



# Accessibility Plan & Audit

**Ponteland High School**  
2024 - 2027

## 1. Aims

The aims of this Accessibility Plan are to ensure that Ponteland High School continues to work towards improving the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the school.

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant actions to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Our school aims to treat all its students fairly and with dignity, courtesy and respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students without discrimination of any kind.

Ponteland High School is committed to a fair and equal treatment of all individuals; able bodied or disabled. We are committed to improving access to the physical environment, to the curriculum and to the provision of information in order to ensure access for all. Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan. We work closely with the sensory support service to ensure that we are informed of any difficulties that students with VI or HI have in accessing the school site or curriculum.

Our school's complaints procedure sets out the process for raising any concerns relating to accessibility in school.

We have considered the views of a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including students, parents/carers, staff and governors of the school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas that were not previously covered. Schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that all children can access their facilities and services. The term 'reasonable' is not explicitly defined in the Act, which leaves it up to the discretion of the school to determine this. Some (but not all) of the factors that may influence a decision are:

- Financial resources of the school
- Cost of the aid or service
- Effectiveness of the aid
- Effect on other pupils
- Health and safety requirements
- Provisions already made by the SEN Framework

This document meets the requirements of [schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010](#).

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled 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 undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled student faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

### 3. School aspects

All schools must also publish at least one specific and measurable equality objective. This or these must represent the equality challenges a school recognises a need to tackle. These objectives are set to cover each 4-year reporting cycle of the duty. The current cycle began on 1 September 2022 and objectives should last to September 2026. A school should report annually on progress towards meeting the objectives.

#### Current good practice

As part of transition procedures, we work with parents and feeder schools to clarify disability or health conditions. Where these are identified follow up meetings take place between parents/students and our SENDCo. Data is constantly reviewed with parents/carers of pupils on roll to ensure our records are accurate and amended promptly if required.

## Enrichment

All pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a range of curricular and extracurricular activities where appropriate. Some aspects of extra-curricular activities may present particular challenges, for example:

- after-school clubs for pupils with physical impairments or use bus transport
- school trips for pupils with medical needs and/or low income However, adjustments are made to allow participation where practicable.

## Physical Environment

We moved into state-of-the-art facility in November 2020 with all of the benefits of a modern school building. It is a 3-storey building within a combined complex including a primary school and public leisure centre.

The site and building are easily accessed by car, bus or walking. There is substantial car parking on site with a number of dedicated disabled bays close to the building entrance. Disabled and wheelchair access to the building is excellent with a number of ground floor access points and no stairs to navigate. All entry points have double doors for ease of access. Within the building disabled students have the use of lifts to access the first and second floors. We have dedicated accessible toilets on every floor; each student toilet area is open plan and has at least one cubicle that can accommodate a wheelchair.

The main reception area is secure. It benefits from access to an interview room for parents/staff to meet and an accessible toilet. It has a low reception hatch, which is fully accessible to wheelchair users.

All faculty areas are accessible for all students to enable full access to the curriculum. Clear signage is in place in corridors and at stair cases. Room numbering is clearly displayed on doors and vision panels, and easy to follow, i.e. G for Ground floor, F for First floor and S for second floor. The library area is located on the first floor. It is an open plan design with multiple entry/access points. Book cases are located around the perimeter of the library with all shelving at wheelchair accessible height.

There is a personal evacuation plan in place for individuals requiring them in the event of a fire/for drill.

## Curriculum

Reasonable adjustments can be made to allow access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability. This includes adjustable work areas in science and technology classrooms, which are located on the ground floor. In addition, we will look at utilising other support mechanisms such as access to IT, adaptations to delivery and access to assessment aids such as a reader/scribe. The level of adjustments required to support access to the curriculum will be discussed with parents, student and pastoral/SEND teams supporting the student.

## Information

The majority of information is directed home via email, therefore it may be necessary that different forms of communication are made available to enable all SEND pupils and their parents/carers access the information in a format appropriate to them. This will be discussed with all parties involved.

## 4. Action plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 so that the protected characteristics of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation are not barriers to participation and achievement. We also acknowledge that whilst financial disadvantage is not a legally protected characteristic, it is an aspect that can place limitations on participation and achievement.

