



The Southfield Trust

Accessibility Plan 2017 - 2020

This policy is reviewed by the Trustees every three years and may be revised in response to feedback from pupils/students, parents/carers, staff and external organisations. The next review is due in the Summer of 2020.

Principles

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Trustees have had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils

The **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)** defines a disabled person as someone 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.'* It is important to note that the DDA definition is broad and includes a wide range of impairments such as learning disabilities, dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy and HIV, where the effect of the impairment on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity is adverse, substantial and long-term.

Rationale

This plan sets out the proposals of the Southfield Trust to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are non-readers and/or have communication difficulties

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical,

sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

The purpose of our accessibility plan is to reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.

Pupil/Student Information

The Southfield Trust is comprised of two special schools for pupils from Reception to Year 11. All of our pupils have an EHCP. All of our pupils have a diagnosis on their statement of one or more of the following:

- ASD
- Sensory Impairment
- Complex Needs including Physical Disabilities
- Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties.

Site Information

The South Downs Sites:

The **West** site has a number of separate buildings dating from 1920 which have been substantially altered and adapted over the years to meet our pupils' needs including:

- Access to hydrotherapy
- A designated foundation stage external play area
- A sensory music outside the classroom project in collaboration with our local primary school

The **East** site is a single two storey building dating from 1950 with significant adaptations including:

- A hydrotherapy pool on site
- An adapted food technology room

Both sites have:

- Tracking and hoister systems with adapted slings
- Several disabled toilets
- Height adjustable changing beds in adapted rooms
- A range of adapted play equipment
- A designated sensory suite
- Two tail lift 17 seater minibuses
- Complex medical provision including oxygen (secured) and suction machinery
- Blood testing equipment
- Security system to all external doors
- Rebound therapy facilities

The Lindfield Site

The Lindfield site comprises:

- one single story building and one external hut and
- one teaching room based on South Downs College campus, Eastbourne site until July 2017.

The main building has been significantly altered and adapted to meet our students' needs and includes:

- Good security systems, with full entry systems having been fitted.
- A security fence surrounding the playground areas of the school.
- Two disabled toilets and two separate disabled shower rooms.
- All subject areas and classrooms have height adjustable tables.
- A designated sensory suite
- Access to hydrotherapy
- Two tail lift 17 seater minibuses
- A Dyslexia Friendly Environment certificate.

The South Downs College (Eastbourne Site)

From September 2013, our Year 12 pupils have had their class base on the Eastbourne site of South Downs College. The classroom has height adjustable furniture and specialist ICT equipment. There is access to disabled toilets on site. Funding for this facility will cease in September 2017.

Trust Commitment

We as a Trust are committed to continually increasing the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the schools as follows:

- Improve access to the **physical environments**, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment and adapted equipment to access education.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils/students with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils/students with a disability are as equally prepared for life as able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the schools such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or educational visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils/students in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve the **delivery of information** to pupils/students, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. This includes hand-outs, timetables and information published on our websites about the schools and school events.

The Southfield Trust will endeavour to meet access requirements from staff, parents, carers and visitors where this is reasonably practicable.

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with both of the schools' aims and Equal Opportunities policies, and the operation of both schools' SEN policies. The Trust recognises its duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA) as follows:

- not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- to publish an Accessibility Plan.

Plans to improve access to the physical environment

Completed physical environment improvements for 2013 to 2016 include:

- The South Downs underwent a third inspection to retain its NAS (National Autistic Society) accreditation which was awarded in May 2016. The Lindfield gained their second accreditation in January 2014. At both schools, as a part of the initial accreditation exercise, improvements to the physical environment to create quiet, uncluttered spaces were made, and continue to be a Trust priority. Learning walks focus on the provision of an ASD friendly environment with individual feedback to each class teacher
- The South Downs has added inclusive play equipment to both sites
- The South Downs has completed a project to improve surface signage and door access to the car park on the east site so that taxi drop off and pick up for pupils is improved
- New changing & toilet facilities to support pupils with complex needs have been installed at South Downs East site
- New complex needs equipment storage facilities on both South Downs sites have been completed
- South Downs have developed a personalised sensory diet programme for all pupils to facilitate curriculum access within sensory profiles
- The Lindfield has achieved a Bronze Learning Outside the Classroom award
- The Lindfield has installed a new outdoor gym

