




Accessibility Plan 2022 - 2025 (SS-16)

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Signature:	
Date:	07.07.2022

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Definition of Disability	3
3.	Reasonable Adjustments	4
4.	Aims of the Accessibility Plan	5
5.	Key Objectives	5
6.	Contextual Information	6
7.	Development	7
7.1	The Purpose and Direction of the School’s Plan: Vision and Values	7
7.2	information from student data and school audit	7
7.3	views of those consulted during the development of the plan	8
8.	Scope of the Plan	8
8.1	Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum	8
8.2	Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services	8
8.3	Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are disabled	8
8.4	Financial Planning and Control	9
9.	Implementation	9
9.1	Management, Coordination and Implementation	9
9.2	Monitoring.....	9
9.3	Assessing the School’s Plan	10
10.	Related Policies	10
Appendix 1	Accessibility Action Plan	11
Appendix 2	Location of planned improvements to steps and ramps	13

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 student because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled student 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 student, 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.

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 student is disabled but rather it is the effect on the student'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 students:

- When something we do places a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage to other students, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the student 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 Code 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 students, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

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 student 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 students, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students. 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 students and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students 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 students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

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

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin 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. Students 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 students, and prospective students, with a disability.

- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, 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 students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students 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 student's diverse learning needs;
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

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 students/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. The number on roll is approximately 1350 students.
- In September 2021 the school will be fully subscribed in Years 7, 8 and 9. The percentage of students taking free school meals (FSM) is 9.3%, well below the national average of 18.9% (June 2021 DfE stats). 13.6% of our students have special educational needs. 51.1% of our population are female and 48.9% are male. 9.7% of students in school receive Special Educational Need (SEND) support; nationally this average is 11.5%. However, 3.8% of the school population have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Nationally this number is 2.0%. 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 28 (max) students with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), all of these students are directed to the provision and the majority are registered as disabled. These students are integrated fully into mainstream with appropriate additional support structures. The vast majority of students are from a white British background and there are very few students with English as a Second Language (EAL). Over the life of the school there have been very few students with physical disabilities.
- The school liaises with local feeder schools in order to identify any students 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 students with a disability well before they arrive.
 2. Improve the information dissemination from our Learning Support facility.
 3. Implement a system that allows parents to inform us if they themselves have a disability.
 4. Identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of disabled students.
 5. Use all available data to inform the planning of individual student learning patterns.

6. Use information supplied via previous LA Asset Management/Accessibility Audits to assist us to develop an action plan to reduce obstacles for the school community.

- The school has been extended a number of times since then. 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, as at the end of the academic year 2021/2022 the following students with special educational needs and disabilities.

	Special Educational Needs and Disability - Cockermouth School - 21/22					
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
Cognition & Learning	29	36	26	22	28	141
Communication & Interaction	19	19	19	8	10	75
Physical/Medical	10	14	13	16	4	57
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	7	5	7	1	4	24
Total	65	74	65	47	46	297

Note; some students may be in multiple categories.

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 its disabled students and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;
- are committed to identifying and then removing barriers to disabled students 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 students 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 STUDENT 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.

Student information will include a range of data:

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

The school has conducted a survey of all students in its SRP and all students with EHCPs. In addition all Teaching Assistants have been asked their views. An accessibility audit has been performed using an audit tool to consider all aspects of the school's accessibility. Both these have been used to form the basis of the accessibility action plan set out in **Appendix 1**.

7.3 VIEWS OF THOSE CONSULTED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The plan has been developed based on information gathered from an audit and from a student survey. In addition the school has consulted the following in preparing its plan:

SEND Coordinator, Pastoral Leads, Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral Care, Head of Strategic Resource Provision (SRP).

8. Scope of the Plan

8.1 INCREASING THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISABLED STUDENTS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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

We plan to increase access to the **curriculum** for students with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are other students. 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 students 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 IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE SCHOOL TO INCREASE THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISABLED STUDENTS CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

Following an accessibility audit we have collated information on the improvements to the physical environment of the school site that will improve accessibility for all students 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 IMPROVING THE DELIVERY TO DISABLED STUDENTS OF INFORMATION THAT IS PROVIDED IN WRITING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DISABLED

Cockermouth School will strive to:

- Produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students.
- 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 students, 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 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 undertake a disability audit and canvass views from staff and students in order to ensure our accessibility plan is focussed on the right priorities.

