



STOCKPORT SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

This document focuses mainly on accessibility for people with disabilities; however, the principles in the Equality Act 2010 as outlined below would also be relevant for all characteristics defined as protected characteristics in the Act (race, gender, religion, maternity, gender reassignment and sexual orientation).

Stockport School is a popular mainstream local authority school. It is accessible for students with physical disabilities, and is almost completely accessible for those in wheelchairs. It has no specialist provision, but makes provision for students with SEN and disabilities in accordance with Stockport Local Authority's ethos that schools are as inclusive as possible, and that students with special educational needs and disabilities should be supported to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Who does the Accessibility Strategy affect and why does it exist?

This plan outlines the proposals of the governing body of Stockport School to increase access for people with disabilities in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act's principles recognise that avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports the agenda of improving attainment and progression for all. Good education and skills are crucial for opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life. The school has a duty under the Equality Act as a provider of education and services to students and their families to ensure that it promotes positive attitudes and access for people with disabilities; it also has a duty as an employer in the public sector to do the same. It will carry out this function by ensuring that discrimination does not take place (either directly, indirectly, for reasons arising from disability, by association or by failure to make reasonable adjustments) and ensuring that people with disabilities are not harassed or victimised because of their disabilities or associated issues.

The Act contains provisions which enable schools to take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular pupil group, provided certain conditions are met. These are known as the positive action provisions and allow schools to take proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.

Positive action is intended to be a measure that will allow schools to provide additional benefits to some pupils to address disadvantage. It is never unlawful to treat disabled pupils (or applicants) more favourably than non-disabled students (or applicants). That is, a school is permitted to positively discriminate in favour of disabled students (or applicants).

The Equality Act states that schools and other public sector employers and providers of education must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who have particular protected characteristics and those who do not.

What are the school's aims for improving accessibility for all stakeholders at Stockport School?

The governing body recognises the need to ensure that students can access their school fully and reach the full potential and support that the school will ensure this by:

- Aim 1. Increasing the extent to which students with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum and attain success in line with their ability, making reasonable adjustments to ensure that this happens;
- Aim 2. Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Aim 3. Improving information delivery to students with disabilities.

The governing body recognises the need to ensure access to the school, information and events for parents, carers and other family members with disabilities and will:

1. Ensure that information is clear, timely and accessible for all and use creative means of contacting family members to pass on or present information when necessary
2. Ensure that events are accessible, physically and cognitively, for family members
3. Ensure that family needs are taken into account when arranging meetings

The governing body also recognises its responsibilities towards employees with disabilities and will:

1. Monitor recruitment procedures to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities
2. Ensure that employees with disabilities are supported with special provision to ensure that they can carry out their work effectively without barriers.
3. Undertake reasonable adjustments to enable staff to access the workplace.

The plan will be resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised in consultation with the:

Parents of students

Employees

Governors

External partners

What is the current provision at Stockport School and what are the aims?

Aim 1. Increasing the extent to which students with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum and attain success in line with their ability;

Strengths:

- A. The school has an excellent track record with student attainment and progress for students with Education, Health and Care Plans. The progress of these students is often better than that of their peers without SEN.
- B. There are regular opportunities for staff training regarding students with disabilities and the school has a continued commitment to providing this. This training is responsive to staff need and student populations.
- C. Students who begin to under-achieve are regularly monitored by pastoral staff and the Senior Leadership Team, as well as the SENCO, SEN Team and Intervention Team, if appropriate.
- D. The school holds regular Pupil Progress meetings to discuss any student who might need extra support or different strategies to help them to be included and successful.
- E. The school plans trips and extra-curricular support carefully, including the daily Homework Club, providing TA support where there is entitlement and need.
- F. Regular reviews take place to monitor progress and plan appropriate intervention for all students, including those with disabilities. This might be a formal SEN review, if they have an EHCP, or a less formal review.
- G. Communication with parents and outside agencies is strong, enabling the school to plan to meet students' needs in partnership with others.

