

Newport City Council Education Service Accessibility Strategy for Schools

2019-2024

Version control.

Version	Author and date	Description
1	RS – July 2018	Initial Draft
2	RS – April 2019	Post consultation update

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Introduction

Newport City Council's corporate plan 2017-2022 sets out the way in which the council will go about achieving the mission of 'Improving People's Lives' and building upon the commitments identified in the 2012 corporate plan, including the delivery of A Fairer City. This strategy is developed to support the delivery of Newport's well-being objectives:

1. To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
2. To promote economic growth and regeneration while protecting the environment.
3. To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient.
4. To build cohesive and sustainable communities.

The development of this strategy has been undertaken in accordance with the commitment set in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020, specifically in relation to Equality Objective 3; Improving Access to Services.

This document sets out the Newport City Council's strategy for progressively increasing the accessibility of Newport schools to pupils with disabilities. It will be reviewed annually and updated at least every three years.

This strategy is for employees of Newport City Council, elected members, teachers and support staff, and for pupils, parents and support workers in the city of Newport. It sets out our vision for an inclusive and positive education experience for all, and identifies basic roles and responsibilities for the Authority and our schools.

This accessibility strategy is developed through a co-production approach incorporating the views of parents, education professionals and third sector support groups through a workshop held at GAVO HQ on 25th June 2018. Attendees included representatives from:

- GAVO
- Sparkle (Serennu Children's Centre)
- Newport Parent Groups
- Newport Access Group/Disability Wales
- NCC Preventative Services
- NCC Occupational Therapists
- NCC Children's Rights
- NCC Education Inclusion
- Primary and Secondary school representatives

The outputs of this stakeholder workshop have been captured and are included at appendix A. The views of young people with recent experience of the education system in Newport have also contributed to this strategy through an informal session facilitated by Sparkle at Serennu Children's centre.

The strategy is subject to public consultation with schools, parents, young people and relevant voluntary organisations across Newport.

Specific guidance for schools with regard to School Accessibility Plans has been provided and a template accessibility plan is attached to this document as appendix B.

A self -assessment survey of our schools has been completed. The results of this survey will be verified on a priority basis as part of this strategy.

We are grateful to GAVO and Sparkle at Serennu Children's Centre for their assistance in facilitating stakeholder engagement in the preparation of this draft strategy.

Legislative context

Schedule 10 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) directs that:

“A local authority in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare... an accessibility strategy”

The act describes an accessibility strategy as a strategy for, over a prescribed period-

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
- Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services offered by the schools
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

The development of this strategy is also in accordance with:

- [The Social Services and Wellbeing Act, 2014](#)
- [The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, 2015](#)
- Recommendations of the Children's Commissioner's follow-up report; [‘Full Lives: Equal Access’, 2017](#)
- [Newport City Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020](#), (objective 3.2)

Definition

A workshop of key stakeholders was held prior to the development of this strategy. Definitions of accessibility were considered and this activity has informed the adoption of the following definition for the purposes of this strategy:

“Accessibility is...The removal of barriers to learning, so that all children and young people are able to achieve their potential in a socially, physically and emotionally inclusive environment.”

This strategy sets out how Newport City Council will work to further remove the barriers to learning and improve inclusivity across the education estate.

Vision and Values

The **vision** for accessibility across Newport’s schools is:

“To provide every child/young person with the opportunity to access an inclusive and positive educational experience; recognising that every child is unique and supporting them to develop (in accordance with/regardless of) their physical, social, emotional and educational needs”

The strategy will support work which will seek to realise this vision, underpinned by the following **values**:

- Working collaboratively
- Listening to parents and pupils
- Participatory
- Child centred
- Transparent
- Flexible
- Universal (across school clusters)
- Equitable provision
- Inclusive
- Respectable
- Accountable

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Authority will:

- Involve and consult with young people, their families and carers in decisions which are likely to affect the quality and equity of their education provision.
- Provide staff and governor training to schools on issues related to improving access to the curriculum, information and the physical learning environment including the development of enhanced approaches to teaching and learning.
- Provide direct advice and consultation to schools in relation to planning for improvements to the physical environment.
- Provide advice and guidance to schools and families regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Directly assist schools in the conversion of information into alternative formats.
- Continue to provide specialist advice and consultation from its support services including the Educational Psychology Team, Occupational Therapists, Teacher advisors and Special Education Needs team.
- Ensure that schools, and school staff, are aware of the range of specialist support services that can provide advice and consultation.
- Include accessibility in the design brief for all new build and school buildings improvement investment
- Review the schools estate audit and identify areas which require consideration for priority remedial action.
- Establish a steering group to monitor progress and report to Newport City Council's Corporate Strategic Asset Management Group.
- Seek commitment to improving accessibility in non-maintained early years settings through the development of accessibility plans.
- Undertake, as necessary, additional access audits with schools to identify all hazards and barriers to access; and to contribute to the provision of comprehensive information about school building stock.
- Review the need for and provision of advocacy services for young and vulnerable people in proceedings which will affect their education provision.
- Encourage schools to work together and collect and collate examples of good practice.

