

## **Haringey Council Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020**

### **Haringey's strategy for the inclusion of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in educational settings**

**March 2017**

#### **1. OUR VISION**

The Haringey Access and Inclusion Policy 2017-2020 sets out the vision for children and young people with SEND, as follows:

All children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs. Schools, early years settings, colleges, services, families and the local authority work together to support children and young people to make good progress and achieve outcomes that prepare them for adulthood.

In line with the 2014 Children and Families Act, Haringey is committed to:

- a person-centred, joined up approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children, young people and their families;
- increased engagement and participation of young people and families so that they have greater choice and control, are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly;
- a published local offer of support, services and provision, how to access it and how to raise concerns or seek redress
- the use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment to drive improvement;
- clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities; and
- increased integration of services and joint commissioning across the Local Authority and Health.

The Accessibility Strategy complements the SEND Commissioning Strategy and helps to turn the vision for the education of children and young people with SEND into reality. It is part of the council's overall enablement and access strategy.

This policy focuses on Improving access to education for pupils with SEND, and is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, participation in society, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream and specialist education settings.

## **2. SCOPE AND KEY AIMS OF THE STRATEGY**

### **Audience**

The Accessibility Strategy sets out the local authority plan to increase access to education for pupils with disabilities in the schools for which it is responsible. Schools should take account of the local authority strategy when drawing up their own school accessibility plans. The strategy is also relevant to academies, free schools and other education settings not maintained by the local authority as they also have a statutory duty to draw up and publish a school accessibility plan.

### **Definition of Disability**

Under the 2010 Equality Act, a person is disabled if they have 'a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to do normal day to day activities'.

This definition provides a relatively low threshold. The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'.

'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial. Guidance from the 'Office for Disability Issues' illustrates the factors which might reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities.

- 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.
- 'Normal day to day activities' could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors in pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010. (Study and education related activities are included in the meaning of 'day to day' activities.)

The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. It is not just restricted to those children with an Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Children and young people with long term health conditions do not necessarily have a SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with a SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

### **Key Aims of the Accessibility Strategy**

The key aims of the Accessibility strategy are:

1. To enable all pupils, whatever their needs, to have access to the full range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. This includes a access to a range of respite and support to meet their needs, and support to access hobbies of their interest.
2. To improve the physical environment of schools to ensure, wherever possible, that accessibility is not a barrier to preventing pupils from attending their local schools.
3. To ensure that Children and Young People have full access to the curriculum, and teaching and communication strategies are modified and differentiated to ensure that this can happen.
4. To ensure that information provided by a school is made available to pupils and parents with disabilities, using alternative formats where required.
5. To ensure that admissions processes to schools and other education providers are fair and enable pupils with SEND to access high quality provision that meets their needs. (See SEN Admissions policy)

## **3. OUR DUTIES**

### **2010 Equality Act**

Local authority accessibility strategies and school accessibility plans are a requirement of Schedule 10 of the 2010 Equality Act. As well as general duties for public bodies, the Equality Act states the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, Local Authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people.

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimize disabled children and young people.

- They must protect disabled pupils from discrimination and harassment and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled peers:
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

### **The reasonable adjustments duty (schedule 13 of the 2010 Equality Act)**

The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires schools and other education providers to take positive steps to ensure that students with disabilities can enjoy the benefits, facilities and services provided for all students. Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory duty when they act to prevent students with disabilities being placed at a substantial disadvantage. Guidance for education providers on making reasonable adjustments is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

### **Anticipating reasonable adjustments**

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one and therefore the setting needs to make plans in advance about what students with disabilities might require, and what adjustments might need to be made. They should not wait until the students are on roll.

### **Auxiliary aids and services**

In September 2012, the duty to provide auxiliary aids and services (including specialist equipment which could include laptops and tablets) was extended to include schools. This places schools and other education providers under a duty to provide aids and services where it is reasonable and where it would prevent a disabled pupil being put at a substantial disadvantage when compared to his or her non-disabled peers. Examples of auxiliary aids include coloured layovers, pen grips, adapted physical education equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software. It also includes communication aid both low tech such as symbols and pictures, and high tech, such as electronic communication aids. Children have told us that these aids can make a significant difference to their access to learning and their educational outcomes.

### **SEN Information Report**

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 states that a school's reasonable adjustments, along with other provisions, must be described in their 'SEN Information Report'.