- H. New technologies, including the use of Firefly (online virtual learning environment), Reading pens, and other emerging technological products, are used creatively to ensure that students can access the curriculum with increasing enthusiasm, competence and independence.
- I. The school has a strong screening programme to enable identification of students who require additional intervention or access arrangements for formal assessments. Access to assistance for formal examinations is well-planned.
- J. The school approaches GCSE options creatively, with adjusted options for students dependent on need, enabling students to be successful with their choices and allocation.
- K. The school creates Pupil Passports for students with SEN, created by the school SEN department, which are one-page profiles containing needs, strengths, targets and how students can be best supported. This makes them accessible and more likely to be acted upon.
- L. Students with additional needs, especially those with EHCPs, benefit from excellent careers advice and support.

Areas to develop:

- A. The school is committed to providing regular CPD to develop staff ability to make excellent provision for students with disabilities; this commitment needs to continue, and to be responsive to staff development needs and needs of the students (responsible staff: Ilr, RCI, HMN).
- B. Increase investment in new technologies to ensure that they are widely available so that students become competent and confident with their usage, as well as ensuring that students are 'trained' in their usage (responsible staff: Ilr, KTa, JBo, HMN)
- C. Provision for students with disabilities without Education & Health Care Plans (usually on the School Support stage of the SEN register) is not as effective as for those with formal SEN provision, due to funding limitations, and data shows that School Support students do not make the same level of progress as that of their peers either with or without formal SEN provision. We need to continue to work with the Local Authority to obtain fair funding for the make-up of our student population to raise attainment of these students and ensure that we make reasonable adjustments within the resources of the school to ensure that provision is made wherever possible, as well as working proactively with the LA to ensure that students who need alternative placements receive these in a timely manner in a placement which meets their needs (responsible staff: Ilr, HMN, teaching staff, Local Authority).
- D. Linked to C), we recognise that excellent teaching is the key to enabling students to make excellent progress and that provision does not need to be limited to Teaching Assistant or external support. We therefore intend to continually reflect the need for effective differentiation as an integral teaching and learning principle in staff training sessions, external CPD training commissioning, lesson observation judgements and feedback and in whole-school/ departmental planning documents; this also needs to be a key principle in all ITT/ NQT training (responsible staff: BSc, RCI, MLT and SLT).
- E. To ensure that staff are making the best use of adult assistance provided to students with disabilities, the school needs to develop planning for the use of Teaching Assistants to support learning, and to monitor/ QA this effectively (responsible staff: HMN, SEN department, teaching staff).

- F. The teaching staff generally differentiate well, opening up the curriculum for all as a result. Line management and Teaching & Learning CPD must maintain a continued focus on the quality of differentiation and work on consistency across the school so that all students have fair access to the curriculum (responsible staff: BSc, RCI, SLT, MLT)
- G. Continue to work with hard-to-reach families to improve attendance through regular monitoring, contact and support, referring on when necessary and aiming to prevent small attendance drops from becoming problematic (responsible staff: Ilr, FSh, Heads of Year, Form Tutors).

Aim 2. Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can take advantage of education and associated services:

Strengths:

- A. Although the school is not barrier-free, it is accessible across the whole curriculum. The school has two disabled toilets, including one with changing facilities. The whole of the ground floor of the school has ramps. There is a lift in the main school building, giving access to ICT, Science and Art. The only building with no lift is the J Block, but this houses English upstairs and downstairs, so students in wheelchairs are taught English downstairs.
- B. Events, including evening events and trips, are planned carefully, with discussion and risk assessments taking place to ensure effective and safe access.
- C. Anti-bullying events are a strong and regular theme of the school's pastoral curriculum, highlighting the need for positive and supportive behaviour in the school. Students with clear physical disabilities are treated respectfully by staff and students.
- D. The school plans trips and extra-curricular support carefully, including the daily Homework Club, providing TA support where there is entitlement and need.
- E. The support for Young Carers, who may care for family members with disabilities, is excellent.
- F. Student voice and leadership is a strong feature of the school, enabling students to play an active part in shaping the school and their role within it.
- G. Arts events, sport and other extra-curricular activities are inclusive and supported.
- H. The SEAL programme, form time, assemblies, self-esteem days and other such activities create a generally respectful and supportive environment.