Schools will:

- Develop, publish and regularly review their School Accessibility Plans.
- Identify all pupils and known prospective pupils who face barriers to learning and full participation.
- Ensure an internal access audit has been completed and incorporate the outcome into school planning.
- Seek to include minor building works or developments to improve accessibility, identified by the school, or through the access audit, into the school development plan.
- Continue to develop approaches to the differentiation of the curriculum to enable increased access for pupils with disabilities.
- Audit staff training needs in relation to increasing participation in the Curriculum.
- Audit pupil, and prospective pupil, needs in relation to the wider provision of school, including after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips.
- Review and audit regularly the school's approach to the provision of written information in general to establish if the format could be improved routinely and in general to improve accessibility.
- Consider, on a planned basis, how to improve accessibility through reorganising or rearranging aspects of the school environment without physical adaptation or building works.
- Seek to develop and share good practice in this area and access the opportunities provided by the Local Authority and other schools to facilitate this process.

Objectives

In order to progress towards the realisation of the vision, the Council has set objectives based around key themes.

The vision is:- “To provide every child/young person with the opportunity to access an inclusive and positive educational experience; recognising that every child is unique and supporting them to develop their physical, social, emotional and educational needs”

The key themes are:

Physical inclusion – The removal barriers created by the physical environment to allow pupils to engage alongside their peers, in all areas of school life to access the full curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Access to Information – To provide information in formats which are suited to the needs of pupils and families. This includes ensuring that school policies and procedures are easily available in alternative formats.

Communication and Transparency – Taking a participatory approach when formulating proposals concerning education provision and consulting with stakeholders when making decisions. This includes being open and honest about what can be expected or achieved.

These key themes have informed the objectives for this strategy.

Physical Inclusion

A self -assessment survey of our school sites* has identified that there are currently 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school with school halls which are not wheelchair accessible. This presents a barrier for some pupils to access community activities such as assembly, school meals and school events alongside their peers.

The survey also identified that there are 14 primary schools and 4 secondary schools where a number of classrooms are not wheelchair accessible. Newport City Council will work to increase the number of schools in which all classrooms are wheelchair accessible. Where it is not possible to make all classrooms wheelchair accessible we will work to ensure that the full curriculum can be delivered in accessible classrooms within the school site.

Additionally, the survey revealed that 27 primary schools and 5 secondary schools had insufficient measures in place to assist pupils with sight or hearing impairments. It is therefore an objective of this strategy to increase the provision of these measures across our schools.

* Note – the self-assessment survey collected information provided by school leadership teams and has not yet been independently verified

Objectives for this theme are:

- To increase the number of school halls which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.
- To increase the number of school classrooms which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.

Access to Information

Providing relevant information in accessible formats will help parents, pupils, families and carers to effectively engage with our schools.

Objectives for this theme are:

- To provide guidance and support to ensure all schools develop and publish effective accessibility plans
- To share good practice across the city in the provision of information in alternative formats

Communication and Transparency

Being open and honest with pupils, parents and families will help everybody to understand parameters and processes and to measure expectations accordingly. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act sets expectations in relation to our processes for identifying and delivering appropriate education support.

Objectives for this theme are:

- To provide clear guidance and training on the process to be followed for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and providing the appropriate support.
- Review progress made against the objectives set out in this strategy, and publish update reports each year.

Priorities for Action

The Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets the mission statement for the Council as 'Improving People's Lives' and the Council's Strategic Equality Plan identifies Improving access to services as our 3rd Equality Objective. This accessibility strategy fulfils action 2 of these objectives, and the actions set below further contribute to the delivery of the equality objective and our vision for accessibility in education. It is also anticipated that these actions will influence the Equality Objectives set within the authority's future Strategic Equality Plan in 2020.

