

**Equality, Disability and Access Statements  
And  
Accessibility Plan**

**Version: 09/23**

**Effective Date: September 2021 (3-year plan)**

**Next full revision: September 2024**

**Reviewed by: Mark Hunter**

**Reviewed on: 13/06/23**

# **EQUALITY AND DISABILITY STATEMENT and ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

## **School Commitment to Equality**

At Annan School, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality, by challenging bullying and stereotypes and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

At Annan, we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

## **Framework**

This policy has been prepared to meet the school's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

## **The Equality Act 2010**

A person is covered by the Equality Act if they have one or more of the 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Act.

### **Protected Characteristics in a school**

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity

## **Responsibilities**

- The Proprietors, Principal and staff recognise their responsibilities under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination.
- The Proprietors are responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its legal responsibilities and for implementing the Equality Policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities, are given appropriate training and support, and for taking appropriate action in any case of unlawful discrimination.

## **Policy and planning**

Equality of opportunity will be considered whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

## **Annan School will:**

- promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards all children, staff and other people if they have one or more of the 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Act;
- eliminate discrimination that is defined by the Equality Act 2010;
- eliminate harassment of children, staff and other people that is related to their disability or diversity;
- promote positive attitudes towards disability and diversity;
- endeavour to make the school a welcoming place for all ethnic and national groups represented in the community;
- ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- encourage participation by disabled children in all aspects of school life;
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment;
- make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children are not disadvantaged compared to their peers;
- have due regard to disabled children's progress.

## **Disability Statement**

Under the Equalities Act a disability is defined as:

***'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'***

The definition is designed to be as broad as possible and there are a wide variety of conditions and impairments covered.

Some impairments automatically meet the definition from the point of diagnosis, such as cancer, HIV and Multiple Sclerosis. People registered as blind or partially sighted are also automatically regarded as disabled under the Act.

If a person meets this definition they will be protected if someone discriminates against them because of their impairment.

There is no need for a medically diagnosed cause for the impairment; what matters is the long-term adverse effect of the impairment on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## **Reasonable adjustment**

Under the school's duty to comply with the Act, and to meet its aspirations as an inclusive school, the school will make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure disabled children are not disadvantaged compared to their peers.

The Equality Act does not say what is 'reasonable'. What is reasonable in one set of circumstances may not be reasonable in another.

Reasonable adjustment may relate to a physical adjustment such as rearranging the furniture of a room to accommodate a child who is partially sighted. Or it may relate to the provision of material or aids such as a physio cushion for a child with sensory needs. Additionally, it could include making adjustments to class organisation to allow a child to be in an environment more suited to their ability or developmental needs.

The following factors are likely to be taken into account when considering whether adjustments are reasonable:

- The effectiveness of making the adjustment. Will it be effective in overcoming the substantial disadvantage suffered by the disabled child?
- The practicality of the adjustment;
- The financial resources of the school;

- The cost of making the adjustment;
- The availability of grants, loans and other assistance to disabled children, such as DSAs, local authority funding;
- The extent to which aids and services will be provided to disabled children from other sources;
- Health and safety requirement;
- The relevant interests of other children – for example if the adjustment results in significant disadvantage for other children.

### **Employment**

The school recognises its duty not to discriminate against job applicants or employees. All areas of employment are covered including:

- recruitment and advertising
- employment contracts
- pay and benefits
- promotion and training
- dismissal and redundancy

The school will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment set out in our staff recruitment policy.

### **Complaints or failure to comply**

Complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's Equality Policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

### **Review**

This policy is monitored by the Proprietors and staff of the school and will be reviewed for changes in procedures and statutory guidelines in accordance with the school's policy review guidelines.

## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **Aim of the Accessibility Plan and Access Statement**

- To make provision to allow disabled children, staff and parents to be fully included in school life.

### **To achieve our intentions Annan School will**

- Make reasonable adjustments to the physical setting of the school and classrooms
- Review health and safety in relation to specific needs, including medical, emergency and evacuation procedures
- Increase awareness of barriers to access, including space in teaching area and outside areas including pathways of travel, signage and decor
- Liaise with parents and prospective parents
- Review practices and policies as necessary
- Address training needs of all staff
- Consider trips and outing that can be accessed by all children where possible
- Include all children in all curricular and extra-curricular activities, where it is reasonable to do so

### **Three-year Plan**

It is our intention that over a three-year cycle and with due regard for funding and resourcing, we will:

**Strand 1:** Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

**Strand 2:** Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;

**Strand 3:** Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff parents and visitors.

Our plan exemplifies the school ethos that:

- Everyone in the school community is made to feel welcome;
- There are high expectations of all children;
- Staff and children share a philosophy of inclusion;
- Children are equally valued;
- The school seeks to remove barriers to learning.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled 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 undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

## **Our previous three-year plans from 2011**

### **Our three-year plan (2011-14)**

- Our 2011-14 three-year plan focussed in particular on the EYFS. This included a £25,000 project to create an accessible garden - designed and part-funded in consultation with the Inclusion team at East Sussex County Council. This has been further developed with accessible growing beds being incorporated into the kindergarten garden. The layout of the Infant garden has been planned to incorporate free flow activities accessible by all children in the Infant House. The toilets are accessible from the building and include a compliant disabled facility.

### **Our three-year plan (2014-17)**

- Our 2014-17 three-year plan had particular focus on the KS2 provision. This has included the construction of an architect designed Junior Building (Keilhau) where access was a requirement of the design. It has incorporated no internal thresholds, full opening doors to all area and new compliant toilet facilities within the building. The design layout included open access cloakrooms to increase independent access to these facilities. In addition, the outside has been level-paved around the building to ensure all outside areas can be accessed. This has been supported by fundraising.
- Further areas of the plan included a new level tarmac playground, disabled parking and drop off facility and a re-surfaced drive between the car park and school.
- The final phase of the three-year plan (2016-17) was to increase the access to the outdoor learning environment. This included designing an 'on-site' wildlife area for forest school, activities. This was planned by the children together with a Forest School design consultant. The project included level (woodchip) paths clearly defined around the site, fencing the pond area incorporating a 'safe' decking area to view the pond, and access to equipment and materials within the area to enable all children access to forest school type activities.

### **Our three-year plan (2018-2021)**

- To employ the services of an outside agency (Council for Disabled Children) to review the school policies, in particular the Equality and Disability Statement, the Access Statement and Accessibility Plan and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- To advise the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the school proprietors on ways to ensure that the policies incorporate best practice and the school's ambitions for its disabled pupils.
- In the light of this review, to update all policies over the three-year period to ensure they are fully compliant with the Equalities Act (2010), reflect best practice and make the school as inclusive as possible.

## **Our current three-year plan (2021-2024)**

### **Strand 1: Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

- To consider the whole school curriculum in relation to the aspirations of this plan. This will be led the School Curriculum Lead in conjunction with others with curriculum expertise within the school. Over the lifetime of the Plan, to focus on chosen areas of the curriculum with a two-fold aim:
  - to ensure that the curriculum can be accessed by children with a range of disabilities;
  - to ensure that awareness of disability is developed through the curriculum.

Lead: Alastair Leigh (Curriculum Lead)

Timeframe: Lifetime of the plan

### **Strand 2: Enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided**

- To audit and upgrade the provision of IT material within the school to enable each pupil the opportunity for differentiated ways of recording and presenting their work;
- To support this with the introduction of a touch-typing program and other software;
- To individualise laptops where possible so that each user can have appropriate accessibility settings.

Lead: Lucie Hunter (Communications Lead)

Timeframe: Year 1: Audit; Years 2/3 Introduction and Evaluation

### **Strand 3: Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff parents and visitors**

- To move the weekly newsletter to an on-line format to improve readability options (for example text size, text-to-speak, etc), to incorporate live links (ie direct links to other websites) and to have translation capabilities
- To carry out a review of documentation given to parents and visitors (ie Parents handbook, prospectus, etc) to ensure it reflects the aspirations of this plan
- To consider the pupil's on-line learning portal (Blick!) which was introduced rapidly during the pandemic 2020/21, with regard to accessibility for children with hearing/sight disabilities.

Lead: **Bullets 1 & 2** – Lucie Hunter (Communications Lead)

**Bullet 3** – Alastair Leigh (Curriculum Lead)

Timeframe:

**Bullet 1** newsletter - gain feedback year 2;

**Bullet 2** documentation - Lifetime of the plan

**Bullet 3** on-line portal – as part of the drafting of the **Distance Learning Policy**

### **Review**

This plan is reviewed annually. The current three-year cycle will be reviewed in September 2024. The plan will also be reviewed if there are changes to the current legislation.