Areas to develop:

- A. The lift does not always work effectively and this hampers the school's ability to provide accessible teaching across the whole curriculum as all of the school's Science and Art classrooms are upstairs. This situation needs rectifying; the lift installed by the LA was a lift meant for internal building areas, but was located on an outside wall, so is affected by temperature; future building works must take this into account and rectify the situation (responsible staff: Ilr, Site Team and Local Authority).
- B. Fire evacuation procedures for staff and students with physical disabilities need to continue to be clearly communicated to staff, parents and students (responsible staff: HMN, Site Team).
- C. Although all classrooms are accessible, desks are not always appropriate heights for wheelchair users; LA funding is available for this and teaching staff must alert site staff when a change is required (responsible staff: Ilr, KTa, Site Team, Teaching Staff).

Aim 3. Improving information delivery to students with disabilities.

Strengths:

- A. The school considers the needs and requirements of students of all abilities and with varying needs when communicating information, both verbally and in writing. Great care is taken in planning lessons, assessments and exams, with planning containing such fine detail as paper colour and font size for students with specific needs. Verbal communication is also considered carefully for students with specific needs and disabilities; important information will be delivered as appropriate on a differentiated basis when necessary.
- B. The school encourages the use of student voice activities to improve staff knowledge of student view and acting on them when required.
- C. Effective access arrangements allow for effective access in examination situations; use of technologies such as reading pens and ClaroRead will open this up further in classroom settings.
- D. The Careers and Options packages are carefully planned to ensure that information is delivered effectively to students, parents and carers.
- E. Firefly, the school newsletter and SchoolComms are used to communicate effectively with students, staff and parents.
- F. Parents' Evenings are key events, with all students and parents encouraged to attend, with phone calls to individual families when needed.
- G. The Leading Parent Partnership Award project includes outreach work, communication with parents and parents' workshops.

Areas to develop:

- A. The teaching staff generally differentiate well, opening up the curriculum for all as a result. Line management and Teaching & Learning CPD must maintain a continued focus on the quality of differentiation and work on consistency across the school so that all students have fair access to the curriculum (responsible staff: BSc, RCI, SLT, MLT)
- B. Increase investment in new technologies such as the Reading Pens to ensure that they are widely available so that students become competent and confident with their usage, as well as ensuring that students are 'trained' in their usage (responsible staff: Ilr, KTa, JBo, HMN)
- C. Remembering that parents often receive information that they are expected to communicate to their children, the school needs to ensure that all written communication sent to parents is accurate, readable and accessible. This should include being aware of reading age of documents that are sent out (using the Microsoft Word tool and aiming for a reading age of no more than 11 or 12 years of age) and ensuring that documents are concise enough to be accessed easily. This will ensure that students are able to gain information from their parents, regardless of the parents' literacy level (responsible staff: Ilr, KHi, RHo, SLT, MLT, teaching staff).

Local Offer – Stockport School

How can my child get a place at Stockport School?

Admissions for children without a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan are overseen by Stockport Council's school admissions team. More information can be found at:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/education/educationtrainingandemployment/schooladmissions/applyingforaplace/> .

If your child has a Statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care Plan, the admissions procedure is different and is overseen by Stockport Council's SEN Team. They can be contacted through their website at:

<http://www.stockportcypdisp.org.uk/ourservices/sen/> .

Before requesting that the school is named on your child's Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan, it is advised that you contact Mrs H McNicholls, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, to look round the school and discuss its suitability for your child. Our phone number is 0161 483 3622.

What are special educational needs?

Special educational needs (SEN) are where a child has needs that are different from the majority of children of their age, that mean they need adjustments made to the way that they are taught.

There are four main categories of special educational needs:

Communication and interaction
Sensory and physical
Cognition and learning
Social, mental and emotional health

Children may have needs in more than one category.