Accessibility Theme	Objective	Action	Owner	Timescale
Physical Inclusion	To increase the number of school halls which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.	1. Verify information provided by schools on priority basis	Newport Norse	By September 2019
		2. Commission feasibility study and costings	NCC education	By January 2020
		3. Agree and commission remedial action	Accessibility Steering Group/ NCC education	By April 2020
	To increase the number of school classrooms which are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments.	4. Verify information provided by schools on priority basis	Newport Norse	Commence by By June 2020
		5. Commission feasibility study and costings	NCC education	By September 2020
		6. Agree and commission remedial action	Accessibility Steering Group/ NCC education	By January 2021
Access to Information	To provide guidance and support to ensure all schools develop and publish effective accessibility plans	7. Review and provide feedback to schools on accessibility plans	NCC education	By October 2021
	To share good practice across the city in the provision of information in alternative formats	8. Identify good practice through review of accessibility plans and share through Head teacher meetings	NCC education Inclusion	By October 2021

Communication and Transparency	To provide clear guidance and training on the process to be followed for identifying pupils with additional learning needs and providing the appropriate support.	9.Ensure the LA is prepared to comply with the statutory ALN Code	NCC Education Inclusion	By April 2021
		10.Provide updates and guidance to schools on Individual Development Plans and how to decide if one is required	NCC Education Inclusion	By April 2021
	Review progress made against the objectives set out in this strategy, and publish update reports each year	11.Establish an implementation, monitoring and steering group through CSAMG	NCC CSAMG	By September 2019
		12.Implementation monitoring and steering group to meet quarterly to agree key decisions, review progress and prepare reports to scrutiny group	NCC Accessibility Group	To meet by November 2019

