

# People Services Directorate

## Schools Accessibility Strategy 2019 - 2022



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# Schools Accessibility Strategy 2019-2022

## 1 Introduction

Welcome to our Schools Accessibility Strategy 2019-2022. Our strategy sets out how we will increase access to education for disabled pupils in our schools by:

- increasing disabled people's access to the curriculum
- improving the environment of schools by removing physical barriers faced by disabled pupils, so they can access education and associated services
- improving the way we present information to disabled people so that is accessible.

The strategy applies to disabled pupils:

- who are in schools now
- in the school system , but at an earlier stage
- who are not yet in the school system, but we, as well as other agencies already know about them.

The strategy is for schools, governors, parents/carers, professionals and members of the local community. It will help in producing individual school access plans developed with disabled children and young people and implemented by each school.

The strategy applies to local authority maintained schools, nurseries, children's centres, and early years settings. Owners and Governors of provision, have to produce their own accessibility strategy under the Equality Act 2010.

## 2 Our Values and commitment

The Derby City Council Plan 2019-2023 clearly describes our values and commitment to the city. Our actions are underpinned by our core values which, put simply, reinforce that we – the Council, its councillors and colleagues – are here for Derby.

Our values and behaviours describe we want to be and how we will achieve this. This is the basis of who we are, the way we work and the type of people we like to employ. Our values inform our future and set us on the right path.

We are bold, we are strong, we care about Derby and we value great people working together as one team.

Our Derby Vision for SEND is for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to:

- be happy, healthy and safe with good relationships
- be informed about the choices they have available
- feel involved in setting their own goals and types of support
- be able to access the right support at the right time
- live independently and achieve their full potential.

Council Leadership and Strategic Directors have signed up to the [Deaf and hearing impaired people's commitment](#) which has six pledges focussing on equality and access for Deaf and hearing impaired people, including children and young people.

Our Health and Wellbeing Board signed the [Disabled Children's Charter](#) in 2013 under the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign.

The Council has a three year [Equality Plan](#) which we work through with our Diversity Forums and Employee Networks.

### 3 Social understanding of disability

The Council has adopted the social understanding of disability, rather than the medical one. This means we accept that 'disability' is caused by the lack of opportunities to take part in everyday life on an equal basis due to physical and social barriers. These barriers can be removed to create equality for disabled people. Under the social understanding of disability:

- the child is valued, rather than being faulty
- strengths and needs are defined by self and by others, rather than a diagnosis
- barriers are identified and solutions developed, rather than labelling
- outcome based programmes are designed, rather than the impairment becoming the focus of attention
- resources are made available to everyday services, rather than assessment, monitoring programmes of therapy imposed
- training for parents and professionals, rather than segregation and alternative services
- relationships nurtured, rather than put on hold
- diversity is welcomed and disabled children are included, rather than re-entry if 'normal enough' and permanent exclusion
- society changes and evolves, rather than staying the same.

## 4 Legislation and what to do when things go wrong

### Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all previous disability discrimination legislation and disability is one of the nine protected characteristics in the Act. The Council has to comply with the general and specific duties of the Act. These cover all aspects of equality including disability. The [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) website gives full details of the Equality Act.

### Reasonable Adjustments

All schools have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. These duties are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. Schools also have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. Disabled children are just as diverse as other communities and so will be protected under other areas of the Equality Act too. The reasonable adjustment duty under the Equality Act contains three areas...

- Provisions, criteria and practices
- Auxiliary aids and services
- Physical features

The physical features area does not apply to schools in relation to disabled pupils, instead, they have a duty to plan better access for disabled pupils generally, including in relation to the physical environment of the school. This is through the development of accessibility plans.

## **Accessibility Plans and strategies – (schedule 10 of the Equality Act)**

All schools must prepare an accessibility plan and all local authorities must prepare an accessibility strategy, concerning the schools that come under their responsibility. An accessibility plan is for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can take part in the school's curriculum
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school
- improving delivering accessible information to disabled pupils, on an equal basis to non- disabled pupils .

Accessibility strategies set out how local authorities will support schools they are responsible for in complying with these duties.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty – (section 149 of the Equality Act)**

All local authorities and schools have a 'general duty' under the Equality Act to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is unlawful under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who don't
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and who don't.

