



# Castle School

## Accessibility Policy

### Policy Preface

Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Christian learning environment at the heart of its communities. We promote care and respect, and expect high standards in all aspects of our Trust life.

As a Church of England Academy Trust, we aim to build communities clearly based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the Academy Trust.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

<b>Lead Person:</b>	<b>Principal</b>
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<b>Statutory Requirement:</b>	Yes



## **Accessibility Policy**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this plan is to show how Castle School ensures and continually increases accessibility for pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

The Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 states all schools must have an Accessibility Plan, reviewed every three years.

### **1.1 Rationale**

An accessibility plan is a plan for:

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum,
- (b) 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, and
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

A disability under the Equality Act 2010 is

‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

This definition includes physical disabilities and others with sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer.

### **2.0 The School's Context and Ethos**

Castle School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within Castle School.

Castle School recognises and values parents and carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

The Castle School Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to the campus within a given time frame and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

The building was newly constructed and opened in March 2012.

On roll are 100 pupils aged 2-19 years from the catchment area of South East Northumberland.

All pupils have Education Health and Care Plans relating to severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties, diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Hearing and/or Visual impairment. Most pupils have speech, language or communication need, some pupils require significant medical intervention including support with gastrostomy feeds.

The children are grouped within their key stage according to age and their learning needs with distinctive provision being made for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The core and foundation curriculum is enhanced by a range of therapeutic activities designed to reach and stimulate our pupils with the most complex needs.

We respect the voice of the pupil and the family and their preferences for how our pupils' needs should be met.

### **3.0 Main Priorities**

#### **3.1 Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

Pupils enjoy and benefit from a curriculum which is well planned to meet their individual needs.

The curriculum extends beyond the classroom to offsite visits. No pupil is excluded from these visits due to disability.

Teaching Assistants support pupils well across the school and are supported in ensuring that they maximise learning for all pupils by working in close collaboration with the class teacher.

Partnership working between school staff, multi-agency professionals and parents enhances the learning opportunities available for pupils.

Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy plus peripatetic support from teachers for pupils with visual and hearing impairment are provided to offer additional support to those pupils who require it.

Close liaison with external agencies such as Health Services and Social Services further supports inclusive practices.

Staff professional development and training includes priority areas such as; moving and handling, Makaton signing, safe management of medical needs.

### **Further Increasing Access to the Curriculum For Disabled Pupils**

Improving teaching and learning lies at the heart of the school’s work. Through self-review and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children.

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timescale &amp; Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Ensure that the curriculum model (pathways approach) is enabling all pupils to make good or better progress and matches pupils’ needs.	Precisely monitoring activities on evaluating impact of teaching/curriculum on pupils’ progress	Teachers Ongoing	Pupils will access a curriculum pathway which allows them to access a range of learning which matches their specific needs and learning styles
Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) accurately reflect and plan small steps of progress towards long term targets in Education Health Care Plans.	Ensure that targets clearly describe next steps in learning and a contexts to generalise learning.	All staff Ongoing	ILP information supports staff to create the best inclusive environment for every pupil. Parents understand the role they can play in sustaining development.

### **3.2 Improving the physical environment of the school to increase access**

Ceiling track hoists are available in several rooms including classrooms which also have spacious layouts with appropriate flooring, flexible furnishing arrangements to support different pupil needs.

Personal hygiene areas, changing areas and toilets are accessible to all pupils who use a wheelchair or have limited mobility.

Corridors are spacious and not cluttered by equipment, having designated storage areas for large physiotherapy equipment.

Specialist rooms include; cookery room (adapted with height adjustable hob and tables), sensory rooms, soft play and medical room and are accessible to all.

Stairs are at either end of the building and have contrast edging, with a lift available for use, this is also safe to use in case of evacuation.

The building also has three identified fire refuge areas and ResQmats available for use in emergency evacuations.

Access to IT equipment to support communication and learning is available as both low tech, eg. Symbol support and high tech, for eg. switches and augmentative communication aids.

Externally the building has designated disabled parking bays for the three school minibuses and parking is available close to the main entrance for visitors.

Pupils' access rebound therapy and physiotherapy sessions in school with appropriately trained staff.

### **Further Improving the Physical Environment**

Ensuring that the physical environment enhances opportunities for all pupils and is reviewed regularly in terms of pupil needs.

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timescale &amp; Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Calm environments to help children self-regulate	Ensuring that spaces are 'clutter-free' and pupils have spaces available should they require a more change of environment	All staff Ongoing	The school is a safe place for all pupils and space is well utilised by all
Outdoor Areas	Continue to develop and find innovative ways for children and young people to enjoy physical activity and outdoor learning	All staff Ongoing	Outdoor space is an inviting environment for pupils to be in.

### **3.3 Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled**

Resources including textbooks and pupil information is carefully chosen to meet diversity of pupil need.

Selection of formats to increase information accessibility for those who have communication difficulties is carefully considered by staff, e.g. symbol supported text.

Delivery of information at school meetings or on the school website is available in different formats on request.

Improving teaching and learning lies at the heart of the school’s work. Through selfreview and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children.

### **Further Improving Accessibility of Information**

This will include planning to make written information that is normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. Examples might include textbooks and symbol-supported or use of visual aids for school information.

Focus	Strategy	Timescale & Responsibility	Outcome
<p>The school website contains photos, text and documents about the school, and videos sharing our pupils achievement. However, information about the school is not in video form, which may be more accessible to some prospective pupils and their families.</p>	<p>To create an introduction video, featuring the pupils, families and visitors, for the school website. To identify a class or group of students to feature in the video. To plan and record the video. To edit the video to a high quality, building accessibility into the design.</p>	<p>School staff and Media co-ordinator December 2021</p>	<p>Publish the video on the school website.</p>