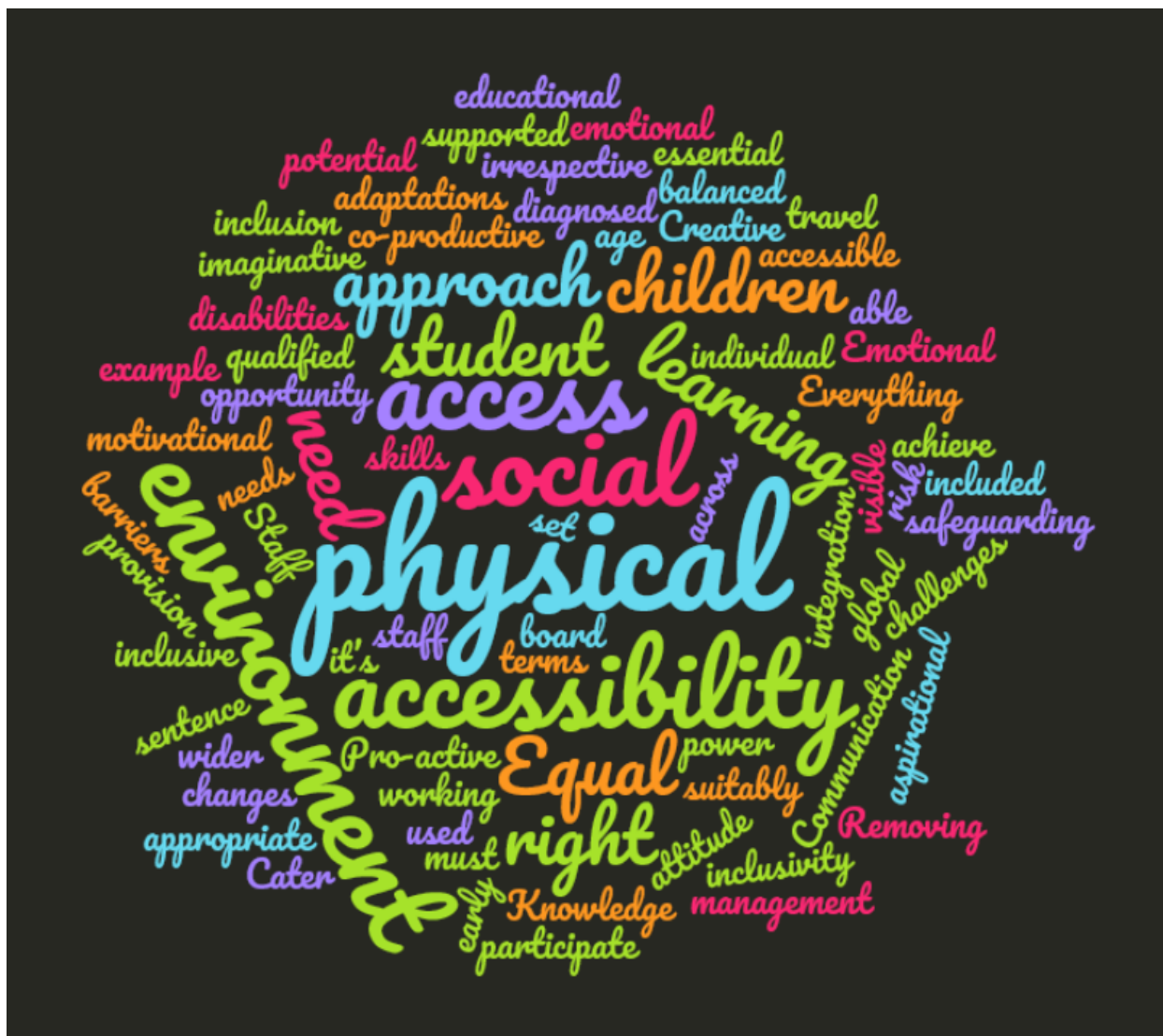
Monitoring and Accountability

Once approved, the recommendation will be that the implementation of this accessibility Strategy and the actions outlined within it will be managed by the NCC accessibility steering group and monitored by Newport City Council's Corporate Strategic Asset Management Group. An annual progress report will be provided to this group. Objectives included in the 2020 Strategic Equality Plan will also be subject to the governance of the Strategic Equality Group.

Appendix A.

