

Accessibility Policy

The Forest Skies Federation



**Approved
by:**

Board of governors
Mr M Davies – Birchwood Junior School
Miss N Haughton – The Lancaster School
Miss J Bingwa – Woodlands Infant &
Nursery School

Date: September 2024

**Last
reviewed
on:**

September 2024

**Next
review due
by:**

September 2027 (3 years or as required to maintain relevance)

Introduction

The Forest Skies Federation has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010:

- to not to treat pupils who are disabled less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for pupils who are disabled, so they are not put at a substantial disadvantage;
- to draw up plans to show how, over time, we will increase access to education for pupils who are disabled.

This policy sets out the proposals of our school to increase access to education for pupils who are disabled in the three areas required by the planning duties of the Equality Act:

- increasing the extent to which pupils who are disabled can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school so pupils who are disabled can take greater advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery of the curriculum to pupils who are disabled.

Aim

It is the overall aim of the Forest Skies Federation to do all that is reasonably possible to ensure that the school's facilities, services, culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to pupils, staff members and visitors who have disabilities, and to comply with our moral and legal responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010).

Our purpose is

- to be sensitive to the needs of every child
- to reduce barriers to learning in every area of school life
- to ensure the curriculum is accessible to every student
- to keep equality of opportunity enshrined in our practice
- to have regard to any Department for Education's guidance

NB: A person is defined as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a "substantial and long term*" adverse effect" on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity (Equality Act 2010). * *has lasted or is likely to last for more than 12 months*

Physical impairment may cover mobility difficulties and sensory difficulties such as hearing and visual impairment, and medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or HIV.

Mental impairment includes neurological deficits such as specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), speech and language difficulties, mental health conditions and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

A very large group of children is included within the definition of disability, including children with significant behaviour difficulties which relate to an underlying impairment.

Not all pupils who have a learning difficulty or special educational need are disabled.

Access to School

The schools were founded over 40 years go and all three sites have had extensions made. As such our physical facilities for persons with disabilities have changed over time. We make every reasonable adjustment in order to accommodate the needs of applicants, pupils, parents/guardians, visitors and members of staff who have disabilities.

Dedicated disabled parking bays are allocated within each car park. Into all school sites there is disabled access available through the front double-doors and there is clear disabled accesses into all classrooms, hall and exits with either ramps, double doors or sloping ramps around the sites.

There are stairs / steps within all three sites but there is always alternative disabled access available.

There is a disabled toilet is available accessed from the hall at all three sites of the Forest Skies Federation.

Admissions

Parents or guardians of children with disabilities or special educational needs are expected to notify them to the school at the point of application. If these are not known at the time, the school should be notified as soon as they are recognised. Parents are requested to include details of any special circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties or other circumstances which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school.

Parents will also be asked to provide copies of any professional reports e.g. Educational Psychologist's report or professional reports from other agencies or EHCP (if applicable). Early notification is of great value, as it will enable the school to consider whether reasonable adjustments need to be made for a disabled child during the admissions process and what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made at the Forest Skies Federation to support the child's future education should an offer of a place be made.

As part of the admissions process, staff will meet with parents to discuss whether or not a prospective pupil will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to facilitate this. In determining this, the school may request further information, such as a medical certificate or additional assessments, that the school considers necessary to make a fair assessment. If, after consultation, the school decides that is unable to adequately cater for the needs of those children with disabilities, The Forest Skies Federation will be unable to offer a place and parents will be informed why an offer will not be made.

Existing Pupils

The school recognises that medical and psychological conditions can develop in existing pupils which may require adjustments to be made to the way in which the curriculum is delivered.

Parents / carers must, as soon as possible, disclose to the school in confidence any known medical condition, health problem or allergy affecting an existing pupil. Where appropriate, the Headteacher & SENCO shall set up a consultation process so that interim measures can be put in place to support the pupil, and that longer term requirements may be determined. The school will, to the best of its ability, make such adjustments as are reasonably practicable to allow a pupil to continue at the school.

Learning Difficulties

The school shall do all that is reasonably possible to detect and deal appropriately with a learning difficulty, which amounts to a “special educational need”. The school staff are not, however, qualified to make a diagnosis of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or other learning difficulties. The screening tests available to schools are indicative only; they are not infallible. Parents/guardians will be notified if a screening test indicates that a pupil may have a learning difficulty. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange any formal assessments; the school can help with this process by recommending specialist help.

In order that the Forest Skies Federation is fully compliant with the Equality Act, all staff are made aware of the duties towards children who are disabled and the ‘reasonable adjustments’ needed for particular children by the school’s SENCO.

Withdrawal of a Pupil

If, after reasonable adjustments have been made, the school is unable to adequately cater for and meet the needs of a disabled pupil and the school can no longer provide an environment suitable for the student to participate and thrive, the Head may request parents to withdraw their child. The Headteacher and SENCo will consult with parents and where appropriate the Forest Skies Federation will request and support the move of the student to another educational establishment.