**Current review dated: 13/06/23**

**Effective date: September 2021 (3YP)**

**Next Full Review date: September 2024**

**Reviewed by: Mark Hunter**

## **Access Statement and current provision**

*Facilities marked (3YP) are/have been introduced as part of our previous three-year plans*

### **Car Parking and Arrival**

- There is parking available on site for disabled visitors adjacent to the playground/school office. (3YP);
- There is a drop off point at the main entrance gate adjacent to the playground. (3YP);
- The surface of the drive is tarmac. (3YP);
- All buildings have entrance doors of a minimum 87cm wide. All buildings can be accessed through double doors to the lobbies of minimum 120cm width; All doorways have small threshold steps;
- The entrance doors are not automatic, but staff are available for those who may need assistance.

### **Office**

- The school office and reception is situated in a ground floor building accessed by a paved slope from the main playground. (3YP);
- The area is well lit with additional automatic lighting in poor visibility. (3YP);
- The reception desk is at seat height. (3YP);
- Pen and paper are available on request. (3YP);
- There is a pictogram map of the school available on request (3YP).

### **Classrooms and other teaching areas**

- Most of the teaching areas are on the ground floor of the buildings. In the Infant house there is a first-floor teaching area. These are accessed by a wide staircase and handrail. In the case of admission of a pupil or member of staff with mobility/access difficulties the school would look at the reasonable adjustments that could be made to accommodate such a disability;
- The teaching areas are well lit with overhead lighting and natural daylight;
- Furniture is spaced adequately for staff, children and visitors to move freely;
- There is one flight of stairs located in the Infant House;
- Flooring is level and of wood, carpet or vinyl. All vinyl flooring is slip resistant;
- The narrowest internal doorway is 80cm;
- Adequate seating is available.

### **Toilets**

- Toilets are located on the ground floor in the Infant House, Keilhau building (3YP) and School Hall with level access. Outside toilets are accessed by two steps from a paved pathway;
- An accessible toilet is located in the Keilhau building and the School Hall (accessible for children in the Infant House) (3YP); The Kindergarten building has an accessible toilet and changing table.
- Accessible toilets have doors which are 90cm wide;
- The accessible toilet in the Keilhau building has vertical and horizontal grab rails (3YP);
- There is an alarm cord with both a visual and audible alarm (Keilhau) (3YP);
- Baby changing facilities are also provided in the Kindergarten (ground floor);
- A waste bin for hygienic disposal is provided.

### **Catering**

- The school offers facilities for cooked meals and packed lunches and snacks from home;
- Meals are taken in the hall (except EYFS) which is situated on the ground floor with level access;
- Tables are well spaced apart and have bench seating. Chairs are also available;



- Lighting is from natural daylight and overhead lighting;
- Staff are always available to assist if required;
- Gluten free meals and non-dairy milk are available.

### **Grounds and Gardens**

- Outside there is a large level playground to the front of the buildings surrounded by a block paved level pathway (3YP);
- There are two large play areas for the EYFS to the front and rear of the Infant House with a level path and various textured surfaces. There is a mobility designed wooden bridge. Paths are level;
- Wooden benches are placed at intervals around the outside play areas;
- Some areas of the school site require reasonable mobility (see Outdoor Learning).

### **Field Trips and off-site activities**

- A separate policy exists covering off-site activities. In assessing the suitability of a venue for a trip or visit, accessibility is one of the factors that is considered. A risk assessment is carried out where necessary and the school makes use of access statements and risk assessments when these are provided by a venue.

### **Statement relating to Outdoor Learning**

Due to the nature of the site and the school's integral approach to outdoor learning, the school site may not be a practical choice for children and staff with certain disabilities.

Outdoor Learning and forest school activities require reasonable mobility, sight, hearing and mental capacity by the nature of using open woodland and the inherent natural hazards. Children need to be able to hear and understand instructions and have an awareness of natural hazards such as tripping hazards, overhanging branches, brambles, nettles, etc.

An on-site wildlife area has been developed to increase access to Outdoor Learning by all children at the school.

### **Additional Information**

- We have a set of evacuation procedures and staff assist with evacuation in all circumstances.
- Clear signage is used throughout the school with a clear font of white lettering on a purple background. Statutory signs are displayed and comply with legislation. Staff are always available to assist.

This access statement aims to accurately describe the facilities that we offer and outlines our plans to continually improve access to education at Annan School.

### **Reasonable adjustment**

Parents of prospective children with a disability will have their child's individual needs assessed to ensure that they can be met by way of **reasonable adjustments**, in line with both our Equality and Disability statement and the Equality Act 2010.

### **Review**

This plan is reviewed annually. The current three-year cycle will be reviewed in September 2024. The plan will also be reviewed if there are changes to the current legislation.

**Current review dated: 13/06/23**

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