



# Woods Primary School

## Accessibility Plan

2022 – 2023

*“Together We Learn Together We Achieve”*

Date of Plan: 12/4/2023

Date of Review: 12/4/2026

Prepared by: Canon B Paine  
K.White  
J. Milliken

Designation: Chairperson - Board of Governors  
Designation: Principal  
Designation: Vice Principal/SENCO

## **1. Introduction**

Woods Primary School welcomes the opportunity to build upon our current position and demonstrate how we intend within the given timeframe, to improve and increase the access to our school for both current and prospective pupils with a disability. This accessibility plan anticipates where possible the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs in the following three areas: the curriculum, physical environment and provision of information.

## **2. School profile**

Woods Primary School is in Ballyronan, Magherafelt. It is in a rural setting and has access to 2 bus routes.

At present, the school delivers a holistic and innovative educational experience to approximately 190 pupils who come from a diverse range of backgrounds. It caters for pupils of all abilities and has a dedicated SEN team who ensure that there is a continuum of provision offered by the school. It is also fully committed to providing high standards and access to a quality educational experience for pupils with a range of disabilities and to ensure that visitors can access our premises and avail of information as well.

## **3. Our Vision and Values**

At Woods Primary School we are committed to developing a caring, inclusive and safe environment, where each child reaches their full potential, regardless of ability and aptitude, to become a positive and confident contributor to society. We strive to achieve this by working in partnership with the child, their parents and the wider community, to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, truly reflecting our values.

Through our values of openness, respect for all, reflecting on our policies and practices including teaching and learning, taking responsibility for our actions and reaching for excellence in all that we do, Woods Primary School shows that it is fully committed to providing equal opportunities for participation in all aspects of school life for both pupils with a disability and non-disabled pupils.

This is reflected in our school vision, which is to inspire, support and challenge all our children and young people to be the best that they can be. Our school motto is, 'Together We Learn, Together We Achieve.'

Our school has established and continues to maintain strong partnership working with local cross-community initiatives and actively seeks training and shares examples of good practice and resources with other schools in the locality cluster, including St. Trea's Primary School.

#### **4. Background legislation**

At Woods Primary School, we work within the current legislation and requirements to carry out our duties to support both current and prospective pupils with a disability.

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), a pupil with a disability is considered to be a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Following the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, we endeavour to proactively avoid the potential for discrimination on the grounds of disability in our admission arrangements, education and associated services provided or offered and suspension and expulsion arrangements, by strategically planning to:

- not treat pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability (unless it can be shown that this is justified);
- make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing pupils with a disability at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled pupil; and
- increase the access for current and prospective pupils to all aspects of school life, education and the associated services we provide.

Since SENDO does not require us to either alter physical features or provide auxiliary aids or services, this accessibility plan should be viewed alongside our current Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy for those pupils with a disability who may require additional provision to be made to support their needs in line with the graduated approach as set out by the Code of Practice.

The SEN policy for Woods Primary School outlines the graduated approach in line with the Code of Practice and shows what additional provision we can offer to support pupils with SEN. The definition of SEN includes pupils with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the educational facilities generally provided for children of their age in ordinary schools, or they have not attained the lower limit of compulsory school age and is, or would be if special educational provision were not made for them, likely to fall within either of these positions when they are of compulsory school age.

It is important to remember that some children with a disability will have a special educational need and conversely, not all children with SEN will have a disability.

## **5. Accessibility Plan**

Under Article 18 of SENDO, the aim of the accessibility plan for Woods Primary School is to outline in writing how we will allocate adequate resources to, implement, review and revise the plan over a period of three years in order to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils within a reasonable timeframe, and in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents, of information which is usually provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

In carrying out these duties, we have taken into consideration the *'Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools'*, which was produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in 2006. We also draw upon guidance set out in the document *'Accessibility Planning: Information for Schools'*, which was issued by the Education Authority (2021).

It is anticipated that by making reasonable adjustments to overcome the barriers in each of the three planning areas identified above, that neither current nor prospective pupils who are disabled will be treated less favourably or placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils in accessing all aspects of school life.

## **6. Information Gathering**

The responsible body of Woods Primary School recognise the need to co-produce the accessibility plan. Pupils with a disability, their non-disabled peers, parents, and staff will all have unique knowledge and experiences of both the effect of the disability on the capacity to carry out normal, everyday activities as well as any barriers they may face such as attitudes, ability to navigate the environment and communication. Views are sought via surveys using questionnaires, pupil information books, review formats and discussion groups.

Data capture forms are used to collect information about pupils coming into our school and from their previous educational setting. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Parents are encouraged to make us aware of any changes to their child's disability. Arrangements are made to support pupils who wish to give their views.

Continuous assessment data including attendance and expulsion figures are also used to inform this plan.

Advice obtained and training delivered by the Middletown Centre for Autism, the Sensory Support Team and from across a range of the Education Authority's, Pupil Support Services have helped to prepare our plan. Some of the Services which have either been involved, are currently involved or may potentially be involved in supporting children within the school include:

- The Autism Advisory and Intervention Service
- Behaviour Support Service and Provisions
- Language and Communication Service
- SEN Inclusion (Learning and Medical Needs) Service.