- At The Lindfield from September 2016, there has been an interim move of the music and drama areas to an external hut for better access for students
- The Lindfield have developed personal sensory packs for students with sensory needs
- The Trust has redesigned office spaces for a growing Administration team at both schools

Planned physical environment improvements for 2017 – 2020 include:

- The South Downs is working towards achieving the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' quality mark to further improve access to the wider environment. This is the focus of an internship for a member of staff from South Downs to work with staff at The Lindfield
- South Downs to develop Improved access to the outside areas during winter months and inclement weather including a cover over the outside trampoline and a new soft surface around it
- The South Downs have submitted plans to build a new block which will give ground level classrooms and storage
- There are plans to build growing beds on West site so that pupils in wheelchairs can access them.
- Training is ongoing in the use of a new outdoor gym area at The Lindfield for students with sensory and/or behavioural needs
- The Lindfield have submitted a bid for a new performing arts block to accommodate the growing student numbers, the increase in accreditation options and the arts strengths of the school
- A successful bid to the Lady Taverners has provided a new sensory room at The Lindfield. Use of this space will be continually developed to provide a quiet sensory space for individuals and small groups
- The Trust has applied to open a new Free School

Plans to increase access to the curriculum

Completed access to the curriculum improvements for 2013 to 2016 include:

- A fully adapted food tech room has been installed at South Downs East
- South Downs have invested in training and equipment for Eye-Gaze technology to provide curriculum access for PMLD pupils. This enhances an improved highly individualised planning around children's' access to learning
- A new facility was set up in 2013 for Year 12 to include a fully adapted ICT and working environment on site of South Downs College. Local Authority funding for this will cease in September 2017
- Both schools have developed specialised therapeutic programmes to support speaking & listening achievement. This includes a new communication team including the appointment of a specialist communication manager and a SALT assistant. The Lindfield have introduced Lego therapy and more sensory time on the curriculum
- The Trust organised a careers enrichment week in May 2014 in collaboration with Young Enterprise

Planned access to the curriculum improvements for 2017 to 2020 include:

- The South Downs will improve access to learning and the curriculum through the purchase of more touch screen table/smart boards and IPADs
- South Downs will continue to explore the feasibility of an after school club
- The Lindfield will purchase more specialised ICT equipment to support curriculum access
- The Lindfield will organise a spiritual enrichment day/week
- The Lindfield are working towards an Art Mark Platinum award

Plans to improve the delivery of information

Completed improvements in the delivery of information for 2013 to 2016 include:

- A new Trust website with accessibility to AAA standard has been in place since April 2016. The website is easier and clearer to navigate and visitors using screen readers and assisted technologies can read and navigate the site content.
- The Trust and school websites and school prospectuses state that the schools can make information available in large print or other formats if requested
- The Trust uses a home text message and emailing services to share information with parents/carers
- South Downs have developed a comprehensive programme of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) including the use of high technology solutions such as Eye Gaze
- The Lindfield has improved communication with parents/carers through a fortnightly magazine and holding evening meetings for parents/carers to discuss important information such as EHCP processes
- The Lindfield is using 'classroom monitor' software to share student progress with individual students and their parents/carers

Planned improvements to the delivery of information for 2017 to 2020 include:

- A Trust autism team will be developed to improve outcomes including information delivery and communication for pupils/students with autism
- Works to be completed at South Downs west site hall to improve the poor acoustics
- The South Downs are working towards extending pupil voice so that pupils can input into decisions about school life through the school council, pupil questionnaires and EHCPs