




# Accessibility Plan 2025 - 2028 (SS-16)

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<b>Signature:</b>	
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## 1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities are under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEND.

As in previous legislation a school must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled pupil, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

## 2. Definition of Disability

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions); 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

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### **Progressive conditions considered to be a disability**

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

### **Conditions that are specifically excluded**

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a pupil is disabled but rather it is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

## **3. Reasonable Adjustments**

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils:

- When something we do places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to other pupils, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the pupil faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Equality Act's "Codes of Practice" will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through SEND processes such as EHCPs etc.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing SEND statement provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a statement details that provision. When a disabled pupil does not have a statement of SEND (or the statement does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

## 4. Aims of the Accessibility Plan

The planning duties on schools and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

In Cockermouth School, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled pupils and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school to enable any disabled person (pupil, parent/carers, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **continue the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is an action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan – **see Appendix 1**

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Single Equality Scheme, and the operation of the school's SEND policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates to the school's estate development plans. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

## 5. Key Objectives

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.

- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework) which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
  - setting suitable learning challenges;
  - responding to a pupil's diverse learning needs;
  - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The school will achieve successful implementation of the Accessibility Plan with continued support in the areas of:

- Providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion.
- Providing targeted training for particular groups of pupils/staff.
- Promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice.
- Encouraging liaison between other local schools including special schools.
- Seeking support/advice from outside the school, from services, other agencies and organisations.
- Ensuring that the school is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools and staff.

## 6. Contextual Information

- Cockermouth School is a secondary 11-18 academy within the Learning for Life Trust. The number on roll is approximately 1280 pupils.
- In September 2025 the school will be largely fully subscribed. Based on the most recent summer census (2025); the percentage of pupils taking free school meals (FSM) is 13.5%, which is below the national average. Approximately 80 pupils have an ECHP.
- The school was built in the 1950s and has been extended many times since then. Much of the site is very difficult to access due to a combination of old buildings and a sloping site. The school's Accessibility Plan seeks to try and improve this situation. We house a Strategically Resourced Provision (SRP) for 33 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), all of these pupils are directed to the provision and the majority are registered as disabled. These pupils are integrated fully into mainstream with appropriate additional support structures. The vast majority of pupils are from a white British background and there are very few pupils with English as a Second Language (EAL). Over the life of the school there have been some pupils with physical disabilities.
- The school building is "end of life" and as such development and replacements are being kept to a minimum as demolishing of the building is due within 3 years and full replacement with a fully accessible new school building is being constructed within the next 3 year period.
- The school liaises with local feeder schools in order to identify any pupils with disabilities who could potentially apply to join the school who are currently in years 4, 5 or 6 in order to plan effectively for the future.
- In order to ensure that our data is up to date and accurate we will:
  1. Liaise with the Local Authority to identify and therefore plan a response to pupils with a disability well before they arrive.
  2. Ensure specific pupil needs information is shared appropriately within school.
  3. Collect information that allows parents to inform us of pupil's needs.

4. Identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of pupils with disabilities.
  5. Use all available data to inform the planning of individual pupil learning to optimise this.
- The school site is sloping and, as such, the buildings are very diverse and have been joined together with series of steep steps/steep slopes. A number of modifications to the buildings have taken place over the years to make them more accessible. For example, a lift has been built in the main school block linking the ground, first and second stories.

*Key starting points for the school's plan:*

The school has identified that we have (October 2024 Census) the following pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

79 pupils	Code E	EHCP
191 pupils	Code K	SEN Support
40 pupils	First language not English	

## 7. Development

### 7.1 THE PURPOSE AND DIRECTION OF THE SCHOOL'S PLAN: VISION AND VALUES

Cockermouth School's vision is "An exceptional learning experience for all" and so we

- have high ambitions for pupils with disabilities and support them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;
- are committed to identifying and then removing barriers for disabled pupils in all aspects of school life;
- value the individual and the contribution they make to all aspects of school life;
- will strive to ensure that its disabled pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources so as to develop fully in their education;
- acknowledge a commitment to embrace the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement;
- will continue to focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;
- are committed to embracing equal opportunities for all members of the school community.

### 7.2 INFORMATION FROM PUPIL DATA AND SCHOOL AUDIT

Key starting point should be assessments of:

- The nature of the school population for whom the school is planning;
- The nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities.

Pupil information will include a range of data:

- Pupils already in school and moving through it.
- The nature of the future intake (advance information from pre-school/primary school etc.).

The previous accessibility audit was conducted in 2022 has continued to be the basis for this Accessibility plan and the ongoing action plan set out in **Appendix 1**. The audit has not been repeated due to the short lifespan of the school buildings.

### 7.3 VIEWS OF THOSE CONSULTED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The plan was initially developed based on information gathered from an audit.

## 8. Scope of the Plan

### 8.1 PARTICIPATION:

#### Increasing the extent to which pupils With disabilities can participate in the school curriculum

- to investigate how the access to those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for pupils with disabilities to access can be improved;
- to further investigate what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of pupils with disabilities.