What should I do if I have concerns about my child?

Your first point of contact with any concerns about your child should be your child's form tutor, Pastoral Manager or Director of Progress. If you have specific concerns that are or may be related to SEN, your first point of contact should be Mrs H McNicholls, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

The SENCO's role is to oversee and arrange the support for all students with SEN and to make sure that you are involved and informed about how your child is doing. In the first instance, it is the SENCO's role to arrange assessment of your child's needs if appropriate.

If you have concerns about your child that relate to a specific subject area, you may wish to contact the Director of Study for that specific subject.

How does the school identify if a child has SEN?

Before children arrive at the school, the pastoral team, a member of the SEN Leadership team, meet with staff at local primary schools. Children with specific needs are discussed at those meetings, in preparation for their arrival at the school. We therefore have a good awareness of students who are already presenting with specific needs.

Also, when students arrive at the school, we do various screening tests, including reading/ spelling tests. This helps us to spot any potential problems quickly and allows us to do further tests if necessary. Once students are in the school, our specialist staff, including those from the Learning Support Service, are able to test students with a wide range of tests that assess a range of skills.

At any time of a child's school career, parents, teachers or others may raise concerns about a child that call for consideration of a child's needs. We are able to call on a wide range of services, including the Educational Psychology Service, HYMS (Healthy Young Minds), Sensory Support Service, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Service, Autism Team, Inclusion Team and others. Some of these services offer direct support or advice and can help to identify children's needs.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, you should initially speak to your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. They will gather information from your child's subject teachers and invite you to a meeting to discuss the feedback received and to plan a way forward.

If, following further monitoring and any intervention resulting from the meeting above, your child is still not making progress, a referral will be made to the SENCO and further assessments will be carried out. Again, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss the findings of these assessments and to plan to next steps.

What support can the school offer for children's overall social, emotional and mental health/wellbeing?

The school has strong behaviour, attendance and anti-bullying policies. The school offers support to students who experience any personal difficulties and takes action against students who bully others or who misbehave. The school is pro-active in seeking appropriate support for students who are vulnerable or who have difficulty managing their emotions in school. This can include seeking a change of placement where we feel it is in the child's best interests.

The school has a strong pastoral system, with a variety of staff whose core role is to monitor and support students' wellbeing.

The school also has access to a local counselling service and other external specialists.

How would the school identify if a student should be put forward for a formal assessment of SEN, to consider whether an Education, Health and Care Plan is appropriate?

A student would normally (though not always) have already been identified as having SEN (and be considered to be part of the School Support category) before this stage would be considered. A decision to apply for an EHC Plan assessment would usually be discussed with parents or carers and, if parents/ carers intended to apply for an assessment themselves, we would hope that this would be discussed with the school before parents did so.

The school/parent can request that the Local Authority carry out a Statutory Assessment of your child's needs. This is a legal process and you can find more details of this in the Stockport Local Offer.

After the request has been sent to the Local Authority (with a lot of information about your child, including some from you), they will decide whether they think your child's needs (as described in the paper work provided), seem to be of a level that needs a Statutory Assessment.

If this is the case, they will ask you and all professionals involved with your child to write a report outlining your child's needs. If they do not think your child needs this, they will ask the school to continue with the support at **'SEN Support'**.

After the reports have all been sent in, the Local Authority (LA) will decide if your child's needs are likely to be severe enough to require a formal assessment and high level of support. If this is the case, they will write an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If this is not the case, they will ask the school to continue with support at **'SEN Support'** and also set up a meeting in school to make sure that a plan is in place to ensure your child makes as much progress as possible.

If an EHCP is issued, this will outline the number of hours of individual/ small group support your child will receive from the LA and how the support should be used and what strategies must be put in place. It will also have long and short-term goals for your child.

How does the school make sure that staff have received appropriate training on SEN?

The school regularly updates staff on children's individual needs and provides training where necessary. Staff also have access to external specialist training.

The school also has a number of staff with specialist expertise in various areas of SEN. A number of staff are qualified to assess for examination access arrangements and we have two SEN specialist teachers employed by the school.