### **School Accessibility Plans**

Schools must publish their Accessibility Plans. The Accessibility Plan should be appended to or be part of the SEN Information Report. Ofsted may request a school's accessibility plan as part of inspection evidence.

#### **4. OUR PRIORITIES**

##### ***PRIORITY 1: Improving access to the curriculum***

Ensuring children and young people with SEND can access the curriculum is an essential element of high quality provision. It enables them to make good progress and achieve outcomes that prepare them well for adulthood. The curriculum covers not only all classroom teaching and learning but wider aspects such as participation in after school and extended school activities or trips and visits. It also includes formal and informal tests, assessments and examinations.

Schools and educational settings are responsible for providing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum for all students. They must:

- publish information on their websites about arrangements for adapting the curriculum and the learning environment for pupils with SEND. Parents have told us that the access to this information is important to them in their decision making about choosing schools
- demonstrate in their Accessibility Plans what actions they are taking to ensure pupils with SEND are able to access the curriculum.

Schools should provide details of how the curriculum is adapted or made accessible for pupils with SEND. Provision maps, which are descriptions of the teaching strategies and adaptations that are used in schools, are an efficient way of showing all the provision that the school makes for children. This is provision that is additional to and different from, that which is normally available for all pupils.

Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less. The following is considered good practice in schools:

- high expectations are set for every pupil using appropriate assessments to agree outcomes to be achieved
- lessons are differentiated and personalized to ensure there are no barriers to every pupil achieving
- effective classroom practice promotes independence

- staff have the support, advice, information and training they require to effectively meet the needs of individual pupils. Parents have told us that effective training of staff is key in ensuring their confidence in schools and settings to meet their child's needs.
- a member of the governing body, or a sub-committee, with specific oversight arrangements for SEND, meets regularly with the Headteacher and SENCO to review how resources are allocated, the impact they are making and ensures SEND is considered as a whole school strategic issue.

The local authority will, wherever possible, support schools and other education settings to establish good practice through provision of advice, information, training and specialist support to help ensure all students can access the curriculum. The support available is set out in the Local Offer.

Schools have a duty to provide auxiliary aids under the reasonable adjustments duty. However, where highly specialized equipment is required for students with sensory or physical impairments, who will already be known to the local health teams and advisory teachers, schools should consult with the relevant specialist teacher who will carry out an assessment and may apply to the SEN Panel for equipment. All equipment supplied by the SEN Panel is overseen by the relevant specialist teachers and therapists and provided on a loan basis to the individual child. The exception to this is communication devices, these types of Alternative and Assistive Communication aids become the property of the child.

### ***PRIORITY 2: Improving environmental access***

The local authority and schools are committed to improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which pupils with SEND can take advantage of education.

This may involve, for example, the creation of safe spaces, calming areas and individual workstations, as well as providing a suitable physical environment for children and young people with disabilities such as ensuring appropriate toileting facilities. Improvements to physical access might include the following:

- Students with physical disabilities

Ramps, handrails, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, emergency evacuation routes, physical access to outside areas and specialist curriculum areas. Parents have told us that access to appropriate toileting facilities is key to ensuring the dignity and well being of their children.

- Students with visual impairment and hearing impairment

Adjustable lighting, blinds, interior and exterior surfaces, induction loops, well designed room acoustics, signage and way-finding systems.

All new school buildings have to comply with current building regulations in relation to accessibility, although further adaptations may be required to meet the needs of specific students.

Schools are required to undertake an **accessibility audit** of their site in order to identify key constraints and how they might be reasonably addressed. An accessibility audit will assess the site, offer suggestions of what is required in order to comply with accessibility requirements and how these might be prioritized. An accessibility audit is a live document which will inform schools of all areas of their site which do not meet the requirements of Equality Act 2010. It will help the school to identify a programme of work that it could reasonably be expected to progress. Schools who have specific site issues will be required to alert Haringey Council to the potential issues and agree a way forward and if reasonable adjustments can be made.

All schools need to consider the reasonable adjustments which may be needed for students with disabilities generally and also for specific students including those expected to transfer into the school.

The responsibility for funding lies with the school, but where major works are likely to be required, local authority maintained schools can submit a business case for additional funding as part of the wider Schools Capital programme. Academies have their own capital funding arrangements directly through the Education Funding Agency.

For children and young people with a visual impairment, an environmental audit can be carried out by the advisory teachers in the local authority specialist VI advisory team.