Input and training regarding the implications and management of medical issues and disabilities within the school environment, provided by the Health and Social Care Trust has also contributed to the identification of reasonable adjustments across the three areas of the planning duty.

## **7. Current Position**

Although the intention of an accessibility plan is to identify a series of actions to increase access to our school for disabled pupils, the information gathered and access audit carried out by the responsible body, revealed examples of good practice in each area:

- Curriculum

Woods Primary School delivers the broad and balanced Northern Ireland Curriculum which aims to empower young people to develop their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

In recognition of SENDO, reasonable adjustments are made to differentiate the curriculum, considering the preferred teaching and learning styles of pupils across a range of disabilities. Specific access arrangements, adjustments for homework completion, gross and fine motor skill programmes and resources needed such as coloured overlays, pre-printed handouts with key vocabulary, sensory boxes, calm room and 'Movement Breaks', are all available to help a pupil access the curriculum.

Playground Pals support pupils in the playground at break and lunchtime and alternative playtime arrangements are available for pupils who may have trouble with navigating the

playground. Pupils with a disability are encouraged to participate in all extra-curricular activities on offer.

Risk assessments are carried out ahead of organising school trips and accessible transport is used as appropriate.

N.B. Some pupils with a disability may have specific needs and they will be provided with support which is additional to or otherwise different from that which is widely available. These pupils will have their support outlined in an individual education plan and appropriate targets set according to their priority areas of need. Their progress in meeting these targets will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the reasonable adjustments being made are effective. For some children, a classroom or general assistant may be funded by the EA to support the learning and care needs of the disabled pupil, so that they can access the curriculum.

- Physical school premises

Woods Primary School is comprised of a main school building. The site has additional features such as a 4G pitch, outdoor play area and a carpark.

The external and internal doors allow wheelchair access to all areas of the school. There are 2 disabled access toilets. There is a designated parking space for Blue Badge Holders in front of the main reception area.

A 'Roger Touchscreen Mic' is available to support a pupil with a hearing disability.

A Calm Room/Sensory Area is available for pupils as required.

- Information

The use of ICT with a range of accessible features, is encouraged, and promoted throughout the school to enhance all aspects of teaching and learning. Staff and pupils at Woods Primary School have access to a range of software and resources on C2k which are designed to support the delivery of written information.

Booklets are provided in different formats in advance of lessons or within a suitable timeframe so that the pupil can become familiar with key vocabulary and concepts, as required. Font size and colour can be adjusted.

A website has been developed so that information regarding school life can be shared with pupils, their parents, and the wider community.

- Medical information

Information that is required to ensure the health and safety of pupils with a range of medical conditions is shared with staff and can be found in the staff room, the medical register on SIMS and in class folders, where relevant.

We have two members of staff who are trained First Aiders and hold current First Aid certificates which are updated as necessary in accordance with guidelines. Their photographs, names and how to contact them are displayed at various points around the school.

All medication is kept in a central safe and secure place as appropriate within the staffroom.

Inhalers for those diagnosed with asthma are kept in filing cabinets and are available for use when required. Emergency inhalers are available for use by those children who have an inhaler and their parents have completed a consent form.

For some pupils with a disability, a care plan is provided by the Health and Social Care Trust which details the procedures to follow to meet the needs of the pupil. Staff receive regular and appropriate training as required.

Consent forms completed for any medication that is required to be taken in school by pupils because of their disability are completed by parents and maintained in line with the school's GDPR policy. All medication that is given is recorded.

## **8. School Accessibility Action Plan**

Woods Primary School acknowledges that there is a requirement to build upon the current good practice which exists, by continuing and reacting where necessary, to take steps that are reasonable to avoid discrimination by placing a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled people within all aspects of school life.

Article 18 of SENDO places a responsibility on our school to plan strategically to find ways to overcome barriers that pupils with a disability may experience in accessing education and associated services provided by the school.

Efforts to improve accessibility to all aspects of the curriculum will include:

- high-quality teaching strategies as the starting point to meet the needs of pupils with a disability;

- identification of adjustments, resources and provisions that are available for pupils with a disability at whole school level;
- effective deployment of additional adult assistance;
- training for all staff;
- a review of all school policies and procedures; and
- promotion of the presence of disability e.g., through displays, information on notice boards and PDMU lessons.

The following areas for improvement have been identified to enhance the accessibility of the physical environment:

- development of an emergency alarm system to cater for those with a hearing impairment.
- improve access to the resource room, P4 and P6 rooms by pursuing the application for a seventh classroom

Improvements to the provision of information that is normally provided in written form will include:

- clear, straightforward, and simple communication with pupils, parents, and the community using available formats, including larger font as required;
- researching the availability of Braille and audio information sharing options.
- increased signage around the school including tactile signage;
- review access to the school prospectus.