How does the school make sure that staff are aware of individuals' SEN?

The school creates an SEN register, which contains details of students' needs and summarises strategies, based on students' Statements or IEPs. The school also produces Individual Passports, a one-page document that summarises students' strengths, difficulties, strategies to use, cognitive abilities and how the student/parents will contribute to the student's progress. If a child is diagnosed during the school year, SEN updates are regularly emailed to staff.

How does the school differentiate teaching approaches for children with SEN?

The school believes, based on educational research, that high-quality teaching for all students is the key to progress and success. As a result, much of our internal training and quality assurance procedures focus on developing the quality of teaching for all students. High-quality teaching means that all individuals are able to access the work and make progress; it is the responsibility of each teacher, with the help of the SEN Department where possible and appropriate, to make sure that this is possible.

In some cases, differentiation of the curriculum will occur. For example, a student with specific literacy needs may be disapplied from the school's usual curriculum pathways by taking one fewer GCSE than other students to give them extra time to focus on developing their literacy skills. Another example would be if a student needed time during the school week for a particular therapy: the school would adapt the timetable to make sure that this was possible.

Arrangements for exams, both internal and external, are differentiated by need. If a student is considered to possibly be eligible for extra time, rest breaks, a reader or a scribe, the school will assess their eligibility and, if appropriate, put these arrangements in place.

In some cases, teachers will need to adapt their teaching or resources to meet students' needs and would be directed to do so by the SEN Department when necessary.

Types of support available in the school (please note that much of this support is usually only provided for students with Statements or EHC Plans where this support is specified within that document; some of it is provided by external agencies, within school hours/ locations):

- Individual support from a teaching assistant (in lessons and/ or at social times)
- Shared support from a teaching assistant
- Mentoring
- Anger management sessions
- Counselling
- Speech and language therapy

Physiotherapy

There are also sources of support that all students, regardless of need, can access. This includes pastoral support from their Form Tutor or Pastoral Manager, and support with homework from Homework Club staff.

How would a child's progress towards their goals, targets or outcomes be reviewed?

Students with an Education Health Care Plan will have an Annual Review. This will take place once the SENCO has gathered the views of each teacher of the student, and the Review will also take account of the student's views, the parents' views and the views of any external agencies involved in the student's case.

The Review will consider the extent to which the student has achieved the outcomes in the EHC Plan, and whether further action is necessary. Further action may include setting new targets, discontinuing the EHC Plan (if sufficient progress has been made or if all outcomes have been achieved) or considering whether further support is necessary.

Recommendations will be made by the school in the Review report, and the Local Authority will consider the recommendations when deciding what action to take.

How can parents or carers work together with the school to support the child in making progress, and how will a parent know if a child stops making progress?

The school sees working in partnership with parents and carers as the key factor in students' progress. This is especially true for a child with SEN, as they need extra support.

The school tries to communicate regularly and clearly with parents about how students are doing in school. This includes regular written reporting on what levels/ grades students are achieving, how close these levels/ grades are to the individual's targets and Attitude to Learning (ATL) scores. All of this is colour-coded, for ease of understanding.

Parents are also invited to an annual Parents' Evening. This involves an individual conversation with each subject teacher and/ or the SENCO.

These aspects of the school's organisation should quickly identify where a student is falling behind their potential, or where extra help is needed.

The school also offers various information/ support events for parents, especially in Years 10 and 11, where we share ideas about how you can support your child in preparation for GCSEs.

If your child has SEN, we would like you to talk to your child's teachers, Form Tutor and Pastoral Manager if there are any problems so we know what they are doing at home and we can tell you about what we are doing in school. We hope this will make sure that we are doing similar things to support your child both at home and in school and can share what is working in both places.

The SENCO is available to meet with you to discuss your child's progress or any concerns/worries you may have. All information from professionals will be discussed with you directly, or where this is not possible, in a report. The SENCO will arrange to meet with you for Annual Review meetings and is also available at all Parents' Evenings.