Protected characteristic	Aim	Current position (benchmark)	Objectives	Actions to be taken/timescale	Staff	Evidence of success
<b>Sex</b>	Ensure equal access to opportunities for both boys and girls Increase awareness of equality rights linked to sex	Female 49.2% Male 50.8%	1. Ensure that the curriculum and extracurricular programme are available to all. 2. Ensure that the PD programme provides all students with a strong understanding of the RSHE programme.	1. Ensure all curriculum and extracurricular activities are available to all and not limited to a single sex. 2. Include equality act, British Values and Protected Characteristics as objective for tracking of assembly sessions.	JGR JGR	1. Males and females equally represented in a range of subjects and activities 2. Positive student engagement in RSHE lessons
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	Ensure equal access to opportunities for all students regardless of religion or belief Increase awareness of equality rights linked to religion or belief	43% Christian 43% No Religion 8% Other 3% Muslim 1% Hindu, Sikh, Roman Catholic	3. Ensure that the assembly programme informs students about British Values and Protected Characteristics 4. Ensure our pastoral system is supportive of all students regardless of characteristic.	3. Develop and continually review assembly programme to address issues related to sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief and race. 4. Refine RSHE curriculum each year in light of government changes.	JGR JGR	3. Positive feedback from staff/students following RSE sessions 4. Students able to explain concepts such as protected characteristics within student voice sessions.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Ensure equal access to opportunities for all students regardless of sexual orientation Increase awareness of equality rights linked to sexual orientation	Very small number of transgender students, i.e. 1 Very small number of children who identify as non-binary, i.e. 1	5. Ensure the Staff Code of Conduct is updated and shared with staff at the academic year and places respect for all at the heart of expectations of conduct.	5. Review, update and distribute the Staff Code of Conduct (annually). 6. Ensure training of pastoral staff includes awareness of contextual issues linked to protected characteristics.	JGR SMC WCA	5. No evidence of sexist, racist, homophobic, and/or anti-religion / belief behaviours within school, i.e. no 'on tow' or exclusions
<b>Race</b>	Ensure equal access to opportunities for all students regardless of race. Increase awareness of equality rights linked to race.	85% of our students are White British. We have a mix of other races represented in school.				

Disability	Ensure high quality access to the curriculum to all students regardless of disability.	<p>Our school offers a differentiated curriculum for all students</p> <p>We use resources tailored to the needs of students who require support to access the curriculum.</p> <p>Curriculum progress is tracked for all students, including those with a disability</p> <p>Targets are set effectively and are appropriate for students with additional needs The curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all students</p>	1. Ensure high quality teaching through training benefits all students but especially those with additional needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inclusion of evidence informed teaching strategies for all students including those with SEND as part of whole school training programme</li> <li>2. Building staff knowledge, understanding and skill in supporting needs prevalent in school through CPD sessions, communication such as screencast videos and training briefings.</li> <li>3. Training appropriate to specific needs delivered to key staff groups.</li> <li>4. Student voice feedback sought on classroom and extracurricular experiences.</li> </ol>	LRO / RSP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased access to the curriculum.</li> <li>2. Needs of all students met.</li> </ol>
			2. Ensure access to specialised equipment benefits individual students to access material.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of student needs to indicate where the use of technology can overcome barriers (e.g. enlarging text).</li> <li>2. Use of colour schemes and overlays to support the needs to students.</li> </ol>	LRO / PRB	
			3. Ensure appropriate communication methods are used to communicate to students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Develop staff knowledge and understanding of the use of technology (Kami / Mote / Screen Readers) for identified students who experience dyslexia, or a visual or hearing impairment.</li> </ol>	LRO / PRB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observations will evidence staff confidence in providing information in a range of methods according to student need.</li> </ol>

