

TORFIELD SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan May 2020

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have an accessibility plan. Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

“A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school’s aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school’s SEN policy.

The school recognises its duty under the DDA:

1. Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
2. Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
3. To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

At Torfield School we are determined to make access to the school as open as possible for every pupil, staff member and visitor.

If pupils can engage in the curriculum and related activities and can benefit from all the school environment has to offer and staff can fulfil their role within the school effectively and safely, then we feel that every effort will have been made to accommodate their needs.

Aim

The aim of our plan is to:

- **Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum**
- **Describe how we plan to improve its physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided**
- **Improve the availability of accessible information for disabled pupils by, for example:**
 - Providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils by planning to:
 - Setting suitable aspirational learning challenges
 - Responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs
 - Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

Achieving the aim

The accessibility plan outlines the main considerations which the school will undertake when planning for improving accessibility. It also describes some recent developments and areas currently under discussion, which, if completed, will contribute to the improvement of accessibility. In identifying improvements, the school will take account of:

a) Education and related activities:

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of DfE, government and LA services, other external professionals and professional bodies that can support or advise the school in improving equality of access and developmental achievement in relation to learning and personal development.

b) Physical environment

The school evaluate and monitor the changing needs of pupils and visitors with physical disabilities and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, noise reduction, colour schemes, and more accessible facilities, services and fittings.

c) Provision of information

The school will provide information in alternative formats when required or requested and possible to do so.

Context and recent actions

With the objective of reducing and eliminating barriers to accessing both the school and to participation in the school community for pupils with a disability, we regularly inspect the school site and review policies and procedures.

Building and Environment

- Although the school is built on a hill, the more recent extensions and the old building have been modified to allow wheelchair access within each of the three levels. Stairs with handrails provide access to each of these levels, and allow access by those using walking aids. The Early Years Centre is on a single level and although there are some restrictions to its accessibility, it is accessible to most disabled visitors and we have no examples where a user has not safely accessed the site.
- Corridors have been deliberately cleared of furniture wherever possible as this is both good ASD practice and also allows more space for wheelchair users. Stairs have high visibility nosings to support safe use for those with visual impairments.

- Classrooms are generously sized to allow room for wheelchairs etc. and teaching groups are small enough to allow room around the tables. Carpets are low pile.
- All areas of the playground and the field and the external areas at the Early Years Centre are accessible to disabled persons although, again, the sloping site is not conducive to easy access. The site is secured by perimeter fencing.
- All areas are well lit and paintwork bright and clean. The environment is ASD friendly, low arousal and predictable. It is kept in a very good state of decoration and repair.
- There are disabled toilets on the middle level and at the EYC.
- Every effort is made to ensure that visual or hearing-impaired pupils can sit near to the teacher.
- Around the school there are many visual signs so that pupils with literacy impairment can access information. Visual time-tables are also used as are consistent use of signs within class areas. We have also purchased visual aids for pupils with sight problems i.e. magnifying reading stands.

Additional Needs

- Provision is made for all children at Torfield. Sometimes children require additional support and this is usually planned and accounted for by our additional needs team.
- Children with emotional/family problems can be given time to talk by our staff in a quiet environment which is suitable for children with complex learning needs. Classes are provided with smaller break out rooms which are available for a range of support uses, including at breaks and lunchtime.
- There is a well-qualified additional needs team and a school nursing service and a linked social worker who can help to support and advise staff about working with children with emotional, behavioural and health related difficulties.
- Speech Therapists work in the school to help our pupils with communication problems and they can offer both regular, formal sessions and more informal help and advice to staff, pupils and parents. Other therapists work in school according to individual needs identified on a child's statement or EHCP.

Provision of information

Our school uses a range of communication methods to ensure information is accessible. This includes:

- Internal signage with symbols and braille where required

- Large print resources
- Makaton / Communicate in Print / sign supported communication and technology to support this

Future planning

We are constantly trying to improve the building, environment, resources and staff skills to make the school even more accessible.

Recent improvements since the last plan review in 2016 include:

Carpets have been fitted to more and more rooms and corridors to reduce noise pollution and make for a calmer, warmer and safer environment and there is an ongoing replacement cycle.

Non-slip safety flooring has been replaced around the school and a cycle for repair and replacement is in place. The Croft Road Additional Support Facility has been refurbished July 2017, providing larger areas of non-slip surface.

Pupil washrooms have been refurbished and built in cupboard storage for other school equipment removed, to provide a cleaner and brighter environment and additional space in both boys and girls washrooms, enabling easiest movement around the rooms and clear and accessible routes and space between cubicles, sinks and hand driers.

The girls washroom has an addition extra wide cubicle to enable assisted toileting if required.

The disabled washroom at Croft Road has been refurbished and an adjoining cupboard converted into an integral shower cubicle.

The EYC staff and visitor washroom has been refurbished to provide a brighter and cleaner environment and larger space for improved access and mobility.

The Croft Road footpaths around the school have been resurfaced with an anti-slip green top coat to improve access and safer mobility and steps have white concrete edgings to provide clear differentiation and visibility.

At Croft Road, the lower playgrounds have canopies erected over them and lighting below to provide additional outside classroom space for the higher needs children and to improve access to an appropriate curriculum and learning for their needs.

At the EYC a hard fibre internet connection has been installed to provide quicker and reliable access to electronic resources and software to all pupils and improving accessibility to specific appropriate learning platforms.

The school hall has been refurbished and high-level windows, previously boarded over, have been opened up, greatly improving light and visibility to the hall.

The swimming pool changing rooms and shower facilities have been refurbished to provide increased space and improved hygiene and environment.

A canopy has been erected over the swimming pool entrance areas and footpath between the two to provide dry areas for pupils and staff to remove shoes.

The foot path to the swimming pool has been resurfaced providing a smoother slope and reduced height step from the car park.

The school car park, has been re-lined and improved to ensure high visibility of pedestrian routes and additional space for minibus access for pupils and staff to board and exit safely.

An additional 9-seater vehicle has been purchased, which can be driven by more staff without requiring a D1 licence and improving opportunities for pupils to be able to access off site facilities and educational visits.

Transport home after attendance at after school clubs and activities is now available to pupils to enable all pupils the opportunity to attend.

All new building or modifications to the environment and provision at Torfield will take into consideration the needs of all abilities and disabilities. We want this school to be “open to all” and to be a truly inclusive environment able to support the complex needs of the pupils in our care.

Further considerations in progress:

Following the completed refurbishment of all outdoor play areas and learning areas, further consideration will be made to improving the grassed areas at Croft Road.

Coloured handrails to the MUGA will be installed, replacing deteriorating steel ones currently in place, to ensure safer access for all staff and pupils and improved visibility.

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Accessibility is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the head of school and considered by the Health and Safety management group.

Chair of AAB.....

Date.....

Executive Headteacher.....

Date