Parents can also get involved with shaping general school policy by attending our termly Parents' Forum meetings or by responding to parent surveys.

How can young people be involved in shaping the plans for supporting them

All students will be invited to their Annual Reviews and their views will be considered throughout. They will be supported to contribute their views.

Additionally, students' views will be considered outside the formal Review scenario. Parents will often be the first people that a child will talk to if they are unhappy with their support or feel that they need more. Parents will often then bring the issue to the attention of the SENCO, and the matter can then be discussed with the student and/ or parents.

In a more general sense, students can join the School Council to help shape the direction of the school.

How will the school support students at key transition points?

The school offers extra visits, often assisted by external agencies, for students in Year 6 who intend to attend the school in Year 7. This often reduces anxiety about the move. For students with Education Health and Care Plans, the SENCO will attend the Y5 Transition Review at your child's primary school if she is available. The school will also attend the Year 6 Annual Reviews of some students who intend to attend the school, to assist in making transition as easy as possible for vulnerable students.

When students begin their transition to Key Stage 4 (Y10-11), the school will make sure that planning for Key Stage 5 or life beyond school begins. This includes arranging access to high-quality careers advice, to make sure that students are on an aspirational but realistic path.

If your child has an EHCP, they will meet with the Young Person's Advisor from Year 9 onwards. They will work with the student and parents/carers to create a plan for their Post-16/Post 18 education.

During the Y10 Work Experience programme, students with SEN are given extra support, if necessary, before, during and after their placements.

If your child does not have an EHCP, they will still meet with the Young Person's Advisor during KS4 to explore the opportunities available and to draw up an Action Plan. Further guidance and information on applications to College is given through the pastoral programme, during form-time.

How does the school make sure that students with SEN can access extra-curricular activities?

Students who are entitled to significant individual support during the school day may also be given support for extra-curricular activities. For example, some students with an EHC Plan, or who are entitled to Access Arrangements such as a reader or a scribe for formal assessments, who need adult support to attend Homework Club will be entitled to adult support, subject to agreement. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

How physically accessible is the school?

The school is accessible across the whole curriculum. The school has two disabled toilets, including one with changing facilities. The whole of the ground floor of the school has ramps. The school also has a lift in N Block.

How does the school manage the administering of medicines?

The first aid team can administer professionally-prescribed medications.

How is the school funded for its SEN spending?

The school's budget includes money for supporting students with SEN. The school also receives some 'top-up' funding for a few individual students with an EHCP that specifies a high level of support. The school has a high proportion of students with SEN and yet it receives much less funding than many other schools in Stockport, as Stockport LA gives schools in more deprived areas of Stockport more SEN money, regardless of whether they have more or less students with SEN than we do.

As a result, we have to be very careful with our SEN budget. This includes sharing support wherever possible. All students with an EHCP receive the support to which they are legally entitled. However, students without that entitlement will not be guaranteed a specific level of support.

The Headteacher decides on the budget for Special Educational Needs, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, SENCO, Business Manager and School Governors, on the basis of the needs in the school.

The Head Teacher and the SENCO discuss all the information they have about SEN in the school, including:

- the students already getting extra support
- the students needing extra support
- the students who have been identified as not making as much progress as would be expected

and decide what resources/training and support is needed.

How is the level and type of support that my child needs decided?

If your child has an EHC Plan, the level and type of support is decided by the Local Authority. If your child does not, the school will decide on the level of support that your child will receive, subject to budgetary restrictions. This decision will usually be made by the SENCO.

What should parents do if they disagree with a decision that has been made?

If the decision was made by the Local Authority, you will usually have a formal right of appeal, and the decision letter will give instructions about how to appeal.

If the decision was made by the school, Mrs H McNicholls, the SENCO, would be your first point of contact. If you still disagreed, you would then contact the Headteacher, Mr I Irwin. If you still disagreed, you would then contact Mr P Maloney, the Chair of the Governing Body.

Reviewed – October 2023- HMN - to be reviewed on an annual basis.