

Accessibility Policy

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Introduction

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA).

It draws on the guidance set out in 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled students', issued by DfES in July 2002.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995:

"A person has a disability 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 carry out normal day to day activities."

Key Objectives of the Accessibility Plan

- a) to increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- b) to improve the physical environment of Thornden School to increase the extent to which disabled students, staff and visitors can take advantage of education and associated services;
- c) to improve communication to students and parents/carers.

Principles

- Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school's SEN policy;
- The school recognises its duty under the DDA (as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
 - Not to discriminate against disabled students in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - Not to treat disabled students less favourably
 - To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
 - To publish an Accessibility Plan

- The school recognises and values parents/carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

(General School Policy and SEN policy);

- The school provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students; and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum 2000 framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum.

(Curriculum Policy/Development Plan/SEN Policy);

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to students' diverse learning needs
- Consulting with appropriate support agencies and thus reducing potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

Activity

This section outlines the main activities which Thornden undertakes, and is planning to undertake, to achieve the key objectives (above).

a) Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum

We see this as covering not only teaching and learning but also the wider curriculum such as school clubs, leisure, sport and cultural activities and school visits.

- Year on year planning for a more inclusive curriculum;
- Changes to teaching and learning arrangements;
- Classroom organisation;
- Deployment of auxiliary aids and personnel;
- Information and training for staff.

b) Improving the physical environment of the school

We see this as attempting to 'increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services.

- Visual improvement
- Signs
- Improvements in the acoustic environment
- Furniture
- Disabled toilets/showers
- Ramps
- Disabled parking spaces
- Steps
- External hard surfaces

- Fire alarm procedures
- Lighting
- Room Access

The school will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of site and premises, such as improved lighting, acoustic treatment, colour schemes and more accessible facilities and fittings (*DfES Guidance 'Accessible Schools'*)

c) Provision of Information

The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the Local Authority for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested (*DfES Guidance 'Accessible Schools'*)

- Modified examination papers
- Modified resource and support material
- ICT facilities

Related Thornden Policies

This Plan will contribute to the review and revision of related school policies e.g.

- School Improvement Plan
- SEN policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Security Policy

Thornden Accessibility Plan: 2025-2028

Objective	Action(s)/Strategies	When	Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation
Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Regular review of curriculum to ensure full accessibility 	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Removal of barriers to learning and participation. 	SLT level - annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High expectations of all students 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Higher achievement by all. 	All staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introduction of specialist courses for targeted students (where appropriate). 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fewer disaffected and under-achieving students. 	As part of the Options programme, consider the needs of the year group.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Higher staffing to allow smaller classes in sets where students require support. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Students achieve target grades/levels. 	From 2024 new Year 7 students are not disapplied from MFL and receive 6-week targeted reading intervention.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Careful planning for rooming, seating and support (including equipment) to ensure disabilities are not a barrier to lesson access. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Classrooms optimally organised for disabled students. Class seating plans in all subjects. 	SLT/SEN/HOY to create bespoke timetables where appropriate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Classroom organisation (strategies to meet immediate short-term needs usually already in place – they have been applied before in similar cases) 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Students working at their own level and achieving their targets grades/levels 	All staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Personalised Learning & Assessment for Learning 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Placement is appropriate 	SENCO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Range of Learning and Teaching strategies facilitated by ICT ◆ Deployment of auxiliary aids and personnel (SEN department) 	Appropriate time		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information and training for staff (SEN department + outside agencies) ◆ Core department LSAs appointed, with specialist training. Training updated and provided on a need's basis <p>The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of Trust/LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts (DfE Guidance 'Accessible Schools')</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teachers and LSAs have the necessary training to teach and support current disabled students. 	SENCO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Core department LSAs appointed, with specialist training. Training updated and provided on a need's basis 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Additional support for disabled students. 	SENCO HODs - core subjects
Improving the physical environment of the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improvements in the acoustic environment ◆ Improvements in lighting in all classrooms (LED) ◆ Install handrails in key areas around the school (more than 2 steps) ◆ Further improvements to signs ◆ Yellow markings (paint) on all steps (look also at external step nosing's) 	Ongoing as rooms are refurbished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Refurbished classrooms more soundproofed ◆ Acoustic loop in new rooms 	Ongoing
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ All new classrooms and corridors fitted with LED lighting 	
		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Part of DDA program 	Regular site checks
		Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improved direction around site + disabled bays ◆ Annual painting of steps 	Anti-slip traffic paint

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ramps (additional permanent ramps were added to the area between Technology and Sports Hall, giving safer access around the school and into the Thornden Hall) ◆ Re-surfaced steps (fishpond courtyard) ◆ New parking spaces outside the school with two spaces for Thornden Hall as well. ◆ External hard surfaces (loose and broken paving slabs now being repaired as soon as they are reported – skilled handyman employed to carry out Health and Safety repairs on a daily basis) ◆ Toilet suites have all got open doorways to enable wheelchair access and disabled toilets facilities that meet DDA requirements. ◆ Improved external lighting on the site. ◆ An automatic door installed in Thornden Hall to improve access for visitors and students 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Safer and easier access for students around the school site. ◆ Wheelchair access – no barriers to access on ground floor ◆ Improved level surface (tarmac), giving better surface drainage and safe accessibility. ◆ Accessibility to the School & Thornden Hall ◆ Skilled handyman appointed ongoing ◆ Part of requirements of the programme to install disabled facilities ◆ Lights installed in darker areas of the site for the evening events ◆ Door installed 	<p>Facilities Manager</p> <p>Facilities Manager</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Maintenance of 3 rise and fall sinks for use in Science and food technology ◆ Update to Thornden Hall to meet all DDA requirements <p>The school will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of site and premises, such as improved lighting, acoustic treatment, colour schemes and more accessible facilities and fittings. (DfE Guidance 'Accessible Schools'.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Appropriate sinks available for use by students and visitors ◆ All DDA requirements met and planned for in advance 	Thornden Hall Manager
Provision of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Examination papers – GCSE are modified ◆ Resource material is modified ◆ Liaison and planning with all appropriate stakeholders working to support the physical and/or mental health needs and disabilities of students. ◆ Information for visitors with disabilities in writing on arrival 	<p>Each year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Good links between exams officer and SENCO (Senior LSAs) ◆ Staff are following advice and students are receiving modified material ◆ Effective exchange of information ◆ Clear information including disabled parking availability, accessible 	<p>Exams Officer + SENCO</p> <p>SENCO / DSL</p> <p>Receptionist</p>

	◆ Install some visual fire alarms (i.e. in areas where others may not be present)	Ongoing	WC provision, a portable induction loop, etc. i.e. toilets	Facilities Manager
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