At all times, the school will take full account of:

- specific impairments
- pupil and parental views
- advice from teachers
- advice from other designated professionals

Prospective Staff Members

Prospective staff members must notify the school of any disabilities as part of their application and must discuss with the school what adjustments could reasonably be made to accommodate them should they be employed. The school may request a full report from a doctor to help determine whether it can properly fulfil its legal, moral and contractual responsibilities to the prospective staff member, its pupils and their parents / carers.

Existing Staff Members

The Forest Skies Federation recognises that medical and psychological conditions can develop in existing staff members which may require adjustments to be made to the way in which they are employed.

Existing staff members must, as soon as possible, disclose to the school in confidence any known medical condition or health problem. Where appropriate, the Headteacher shall set up a consultation process so that interim measures can be put in place to support the staff member, and that longer term requirements may be determined. The school will, to the best of its ability, make such adjustments as are reasonably practicable to allow a staff member to continue at the school.

Reasonable Adjustments

In determining what is reasonable the school will have regard to:

- The financial resources available to the school
- The costs of any particular alteration to the premises, staffing arrangements, or special equipment required
- The practicality of making reasonable adjustments
- The extent to which aids and services will be provided via a EHCP, or by provision paid for outside the school's resources
- Health and Safety requirements
- The interests of other pupils
- The need to maintain academic, musical, sporting or other standards

Personal Information

All personal information provided to the school regarding a pupil or staff member's disabilities shall be treated in strictest confidence and only used in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every **3** years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be approved by the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and SENCo.

Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy

Appendix 1: Accessibility audit

Forest Skies Federation Birchwood Junior School Site / The Lancaster School Site / Woodlands Infant and Nursery School Site				
Area	Item	Action	Timeframe	Outcome
Improving physical access	Car parking	A designated disabled car parking space is available at all sites	Existing	Disabled parking for staff or visitors to school
	Ensure wheelchair access from all fire exits	Doors are accessible via ramps where required. Door widths are suitable for wheelchair access.	Existing	Wheelchair access in an emergency
	Ease of access from inside via fire doors	Thresholds between classroom and outside smoothed to aid transition	Existing	Prevention of trips of falls Wheelchair access in an emergency
	Visibility making added to changes of height outside	Yellow paint / tape used to highlight key areas within the school grounds (door floor edges, raised or dropped kerbs)	Existing	Prevention of trips of falls

	Ramps to enter / exit the building	<p>Alternative access means all ground floor areas have disabled access</p> <p>Birchwood Junior School site - Ramps and dropped kerbs (outside staffroom / from breakfast room, outside Class 3, outside Class 12)</p> <p>The Lancaster School site – Sloped incline into reception area and external classroom doors / dropped kerbs and ramp (EYFS)</p> <p>Woodlands Infant and Nursery School site Sloped incline into reception area Ramp to external classroom door</p>	Existing	Wheelchair access in an emergency
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		kerbs and ramps into all classrooms		
	Hygiene Suite	<p>All sites have a hygiene suite / disabled toilet</p> <p>Birchwood Junior School site - Entrance foyer / behind Class 2 (including hoist)</p> <p>The Lancaster School site – Accessed from the hall (including hoist and shower)</p> <p>Woodlands Infant and Nursery School site Entrance foyer (including shower)</p>		
Improving access to the curriculum	Teaching & Learning	<p>To ensure ALL children can access the teaching within their classroom and that class teachers are meeting their needs where required.</p> <p>Work with SENCO and outside agencies.</p>	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL children will be able to access the teaching provided within their classroom either with support from additional adult or aids such as personal areas in classrooms, visual timetables, etc.

	Teaching & Learning	To ensure that behaviour for learning is in line with school policy and all children participate in all aspects of learning in the classroom. Staff trained in Restorative Practice.	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL children will have access to the teaching and learning in their classroom with minimal disruption from children with additional SEMH needs.
	Teaching & Learning	Staff to have continuous cycle of professional development, specific training offered where appropriate to meet individual pupil needs.	<i>Under continuous review</i>	Staff training is kept up to date to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.
	Out of school activities and after school clubs	To ensure that all children have access to all out of school activities and after school clubs. Class teachers to be made aware of accessibility requirements when booking trips and leading after school activities.	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL children will have access to out of school activities and after school clubs.
Improving the delivery of written information	Accessibility for all persons with visual	To review and improve, where necessary all written formats to ensure they are accessible to pupils and parents with visual impairments.	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL pupils, parents/carers with visual impairments will be able to access all written communication
	Impairment			
	Access for parents families with English as additional language	Use of Google translate loaded onto iPad to help support parents who are not able to access English confidently.	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL pupils, parents/carers with English as an additional language will be able to access all written communication

	Website	Translate function needed on website	<i>Under continuous review</i>	ALL pupils, parents / carers able to access the school websites in their home language
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