

How can an accessibility plan be developed?

An accessibility plan can be developed by taking the following steps:

INFORMATION GATHERING

- Set up an accessibility planning working group or committee
- Seek the views of stakeholders
- Gather and analyse information
- Consider other policies
- Carry out an accessibility audit



ACTION PLAN

Take each issue identified and outline

- short, medium, and long term targets
- who is responsible for implementing the action
- when the action will be completed
- how it will be monitored and evaluated
- any costs involved/ sources of funding
- training needs related to the targets
- clear success criteria



IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND REVISE

- Once the plan has been implemented, review the objectives at least annually
- Include details in the Annual Report
- Consider the impact of accessibility in other school policies
- Make the written report available from the school's office/ website
- Revise objectives at least once every three years, or earlier if necessary to inform the priorities for the next accessibility plan

Where does accessibility plan fit within school policies and procedures?

Accessibility planning should not just be a standalone project but incorporated into a wider and well-developed policy environment aimed at including and developing pupils with a disability to their full potential.

Schools may wish to dovetail their accessibility plan so that it coincides with or is a separate component within the school's development plan, which is a strategic plan for making school improvements.



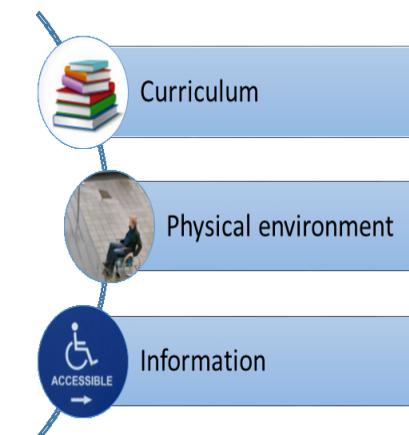
If a pupil or their parent feels that they are being discriminated against because of their disability, what can they do?

- Speak to the principal; or
- Follow the school's complaints procedure to speak to the responsible body; or
- Contact the Dispute Avoidance & Resolution Service (Tel: 028 9072 606); or
- Contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (Tel: 028 9072 4847).



Accessibility Planning:

Increasing the access to education for pupils with a disability in schools



A summary guide

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www.eani.org.uk
cyps-send@eani.org.uk

What is an accessibility plan?

Article 18 of SENDO places a duty on the responsible body (i.e. Board of Governors of grant-aided schools or the proprietor of an independent school), to prepare a written accessibility plan to show how it will over time:

- a) increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's [curriculum](#);
- b) improve the [physical environment](#) of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- c) improve the delivery to disabled pupils
 - I. within a reasonable time, and
 - II. in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents,
of [information](#) which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

The responsible body for the school must have regard to the need to:

- allocate resources for implementing the plan;
- review annually and revise the plan e.g. every three years; and
- make a copy of the plan available if requested.

Why is an accessibility plan important?

An accessibility plan is an important way of showing how the responsible body for the school anticipates and responds to its duty to avoid discrimination against pupils on the basis of disability.

It outlines the steps that are reasonable to take within the school context to avoid treating both current and prospective pupils with a disability less favourably. This is to ensure that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils (unless it can be shown that this can be justified), in accessing education or associated services provided for, or offered to, pupils at the school.



What is a 'reasonable' adjustment?

There is no standard definition of what 'reasonable' means. It will depend very much on the context of the individual school setting, its own resources as well as the needs of disabled and non-disabled pupils.

The Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Schools (ECNI, 2006) provides useful examples of reasonable adjustments.

What is an example of a reasonable adjustment?

Examples of reasonable adjustments can include:

Curriculum: classroom organisation, changes to teaching and learning arrangements, accessible venues and transport for school trips, writing slopes and pencil grips, timetabling arrangements, keyboard skills instead of handwriting.

Physical environment: adjustable lighting and paint schemes with good colour contrast, lifts, ramps, stair treads, parking spaces near entrance, accessible toilets, minimise clutter in rooms, keep pathways free from leaves, kerbs.

Information: Braille, large print, audio format, digital formats, pictorial representation, easy read or simplified text, accessible webpage.

Who is responsible for creating an accessibility plan?

A whole-school approach is recommended in order to create an accessibility plan. This helps to gather a range of views and data in order to identify barriers and to determine solutions that will show how the school plans to increase and improve the extent that pupils with a disability can access all aspects of school life.