We plan to increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are other pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or off-site visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

We have set out our key priorities in **Appendix 1**.

### 8.2 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can take advantage of education and associated services

Following the accessibility audit we have collated information on the improvements to the physical environment of the school site that will improve accessibility for all pupils and staff. Our plans for our physical environment have been prioritised so that we can address priorities with our limited resources in the appropriate order. These are also listed in **Appendix 1**.

### 8.3 INFORMATION

#### Improving the delivery to pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are disabled

Cockermouth School will strive to:

- Produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired pupils.
- Investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities.
- Investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.



The school plans to improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe. The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

**Appendix 1** provides further information on the actions we will take.

## 8.4 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL

The Headteacher with Senior Leadership Team, together with the Finance & Staffing Committee will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time School Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Development Plan.

We will finance the plan by identifying costs and where affordable incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.

# 9. Implementation

## 9.1 MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Our Leadership Team will monitor progress in implementing our accessibility plan and ensure it is focussed on the right priorities, including:

- produce action plans, with definite time scales for the implementation of the actions implicit in the plan;
- present the plan to the governing body for their approval;
- modify the plan based on the views of stakeholders;
- review the plan and the associated action plans to see if milestones are being met. This plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary every three years.

## 9.2 MONITORING

Cockermouth School recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

The progress of the whole pupil population is monitored by form tutors, subject teachers, Heads of Year, Directors and Heads of Department using data gathered. Pupils with disabilities are monitored in exactly the same way as all other pupils. In this way it is possible to analyse the relative attainment and progress of pupils with disabilities. When analysis of progress and interventions is produced, pupils with disabilities will be a group that will be specifically reported.

Evaluation that may be useful to judge success may include:

- Success in meeting identified targets;
- Changes in physical accessibility of school buildings;
- Questionnaires, responses from stakeholders e.g. parents, pupils and staff, indicate increased confidence in the school's ability to promote access to educational opportunities for pupils with disabilities;

- Improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for pupils with additional needs;
- Recorded evidence that increased numbers of pupils with disabilities are actively participating in all areas of the school;
- Recorded evidence that fewer pupils are being excluded from school opportunities as their needs are being more effectively addressed through the application of strategies and procedures;
- Increased levels of achievement for pupils with disabilities;
- Pupil responses; verbally, pictorially and written that indicate that they feel themselves to be included;
- External inspections from time to time that identify higher levels of educational inclusion.

### 9.3 ACCESSING THE SCHOOL'S PLAN

This will be done through:

- Presentation in a section on the school website which is open to all visitors to the site.

We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested.

The school/setting will achieve successful implementation of the accessibility plan with continued support in the areas of:

- Providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;
- Providing targeted training for particular groups of pupils/staff;
- Promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;
- Encouraging liaison between other local schools/settings including special schools;
- Seeking support/advice from outside the school/setting, from services, other agencies and organisations;
- Ensuring that the school/setting is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools/settings and staff.

## 10. Related Policies

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policies
- Single Equality Scheme/Objectives
- Staff Training and Development Plan
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Off-Site Visits Procedures
- Whole School Behaviour Policy
- School Development Plan
- Complaints Procedures

## Accessibility Action Plan

The action plan has been updated in the context of the forthcoming new school build project.

## APPENDIX 1

### Making the curriculum more accessible at Cockermouth School

High Priority Action	Plan	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Training for staff in the identification of and teaching children with ASD and other SEND needs.	All staff attend appropriate training. Delivered by staff in school.	All staff are familiar with the criteria for identifying specific needs and how best to support these children in the classroom.	Ongoing	Children with ASD are successfully included in all aspects of school life.
Review support staff deployment	Optimise the distribution of support staff to best meet the needs of pupils within budgetary constraints	Adult support is available during key times that individual children may need support i.e. lunchtimes, extra-curricular activities.	Reviewed annually and dynamically each day.	Children who need individual adult support to participate in some activities have access to this support.

### Making the physical Environment more accessible at Cockermouth School

	High Priority (within 1 year)	Medium Priority (within 2 years)	Low Priority (within 3 years)
<b>Approach and Car Park</b>		Lighting for routes from car park to entrances	
<b>Horizontal Movement Fixtures and Fittings</b>	Improved lighting in common areas (eg dining room)		
<b>Fire Exits</b>	Regular evac training for staff/pupils who are likely to require this. Review of the PEEPs in place for those who require them.		
<b>Information</b>	Publish on our website info on the accessibility of our premises.		
	Undertake an accessibility audit on our website and address the findings		
<b>Equality Adjustments</b>	Ensure access to interpreters if needed	Designated quiet/prayer space	

### Making written information more accessible at Cockermouth School

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	Ongoing	Differentiation of written material for a variety of needs is available.
Written material is available in different formats on the school website	Different formats required by various groups will be investigated	Different formats will have been determined that cater for all needs.	Ongoing	Formats of written material will be available on the school website to cater for all disabilities.

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