



OFG
Education



Options
Higford

Accessibility Policy and Plan

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APPENDIX 1 – ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1.0 Introduction

Options Higford School is an independent specialist day school for pupils aged 5 to 19 with autism and complex needs. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). We aim to remove barriers so pupils can access learning, participate in school life and achieve their potential.

This policy and plan explain how we improve access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information. Individual arrangements are informed by EHCPs, pupil and family views, professional advice and relevant assessments. Safety and safeguarding are considered throughout.

2.0 Definition of Disability

Under section 6 of the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if a physical or mental impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disabilities may be visible or non-visible. We consider each pupil's needs and the barriers they experience rather than relying on a diagnosis alone.

3.0 Key Principles

Our aim is to increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum, improve their access to the school environment and provide information in ways they can understand. This includes lessons, specialist spaces, play, educational visits, community learning and preparation for adulthood.

We plan reasonable adjustments around pupils' strengths, communication methods, sensory and physical needs, and EHCP outcomes. We seek pupil and family views when identifying barriers and reviewing the effectiveness of support.

Options Higford School will:

- Not discriminate against disabled pupils in admissions, education, exclusions or access to facilities and services.
- Make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.
- Provide a broad, balanced and personalised curriculum through the Engage, Explore, Apply and Future pathways.
- Respect pupils' and families' knowledge of their needs and their right to confidentiality.
- Maintain, implement and review the Accessibility Plan in Appendix 1.

The Headteacher oversees the policy and plan. The Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, operations and site lead, class teams and relevant clinical colleagues contribute to actions within their roles. Staff use agreed strategies, identify barriers and report concerns promptly. Leaders review progress against the plan each term and update it when pupil needs, provision or the site change.

5.0 Current Accessibility Status

The school considers access to entrances, routes, classrooms, toilets, specialist facilities, outdoor areas, dining spaces and emergency arrangements in relation to individual needs. This includes the library, immersion room, sensory room, soft play, indoor gym and MUGA. Where a barrier is identified, leaders consider suitable equipment, adjustments, alternative spaces or changes to arrangements.

The current site accessibility audit will establish verified physical access details and priorities. The school does not assume that every area meets every person's needs. Visitors may tell the school about access requirements before attending so suitable arrangements can be considered.

6.0 Curriculum

Teaching is adapted to pupils' communication, sensory, cognitive and physical needs across the four pathways. Staff use EHCP outcomes, assessment, pupil and family views, and specialist advice to plan learning and review progress. Adjustments may include visual timetables, symbols, objects of reference, signing, AAC, assistive technology, adapted resources, sensory strategies and personalised routines.

Educational visits, enrichment and community activities are planned so pupils can participate meaningfully and safely. Risk assessments consider transport, venue access, communication, sensory needs, personal care and staffing. Information for pupils and families is provided in an accessible format where needed, and staff check that important information has been understood.

This policy should be read alongside the school's SEND, Curriculum and Planning, Equality, Admissions, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Educational Visits policies and procedures.

Appendix 1 – Accessibility Plan 2026–27

Timescales: Short term = by December 2026; medium term = by April 2027; long term = by September 2027. Ongoing actions are reviewed each term. The final column is for dated progress and evidence.

Parent and pupil voice

Accessibility outcome	Action to ensure outcome	Who is responsible?	Timescale	Notes and progress
Pupils can contribute to decisions about learning and school life.	Gather views through speech, symbols, objects, AAC, supported choices or observation, as appropriate. Record at least one resulting action each term.	Deputy Headteacher, SENCo and class teams	Medium term; then termly	Record pupil voice, action and impact.
Families can identify barriers and understand the school's response.	Ask about access needs at admission and EHCP review. Log concerns raised during the year, agreed actions and responses.	SENCo and class teachers	Short term; ongoing	Review family feedback and action log termly.

Provision of information

Accessibility outcome	Action to ensure outcome	Who is responsible?	Timescale	Notes and progress
Pupils understand routines, choices and safety information.	Check individual communication profiles and use agreed visuals, objects, symbols, signing or AAC consistently. Review understanding when needs change.	Class teachers, support staff and speech and language therapist where involved	Short term; ongoing	Sample communication profiles and classroom practice.
Families can access essential school information.	Review key letters, parent information and website pages for clear language. Provide an alternative format or conversation when needed.	Headteacher, school office and SENCo	Medium term	Record revised information and requests met.

Inclusion in the school community

Accessibility outcome	Action to ensure outcome	Who is responsible?	Timescale	Notes and progress
Pupils can participate in visits, enrichment and whole-school activities.	Check transport, venue, communication, sensory needs, personal care and staffing when planning. Record adjustments and review participation afterwards.	Educational Visits Coordinator, class teachers and Deputy Headteacher	Short term; ongoing	Sample risk assessments and participation records.

Access to the physical environment

Accessibility outcome	Action to ensure outcome	Who is responsible?	Timescale	Notes and progress
Physical access barriers and priorities are accurately recorded.	Complete or refresh the site audit covering entrances, routes, toilets, specialist spaces, outdoor areas, signage and evacuation. Agree actions, owners and dates.	Headteacher, operations/site lead and SENCo	Short term	Attach dated audit and prioritised action log.
Shared and specialist spaces meet pupils' identified access needs.	Review movement, sensory load, equipment and transitions in the library, immersion room, sensory room, soft play, gym, MUGA and dining areas. Record individual adjustments.	Operations/site lead, class teams and occupational therapist where involved	Medium term	Record room checks, pupil feedback and adjustments.
Evacuation arrangements reflect current pupil needs.	Review individual mobility, communication, sensory and care support in emergencies. Brief relevant staff and update arrangements when needs or rooms change.	Headteacher, operations/site lead and class teachers	Short term; ongoing	Record individual plans where needed and staff briefings.

Access to curriculum

Accessibility outcome	Action to ensure outcome	Who is responsible?	Timescale	Notes and progress
Pupils participate meaningfully across all four pathways.	Sample planning and learning across Engage, Explore, Apply and Future. Check communication support, adaptations, staff roles and assessment against starting points and EHCP outcomes; revisit agreed actions.	Deputy Headteacher, SENCo and pathway/subject leads	Medium term; then termly	Use planning scrutiny, learning walks and Evidence for Learning.
Reading, phonics and communication learning is accessible at each pupil's level.	Review assessment information with communication profiles and adapt resources and staff guidance, including for pupils who do not use speech or conventional print.	Phonics lead, class teachers and SENCo	Medium term	Record resources, assessment and participation.

Legal reference: Equality Act 2010, section 6 and Schedule 10. Before approval, check physical access statements against Higford's current site audit and confirm the named role holders and dates.