	Maintain access to the physical environment to promote students of all backgrounds and needs making the most of the learning experiences available.	<p>The new school building has been built to accommodate the needs of all students including those with disabilities. This includes consideration given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking and access points</li> <li>• Wide corridors</li> <li>• Lift access to all floors</li> <li>• Science and DT classrooms on floor level</li> <li>• Adjustable work areas in science and DT classrooms</li> <li>• Clear signage throughout the building</li> <li>• Outside areas are easily accessible and are flat</li> <li>• Multiple accessibility toilets on every floor and changing facilities</li> <li>• One-way system for movement and staircases</li> </ul>	4. Ensure school arrangements are reinforced as planned to guarantee access to all areas for all students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out H&amp;S checks to ensure that current systems and arrangements are in place and working (half termly)</li> <li>2. Develop personal evacuation plans for identified vulnerable students for use if there is a fire alarm.</li> <li>3. Co-ordinate regular student feedback to ascertain if there are barriers to use of areas to the site.</li> </ol>	<p>DJA</p> <p>LRO</p> <p>LRO</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disabled students can easily navigate the school site</li> <li>2. The school is responsive to the outcomes of self-evaluation and student voice feedback to adapt provision promptly</li> </ol>
Financial Disadvantage	13.75 of our students are eligible for Pupil Premium	Please refer to our Pupil Premium report outlining our use of this funding				



## 5. Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every three years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be approved by the Ponteland High School Academy Committee.

## 6. 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 and disability policy

Item	Issue	G	A	R	Action Plan
1	Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?				The occupational therapists for each individual student with a disability have approved our furniture and equipment as suitable
2	Are pathways and routes logical and well signed?				
3	Do you have emergency and evacuation procedures for specific students with a disability?				Yes, we have personal evacuation procedures in place for all vulnerable students with a disability currently at the school and have been updated for the new school
4	Is appropriate furniture and equipment provided to meet the needs of individual students?				Yes – laptops are provided where necessary, as well as height adjusting furniture in science and technology classrooms.
5	Do furniture layouts allow easy movement for students with disabilities?				Seating plans are used to ensure that students with disabilities are seated appropriately. Redesign of the IT curriculum area has improved access to facilities for students.
6	Are quiet rooms/ calming rooms available to children who need this facility?				Yes; The Base

7	Are car park spaces reserved for disabled people near the main entrance?			Yes. There are multiple accessible parking bays located close to the main reception and student access
8	Are there barriers to easy movement around the site and to the main entrance?			No
9	Are steps needed for access to the main entrance?	Not applicable		No
10	Do all those steps have a contrasting colour edging?	Not applicable		Yes
11	If there are steps, is a ramp provide to access the main entrance?	Not applicable		Yes
12	Is there a continuous handrail on each ramp and stair flight and landing to the main entrance?			Yes
13	Is it possible for a wheelchair user to get through the principal door unaided?			Yes
14	If no is an alternative wheelchair accessible entrance provided?	Not applicable		
15	If there is a lobby at the principal entrance, is it possible for a wheelchair user to negotiate the doors?			Weight of the doors may mean some would require assistance to keep the doors open.
16	Do all internal doors allow a wheelchair user to get through unaided?			No, the majority of doors require assistance to open however there is electronic door access to the main building for students
17	Do all corridors have a clear unobstructed width of 1.2m?			Yes
18	Does each block have a wheelchair accessible toilet?			Yes

19	Does the relevant block have accessible changing rooms/shower facilities?			Yes
20	If the block is on more than one level, do the internal steps/ stairs have contrast colour edgings?			Yes
21	Is there a continuous handrail on each internal stair flight and landing?			Yes
22	Do the blocks have a lift that can be used by wheelchair users?			Yes
23	Do you have any sort of mechanical means provided to move between floors? If, yes please state.			A lift.
24	Is it possible for a wheelchair user to use all the fire exits from areas to which they have access?			
25	Are non-visual guides used to assist people to use the buildings?			No, this is something that we do not currently have the need for
26	Could any of the décor be confusing or disorientating for students with disabilities?			No
27	Is a hearing induction loop available (either fixed or portable) in the school?			Where necessary portable hearing support devices are provided as according to student need.
28	Do emergency alarm systems cater for those with hearing impairment? (e.g. flashing light)			For the majority of students audible warning systems are fine. For HI students there is no flashing light fitted to the school's alarm system, however, there are clear electronic signs for students to follow. These students would also have a Personal Evacuation Plan