In addition, local authorities, including schools have specific duties under the Act by publishing information every year to demonstrate their compliance with the 'general duty' and this includes in relation to disabled pupils. One or more equality objectives have to be published at least every four years.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provide some useful guidance on the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) which describes in more detail what schools need to do to comply with the Duty. It goes into detail about what 'due regard' to equality means for schools, so when schools make a decision or take an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular characteristics, such as:

- considering equality implications before and at the time a policy is developed and when making decisions – not as an afterthought and keep them under review
- consciously considering each aspect of the duty – having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination is not the same as having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity
- assessing the risk and extent of any adverse impact that might result from a policy or decision and the ways in which the risk may be eliminated before the policy is adopted
- integrating the equality duty into school functions – analysing rigorously with an open mind, no tick boxing
- paying due regard themselves and not delegating this responsibility to others and recording steps they've taken to comply with the duty.

### **Children Act 2004 –Section 14 – Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006**

[Derby Safeguarding Children Board](#) is made up of senior people from the key agencies that work with children, young people and their families. Their aim is to work together to keep children and young people in Derby safe from abuse or harm at home and in our communities. The Board commissions working groups and sub-groups to provide specialist advice on working with disabled children and parents. They also run training courses on safeguarding and disabled children and young people, covering issues such as:

- understanding why disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse

- developing ways in which workers can reduce that vulnerability
- understanding the impact of practitioners' decisions and actions in safeguarding disabled children and have confidence in challenging practice.

### **Children and Families Act 2014, including the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice:0-25 years**

Section 30 of the 2014 Act requires the Local Authority to publish a [Local Offer](#) which contains details of all services and provisions available to disabled children and young people. It also includes how accessible schools are and information about their inclusion policies. Schools are required to publish a statutory school information report on their own website giving details about how they include disabled pupils.

### **What to do when things go wrong**

The **Equality Act 2010** says education providers like schools, colleges and universities mustn't discriminate against their pupils and students. If anyone has been discriminated against by a school, college or university, they may be able to take action against them under the Act.

It's always better and less stressful for everyone concerned to talk through issues with the school first and see what can be done and what can be changed. If this doesn't work you may need to make a formal complaint to the school governors. If the complaint is still not resolved you have a legal right to make a discrimination claim in court.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau [Disability Discrimination in Schools](#) gives full details of how to complain and so does the [Equality Advisory Support Service](#)

## 5 Access to the curriculum

We provide support to schools to help them to implement their accessibility plans. This includes:

- ensuring that schools are aware of support services that provide advice to schools and staff – information is available on the Local Offer and on the Schools Information Portal.
- providing specialist help to identify ways forward in increasing the inclusion of all pupils – the Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service education specialists and psychologists see individual children on referral

Specialist services are available to schools to provide advice on curriculum access. These services include advice on curriculum access for specific groups of children and young people with:

- physical impairments
- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- autism spectrum impairments

Written guidance and information sheets are available to all Derby City Schools on the Schools Information Portal for specific groups such as children with a visual impairment.

Educational Psychologists also provide advice on curriculum access for disabled children and young people with a broad range of educational needs and impairments.

This support and advice is provided in a variety of ways...

- Consultancy and training
- School improvement advice
- Individual casework, consultation
- Written guidance
- Monitoring
- Inset to individual schools
- City wide training and project development
- Teaching support

### **Specialist training, equipment and resources**

Any specialist medical training school staff may require will be provided, monitored and supported by health professionals.

The Council works in partnership with health services to provide a range of specialist aides, equipment and ICT to promote disabled pupils' access to the curriculum. We are committed to developing our partnerships with the health services and other agencies to seek opportunities for joint working and pooling of information and resources, to promote access to appropriate provision for disabled pupils. The Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service are instrumental in forging these links.

## **6 Improving the physical environment**

Since 2003 the Council has adopted a strategic approach to improving physical access to its schools. We give priority to providing access for wheelchair users to school buildings, including accessible toilets and changing facilities for disabled pupils, students, parents, staff and visitors.

Specific access improvements are made for visually impaired pupils and hearing impaired pupils, including improved acoustics, provision of glare reducing sun blinds and classroom sound amplification systems. The Council's strategy is to create pathways of accessible schools from nursery to secondary school, so disabled pupils, where possible, can progress through their school life with their friends.

Our School Organisation and Provision Team and Specialist Teaching and Education Psychology Service STEPS work together with schools to plan and provide specific building adaptations for disabled pupils at an early stage. This can happen while a pupil is at school or about to join.

Improving the environment for disabled people is a high priority for all school building refurbishment and school extension work. Opportunities are always used to include features to greatly improve access.

Over recent years a number of Derby Schools have been replaced with new buildings which are fully accessible for disabled people.

In some cases, because of original layout and design, it may not be possible to provide full access to older school buildings. In all cases, the school is expected to make reasonable adjustments to make the premises as accessible as possible. For example a reasonable adjustment is to move a class with a wheelchair using pupil to a ground floor classroom or move a parent's open evening to an accessible room.