As a result of the audit, we shall:

- 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

We recognise that monitoring is essential to ensure that students with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

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The progress of the whole student population is monitored by form tutors, subject teachers, Heads of Year, Directors and Heads of Department using data gathered. Students with disabilities are monitored in exactly the same way as all other students. In this way it is possible to analyse data focusing on disabled students. When analysis of progress and interventions is produced, students with disabilities will be a group that will be focussed on by staff.

Governors will be required to comment in their annual report to parents on the Accessibility Plan and identify any revisions as necessary. 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, students and staff, indicate increased confidence in the school's ability to promote access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities;

- Improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for students with additional needs;
- Recorded evidence that increased numbers of students with disabilities are actively participating in all areas of the school;
- Recorded evidence that fewer students 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 students with disabilities;
- Student 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
- Governor Training 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

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 specific learning difficulties.	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 students within budgetary constraints	Adult support is available during key times that individual children may need support i.e. lunchtimes, extra-curricular activities.	Reviewed Annually	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)
Approach and Car Park	Marking and signing for accessible parking bays including directional signage to get to them.	Wayfinding signage	Lighting along pathways and steps
			Lighting for routes from car park to entrances
			Contrasting marking on steps
Entrances & Doors	Maglocks on fire doors to ensure ease of passage for wheelchair/low mobility students, staff & visitors.	Main entrance doors are not automatic	
Horizontal Movement Fixtures and Fittings		Visual clues to indicate floors, directional markings and key exit routes Staff room facilities do not have low height kitchen or appliances.	Contrasting colours on wall switches/plugs
			Catering servery / water dispensers heights and ease of use.
			Improved lighting in indoor corridors
Vertical Movement	Signs to indicate where the main lift is located.	Markers at bottom of stairs to indicate when reached	
Toilets and Changing Areas	Number/design of accessible toilets to be improved.	Sinks and mirrors not all at heights appropriate for wheelchair/low mobility students, staff & visitors.	Number of gender neutral toilet facilities to be increased.
	Dedicated changing areas with personal cubicles for showers for all students.		
Fire Exits		Regular evac training for staff/students who are likely to require this.	
		Review of the PEEPs in place for those who require them.	

Information	Publish on our website info on the accessibility of our premises.		Tactile plans/signs for the building
	Undertake an accessibility audit on our website and address the findings		
Equality Adjustments	Leaflets and posters that promote diversity	System in place to raise awareness/support for victims of bullying/hate incidents.	Designated quiet/prayer space
			Ensure access to interpreters if needed
Steps and Ramps		Various indicator strips/rails/ramps and surface grips (see plan in Appendix 2)	