### ***PRIORITY 3: Improving access to information***

The requirement in the 2014 Children and Families Act to develop a Local Offer has the express purpose of making information more accessible. The Haringey Local Offer is being re-designed to make the information more accessible following feedback from children and families. The re-designed website is due to be launched in September 2017. Any member of the public who cannot access the internet, or requires assistance to do so, can utilize a number of local services to help them. These services are as follows:

- Haringey Libraries; any member of a Haringey Library can visit their local library to use the IT equipment there for free and members of staff will assist people in the use of the Local Offer as necessary.
- Schools in Haringey are also engaged with supporting students and families in the use of the Local Offer if necessary
- A variety of professionals from the local authority and outside the local authority, such as NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, are encouraged to work with families, supporting them in the use of the Local Offer

Haringey's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) are also available to support/assist individuals to access information about the Local Offer.

If English is a barrier, the service approached will work with the person making the enquiry to ensure they have the appropriate information and use an interpreter if required.

The local authority is committed to reviewing and updating the Local Offer on a regular basis, taking into account feedback received from children and young people and their parents/carers.

Schools and other education providers have a responsibility to provide accessible information to parents and pupils to ensure that students with SEND are not disadvantaged.

Information provided should be clear and free of jargon. Where appropriate, particularly for students or parents with sensory impairments, information may need to be made available through alternative methods and formats.

#### ***PRIORITY 4: Ensuring fair school admissions processes***

##### **Local authority responsibilities**

Haringey Council is the admissions authority for all local authority maintained schools, including nursery classes in maintained schools. Academies are their own admission authorities.

There are two school admission pathways for children with SEND, as follows:

- For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of SEN, applications are handled by the local authority Special Needs Team.



- For children with a SEN but without an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of SEN, families apply for admission to a school through the normal application process.

Both processes must comply with the School Admissions Code, the 2010 Equality Act, the 2014 Children and Families Act and other relevant legislation.

### **Placement in specialist provision**

Where placement at a specialist educational provision is being considered, Haringey authority will make a decision through the SEN Panel with reference to Haringey's admissions guidance for specialist settings. Information on the facilities provided at each school can be found on each school's website and the Local Offer.

### **The School Admissions Code**

The School Admissions Code produced by the Department for Education sets out the law in relation to school admissions. The Code requires that the process must be reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation, including equality legislation. The admissions process must ensure that arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child with a disability or special educational needs.

The local authority has an important role in monitoring compliance with the Admissions Code and are required to report annually to the Schools Adjudicator on the fairness and legality of the admission arrangements for all schools in their area. Although academies are their own admissions authorities, the School Admissions Code still applies and the responsible body or Academy Trust has the responsibility to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with the Code.

### **The 2010 Equality Act**

The 2010 Equality Act requires that the responsible body of all types of schools must not discriminate in the arrangements it makes for deciding who is admitted, in the terms it offers for admitting a pupil or by not admitting a pupil.

### **The Children and Families Act 2014**

The school admission process should:

- reflect the importance of the child or young person with SEND, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decision
- provide children with SEND and their parents with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions.

Detailed information about school admissions can be found on Haringey's website under 'Admissions'.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

This strategy covers the period 2017 – 2020. It will be reviewed at least annually, or when required by legislation, and revised and updated as required. An associated action plan will be drawn up to identify the further actions required to meet the key aims of this strategy and address the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act.

This document sets out the responsibilities on schools for implementing the Accessibility strategy, in line with the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act. The local authority will provide information, advice and support to schools as described in the Local Offer. For pupils with physical and sensory impairments or communication disorders such as autism, advice and support is available from the relevant local authority specialist advisory teams.

The local authority Building Management team can signpost schools to services which carry out accessibility audits. Advice on adjustments required is also available from the Occupational Therapy Team.

Network Learning Communities also have an important role in ensuring a local area perspective, working with local authority services, schools and other partners, in reviewing and improving the accessibility arrangements for children and young people with SEND in their area, identifying local problems and promoting good practice.

## **6. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS**

We would be pleased to receive your comments on this strategy document. If you have any feedback, please email [sen@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:sen@haringey.gov.uk) . We would welcome suggestions about ways of improving this document and examples of good practice.

In the case of a complaint about the implementation of the strategy, you can do so by using the online form on the Haringey council website <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/council-feedback/complaints-about-council>. If there is concern about a school's accessibility arrangements, parents should consult directly with the school. Every school has their own complaints procedure.

## **7. FURTHER INFORMATION**

Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Haringey Local Offer

[Haringey Local Offer](#)

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

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