NCC Accessibility Stakeholder Workshop;
Gavo HQ 25 June 2018

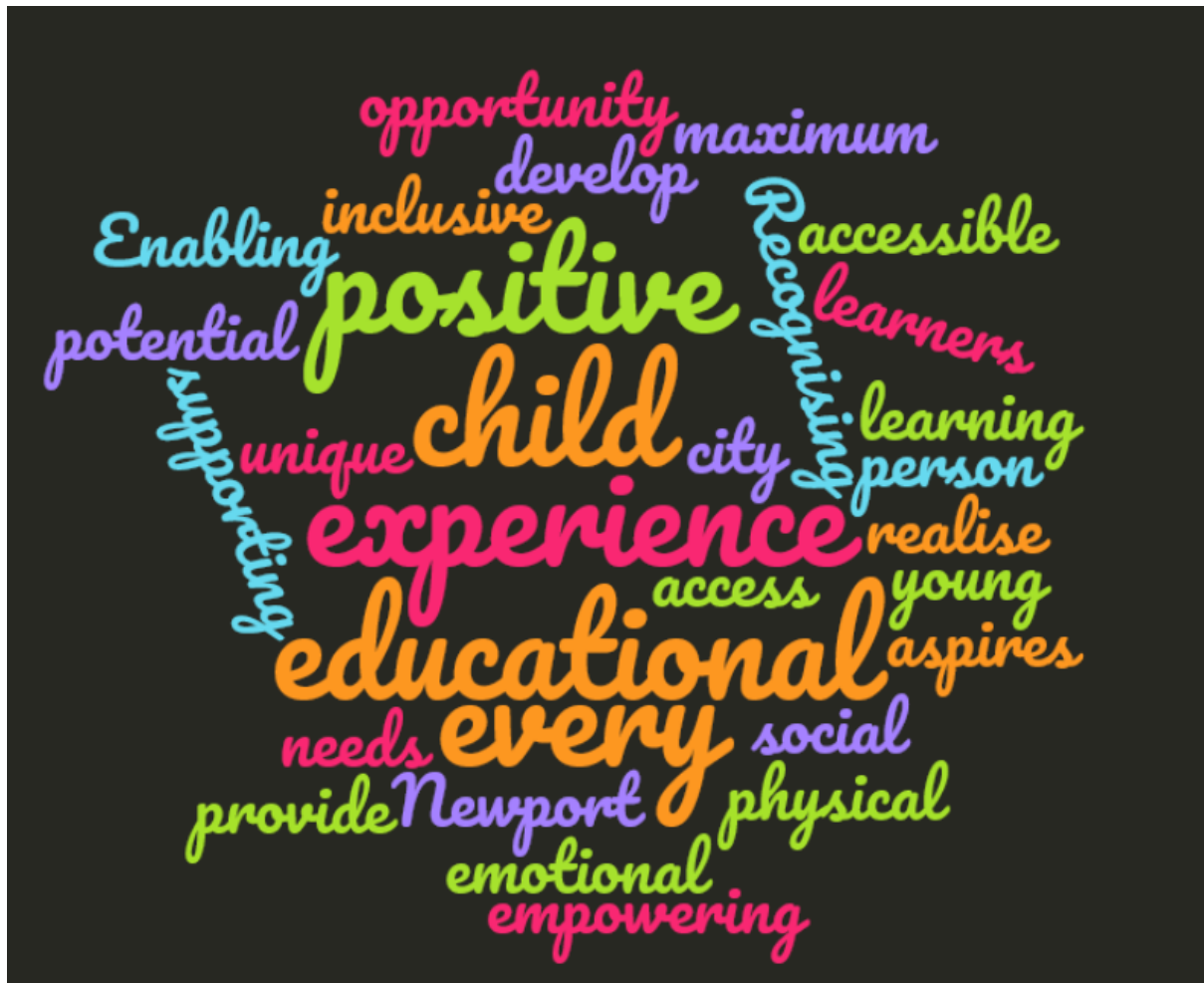
Activity 1: Definition



Activity 2: What's in a strategy?



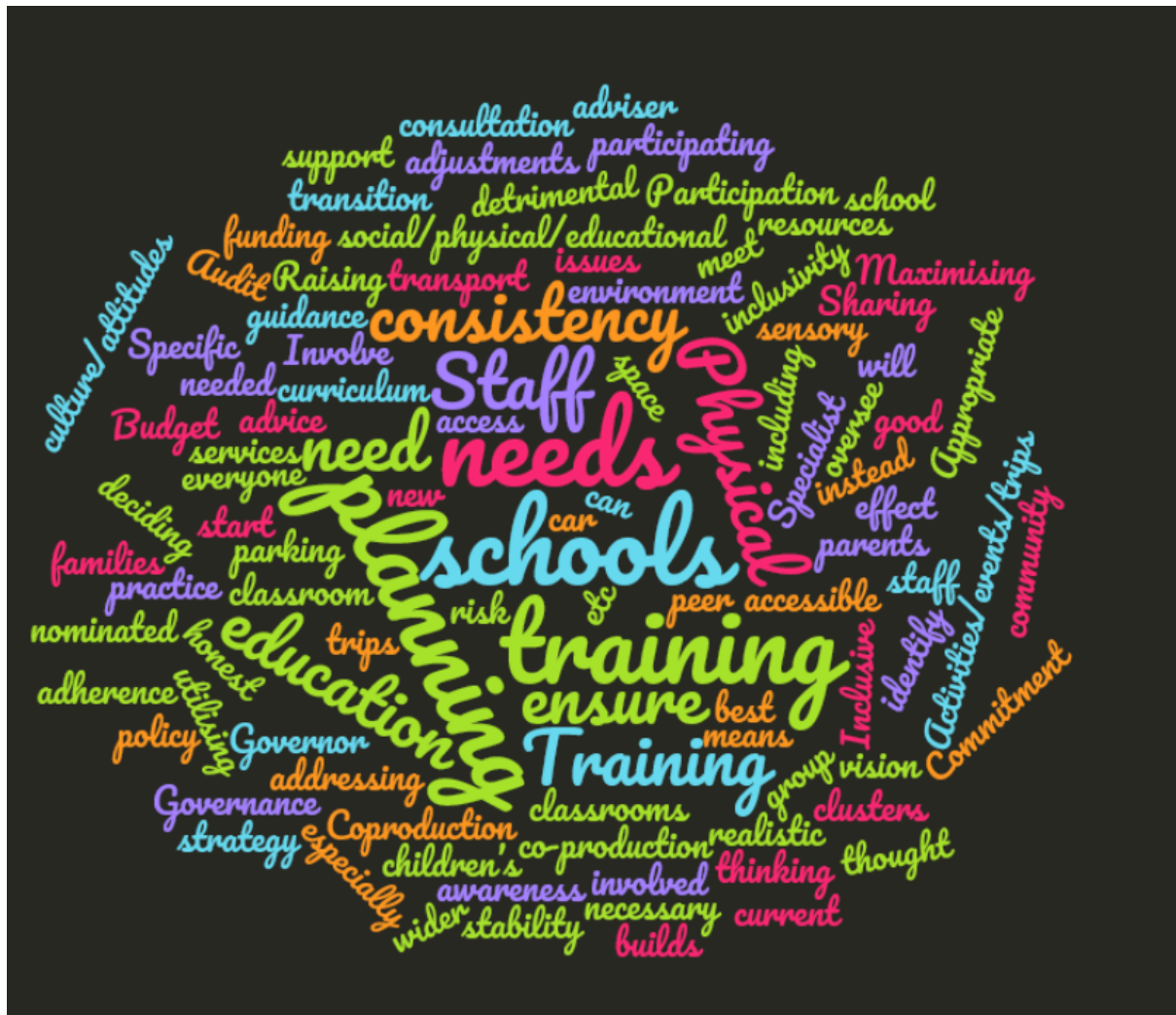
Activity 3.1: Vision



Activity 3.2: Values



Activity 4: Priorities



Appendix B – School accessibility plan template

Accessibility Plan

**INSERT
SCHOOL
LOGO**

School Name:	
Plan Date:	
Review Date:	
Approved by:	