Making written information more accessible at Cockermouth School

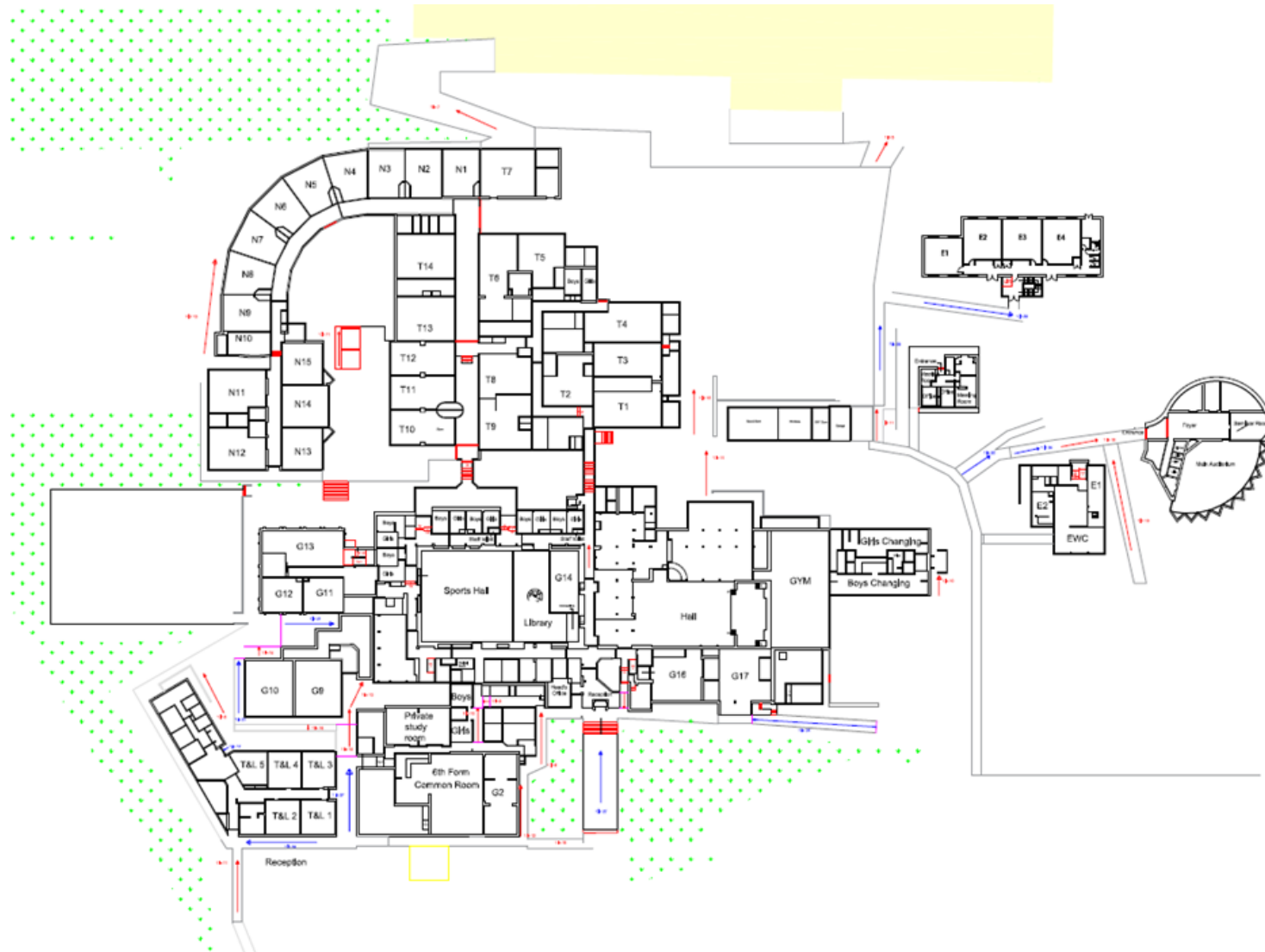
Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when 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.

Additional Actions from the Student Survey

	Who	When
Reiteration of respect from students for students who have extra physical, learning or sensory needs.	Pastoral Team	Autumn Term 2022
Teacher awareness of inclusivity when planning activities so that all students can take part wherever possible.	CDP sessions	Autumn Term 2022
Obvious and effective help for students who need support accessing learning, lessons or activities.	SRP Leaders	Autumn Term 2022
Ability to finish lessons earlier to avoid crowded corridors	SRP Leaders	Ongoing
Increased awareness of the main building lift.	Business Manager	Autumn Term 2022
Improved accessible toilet provision.	Business Manager	Autumn Term 2023
Accessibility review of the school's website	Business Manager	Spring Term 2023
Holding back of doors where possible around school	Business Manager	Autumn Term 2022
Ongoing high presence of adults around the building	Headteacher	Summer Term 2022
Increased door signs & wayfinding signs	Business Manager	Autumn Term 2022
Ongoing crowd management during busy corridor use	Headteacher	Summer Term 2022
Review of design of school site as part of national school rebuilding programme.	Business Manager	Ongoing

Location of planned improvements to steps and ramps

APPENDIX 2



Headteacher:
Mr R J King BSc

Chair of Governors:
Mr A Ward

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