All schools have a duty, and have delegated funding, to make their own reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of their current and future pupils. In many cases schools may be required to fund their own building related changes, such as ramped access, threshold changes, improved toilets and specialist changing facilities. Any schools wishing to make any significant changes to existing accessibility facilities must consult with the Council, and obtain approval, prior to doing so. There will be presumption against any proposals that diminish accessibility, unless it can be clearly demonstrated there is no longer a current or future need for the space.

In cases where schools fund and plan their own building work they must consider including features to improve access. Such features include making sure appropriate contrasting colours are used on door frames to assist visually impaired people and the choice of plain rather than patterned carpets to avoid difficulty for pupils, students, staff and visitors living with autism. Likewise, schools must consider and appropriately prioritise larger scale changes.

### **Definition of basic accessibility**

Basic accessibility to schools means:

- appropriate circulation routes in and around school buildings
- centrally located accessible toilet and changing provision

- access to specialist spaces, such as halls, libraries, science classrooms, design and technology, information technology and physical education spaces
- appropriate access to general classrooms - reasonable adjustments may be necessary by moving a class to a ground floor accessible room
- access to play spaces, sports fields and social spaces
- making sure the environment in all areas is suitable for sensory impaired people, including features such as blinds to reduce unpleasant glare, acoustics to avoid distractions and low background noise heating systems
- making sure emergency evacuation plans are in place
- access to timetables.

## **7 Improving accessible information**

We provide guidance and information on communicating with others and producing information in alternative formats on the Council's internal network (iderby) in the 'Communication Toolkit'. The Plain English Guide includes advice on Readability and Equality.

The Council has an Equality, Dignity and Respect Policy and Delivery Plan and an Accessible Communication Protocol. These documents include advice for council staff and services (including schools) in communicating, consulting and involving our customers and providing accessible information. We have produced some guidance for employees on specifically working with Deaf and hearing impaired people.

Our local offer has symbol support on the webpages, there is a language translation function and sign video service is available. There is also a telephone number and text relay service available to support users.

In addition we work very closely with Derby's Deaf community and our Deaf and hearing impaired people's commitment working group to make sure we improve on making our information accessible for Deaf people.

## **8 Involving**

The schools accessibility group includes representatives from:

- School organisation and provision
- Specialist teaching and psychology service
- Diversity and Equality Team
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Service

## **9 Monitoring and reviewing the strategy**

The strategy and plan will be monitored every three months and reviewed after two years by the Schools Accessibility Strategy Working Group, who put this strategy together.

# 10 The Schools Accessibility Action Plan

## Accessibility Action Plan 2019

### 1 Access to the curriculum

<b>What are we going to do?</b>	<b>When by?</b>	<b>Who is leading on this?</b>	<b>Progress and success</b>
Support schools in making their curriculum accessible for disabled children and young people, including physical education	On-going	Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service	

### 2 Improving physical access

<b>What are we going to do?</b>	<b>When by?</b>	<b>Who is leading on this?</b>	<b>Progress and success</b>
Review on-line access guide about schools in Derby	Dec 2019	School Organisation and Provision	
Support schools in making their premises accessible and inclusive for disabled children, parents, visitors and employees – Review/ update and publish on line 'A Guide for Making Reasonable Adjustments for Schools'	Dec 2019	School Organisation and Provision	

### 3 Improving accessible information

<b>What are we going to do?</b>	<b>When by?</b>	<b>Who is leading on this?</b>	<b>Progress and success</b>
Look into the possibility of <u>schools</u> signing up to a Deaf and hearing impaired people's Commitment	December 2019	Equality and Diversity Team Corporate Resources	

### 4 Other actions - governance

<b>What are we going to do?</b>	<b>When by?</b>	<b>Who is leading on this?</b>	<b>Progress and success</b>
Collect information on how many schools have produced an Accessibility Plan and Equality Objectives and report this on the Council website	December 2019	Equality and Diversity Team Corporate Resources	
Design a form for disabled parents to complete to inform schools of their reasonable adjustments needed	December 2019	Equality and Diversity Team Corporate Resources	

We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it. Please contact us on: 01332  
Minicom: 01332 640666

## Polish

Aby ułatwić Państwu dostęp do tych informacji, możemy je Państwu przekazać w innym formacie, stylu lub języku.

Prosimy o kontakt:

Tel. tekstowy: 01332 640666

## Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਮਿਨੀਕਮ 01332 640666 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

## Slovakian

Túto informáciu vám môžeme poskytnúť iným spôsobom, štýlom alebo v inom jazyku, ktorý vám pomôže k jej sprístupneniu. Skontaktujte nás prosím na tel.č: Minicom 01332 640666

## Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم منی کام 01332 640666 پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔



Derby City Council