Introduction/Aim of the Plan

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation¹ and requirements. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. This Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives, and will similarly be published on the school website².

Key Objective of the Plan

The purpose of the accessibility plan is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors with a disability. The plan is developed around three planning duties: Improving Access to the Curriculum; Improving the Physical Environment and Improving Communications. The plan also takes account of the need to involve pupils in making decisions which are likely to affect them.

Equality Act 2010 Statement

It's against the law for a school or other education provider to treat disabled students unfavourably. This includes:

- direct discrimination, for example refusing admission to a student because of disability
- indirect discrimination, for example only providing application forms in one format that may not be accessible
- discrimination arising from a disability, for example a disabled pupil is prevented from going outside at break time because it takes too long to get there
- harassment, for example a teacher shouts at a disabled student for not paying attention when the student's disability stops them from easily concentrating
- victimisation, for example suspending a disabled student because they've complained about harassment

Reasonable adjustments

Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which the school provides. Guidance for the practical implementation of this in schools can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission web site.³

Definition of a disability

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

¹ 2010 Equality Act – Schedule 10, Section 88

² [The Children's Commissioner for Wales](#) states School accessibility plans should also be made available online.

³ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/what_equality_law_means_for_you_as_an_education_provider_in_wales_schools.pdf

General provision

INSERT A STATEMENT ABOUT YOUR CURRENT GENERAL PROVISION ARRANGEMENTS HERE

e.g. The school endeavours to ensure that all pupils, including those with disabilities, are able to take part in all school activities; children with disabilities are always included in activities such as school assembly when wheelchair space, specially adapted chairs, digital microphones or individual support is provided.

Classrooms are organised and set out in order to ensure that pupils can move easily about the room and so that class activities are fully inclusive.

Access to the curriculum

INSERT YOUR CURRENT CURRICULAR AND EXTRA CURRICULAR PROVISION ARRANGEMENTS HERE

Consider, for example -

- The school employs when required, additional Teaching Assistants for children with disabilities.
- Provision and use of tools in design technology or cooking lessons.
- Planning trips and visits; PE and lunchtime arrangements.
- Staff training review and provision – what training is provided to all staff and what to specific staff working closely with pupils with needs

Building Access

INSERT YOUR CURRENT BUILDING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS HERE

Consider, for example –

Are doorways sufficient width for passage of wheelchairs; potential barriers identified and alternative routes adopted where appropriate? Any pathfinding aids.

Pay particular interest to communal areas; the hall and stage – are ramps required anywhere and if so are they provided? How are pupil needs taken into account for PE/ sports?

Communication and access to school information

INSERT CURRENT COMMUNICATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Consider, for example -

Provision of hearing loops to certain areas; provision of information, including newsletters in alternative formats, liaison with families and support workers prior to joining the school and before transition between year groups. Identification and notification of specific pupil

Pupil engagement and consultation

How does the school ensure that pupils are involved and consulted on matters and decisions which will affect them? E.g. school council and ballots.

Future Development and action plan

Curriculum and extra-curricular access

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
Support for pupils	Termly	Review TA support.	Initial	Initial	
Trips and visits inclusion					

Building Access (Physical Environment)

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
Improve access to the KS2 playground					
Improve layout/organisation of Y4 & Y5 classrooms					
Enable access to the stage					

Communication and access to school information

Strategy/Target	Timescale	Action	Who actions this?	Co-ordinator	Evaluation Review of Impact
School events/ newsletters		Ascertain the need among parents/carers whether information is required in alternative formats			
		Develop staff and pupil skills to ensure website contains relevant information and newsletters			
Annual report to parents		Ascertain the need among parents/carers whether information is required in alternative formats			
		Develop staff and pupil skills to ensure website contains relevant information and newsletters			
School notices		Teachers aware of which parents need verbal reminders Notices would be placed at wheelchair height where needed			

School map with accessibility points

**INSERT
SCHOOL
MAP**