## **9. Review**

The responsible body of the school has the overall duty to implement the accessibility plan. They will monitor the school's success in meeting the targets by reviewing and reporting on it annually, or earlier if necessary. It will be made available for consideration by the Department of Education, Education Authority, or the Education Training Inspectorate, in a timely manner if required.

## **10. Revise**

This accessibility plan is valid for a period of three years (12 January 2023 to 11 January 2026). It will be revised at the end of the three-year cycle which coincides with the duration of the school development plan.

Woods Primary School acknowledges that it may not be possible for all changes to be completed within the lifecycle of this accessibility plan and if so, these actions may be taken forward into following plans.

Due to new knowledge arising from changes in legislation regarding their statutory duties, improvements in methods of teaching and learning, advances in technology and increased awareness of the effect of disabilities may inform the reasonable adjustments which can be made of new targets once another access audit is carried out.

## **11. Confidentiality**

The school respects the right of the pupil with a disability to have privacy. A pupil (if the school believes that they have sufficient understanding of the nature of the request) or a parent may request that the nature and existence of the disability is treated as confidential.

At Woods Primary School, we will treat all information provided with respect and in line with our GDPR policy. We will take any such request into consideration when deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable and discuss with parents and the pupil as appropriate to identify what can be reasonably expected for the school to offer without infringing upon the request for confidentiality.

However, both parents and the pupil with a disability must be made aware of circumstances (such as child protection, health and safety), in which it may be necessary for confidential information to be disclosed to maintain the best interests and safety of the child. They will be informed of when such information has been shared.

## **12. Complaints procedure**

The responsible body for Woods Primary School has taken steps in advance that are reasonable within the school context to avoid the potential for discrimination that cannot be justified. They have made these adjustments to ensure that the physical environment, curriculum, and delivery of information are accessible for current and prospective pupils with a disability so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled pupils.

However, both current and prospective pupils who have a disability and their parents are encouraged to firstly engage with the school and speak to Mrs K White, the principal if they have further knowledge about the effect of their disability or to express suggestions that may support them. Sometimes we may be able to agree to and implement the requested adjustment(s) almost immediately.

In other cases, if this does not lead to a resolution, a formal complaint can be lodged. A copy of the school's complaints procedure can be provided from the school office and is also available on the school's website. In such cases, the responsible body for the school may require some time to take this latest information into consideration and may seek input from others including expert opinion before deciding if it is reasonable to take the steps to make these adjustments within the context of this school. Once a decision has been reached about whether the adjustment suggested is reasonable, we will write to you setting out the decision and the reason. We aim to respond to requests within ten working days and will continue to work in partnership with pupils and parents to alleviate where possible any disadvantage to pupils with a disability.

The Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS) is a free, independent, and confidential service that can be availed of if you need support in trying to resolve a disagreement with the school or the Education Authority in relation to SEN. Contact details are as follows:

- Service: Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service
- Address: Global Mediation (DARS)  
55-59 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8FE
- Phone number: 028 90 726060
- Email address: [DARS@globalmediation.co.uk](mailto:DARS@globalmediation.co.uk)

If there is a disagreement between the adjustments provided by the school and what is sought by the pupil with a disability or their parents, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST), will make the ultimate decision in determining whether the step is reasonable for the school to take or if discrimination has occurred by its failure to do so. Contact details are provided below:

- Service: Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal
- Address: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Royal Courts of Justice  
Chichester Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 3JF
- Phone number: 0300 200 7812
- Email address: [tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:tribunalsunit@courtsni.gov.uk)

### 13. Links to other policies

This accessibility plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, documents and plan:

- Admissions
- Assessment
- Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Complaints
- Teaching and Learning
- Fire Safety and Evacuations
- General Data Protection
- Health and Safety
- Homework
- ICT
- Intimate Care
- Manual Handling
- Positive Behaviour
- School trips and educational visits
- Special educational needs
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Transition
- Uniform

#### Documents

- Department of Education (1998) Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.
- Department of Education (2009) *'Every School a Good School: A policy for school improvement'*.
- Department of Education (2019) *'Every School a Good School' - The Governors' Role: A Guide for Governors*.
- Education Authority (2021) *Accessibility Planning: Guidance for Schools*.
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2006) *'Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for School'*.
- JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.
- Department of Education (2005) *Supplement to the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*

#### Plan

- School development plan 2023-2026.

## 14. Availability of the accessibility plan

Both a signed copy of the school's written accessibility plan and the completed access audits and action plans are held in the principal's office. Upon request, a copy of the accessibility plan can be made available either via email or post and in an alternative format if necessary, by contacting:

- Name: Mrs J Clements
- Designation: School Secretary
- Address: Woods Primary School  
38 Oaklea Road  
Magherafelt  
BT45 6HX
- Phone number: 028 79418 415
- Email address: [info@woods.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@woods.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk)

A copy of the accessibility plan has been placed upon the school's website.

All efforts have been made to ensure that the accessibility plan is as jargon-free as possible and is presented in a clear design and layout.