



## **Accessibility Policy and Access Plan 2025**

Hope Tree School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

The school will monitor its activity under the Equality Act 2010 (and in particular Schedule 10 regarding Accessibility) and will advise upon the compliance with that duty.

### **Definition:**

#### **SEND:**

A student has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely a provision different from or additional to that normally available to students of the same age (SEND Code of Practice 2015).

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995) defines disability:

“A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”

Not all students who have a learning difficulty or special educational need are disabled.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), schools, colleges, universities, adult education providers, statutory youth services and local education authorities were required to make the same sort of reasonable adjustments for disabled people as stipulated in the DDA 1995. The aim of including these groups, organisations and bodies in the Act was to ensure that disabled people were offered the same opportunities and choices as those in mainstream society. It was also designed to make sure that where possible, disabled people have the right to be able to work at their fullest capacity and have the chance to fulfil their potential.

### **Key objectives and principles:**

- Not discriminate against students with a disability in admissions and exclusions, provision of education and associated services
- Set out procedures to enable all students with SEND to reach their

full potential, to be fully included in the School community and to make a successful transition to adulthood

- Afford opportunities to students with SEND and ensure that the culture, practice, management and deployment of resources are designed to meet the needs of all students with SEND
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010/SENDA Act 2001
- Have regard to guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as is in force and amended from time to time
- Detect and manage learning difficulties whilst having regard to the SEND Code of Practice or any substituting or amending code of practice as issued from time to time
- Operate a “whole student, whole school” approach to the management and provision of support for SEND
- Work in partnership with parents to enable them to make an active contribution to the education of their child
- Not treat students with a disability less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- Make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- Plan to increase access to education for learners with a disability
- Recognise and value parents/carers knowledge of their child’s disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities and respect their rights to confidentiality
- Provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their learning styles whilst endorsing the key principles of the National Curriculum
- Set suitable learning challenges
- Respond to students diverse learning needs
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students

Hope Tree School is committed to making the school environment as accessible as possible for all students, staff and visitors.

**Curriculum delivery:**

<b>How does curriculum delivery ensure accessibility?</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
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<p>Does the school ensure that all teaching and support staff have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?</p>	<p>All staff working at the school will have training/experience of working with autistic students. Upon a student being admitted to roll the school, we will assess their needs and, where necessary, ensure that additional training will be offered to staff.</p>
<p>Are the classrooms organised to meet the needs of disabled students?</p>	<p>HTS offers very small class sizes with high staff ratios. All classrooms are organised to meet the needs of the student body.</p>
<p>Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?</p>	<p>Each student has individual targets and objectives on their EHCP. Each lesson is planned to ensure that all activities offered allow every student to access the learning.</p>
<p>Are all lessons responsive to student diversity?</p>	<p>All students at school are neurodivergent. All areas of the curriculum are delivered taking this knowledge into account.</p>
<p>Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, groups and the whole class?</p>	<p>HTS offers a mixture of self directed learning, small group work/interventions, 1-1 interventions and whole class teaching.</p>
<p>Are all students encouraged to take part in music, drama, and physical activities?</p>	<p>All students are encouraged to take part in activities from across the curriculum. Modifications to lesson plans will be made where possible to include all students. Alternatives will be provided where a student's disability prevents them from accessing a particular activity.</p>
<p>Can staff provide alternative ways to give access for students with disabilities who cannot engage in physical activities?</p>	<p>All lessons are planned to take into account the needs of each individual student. Any student with a physical disability will always be provided with an alternative.</p>
<p>Does the school provide access to ICT appropriate for students with disabilities?</p>	<p>All students are provided with individual ICT, which can include software and/or apps to facilitate good access.</p>
<p>Can school trips be made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment of impairment?</p>	<p>All school trips will be planned and undertaken to ensure all students can attend. No student will be prevented from attending a school trip due to any form of impairment.</p>

Are there high expectations of all students?	All staff have high expectations of all students at all times. High levels of positive reinforcement are embedded throughout the school day, supporting all students to achieve.
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	The aim of the school is to give access to education and our school values are embedded in all aspects of school life. Staff build positive working relationships with students to ensure students feel safe in the classroom. Staff use creative and often innovative ways of ensuring barriers are removed and all students have the chance to participate.

### Physical Environment:

<b>How does the physical environment ensure accessibility?</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Within the school building does the size, layout of areas, including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities, classrooms, outdoor play areas allow access for all students?	<p>Many sports activities take place off site and are accessible to all students. There are doors leading to the outdoor spaces in each building; in Nursery House, this requires a step down. There is a portable ramp available for wheelchair users.</p> <p>Outdoor space is partially accessible to wheelchair users with large paved areas. The wider grounds are grass which may be accessible with support. <b>(AP1)</b></p> <p>Traversing from the patio to the grassed area is not 100% level. <b>(AP2)</b></p> <p>There are trampolines on site to aid students with sensory regulation. These trampolines are freestanding with steps to access. <b>(AP3)</b></p> <p>Outdoor play equipment such as swings are adjusted as necessary to meet individual needs.</p>
In the school building can students who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access, such as those caused by steps, stairs, doorways and toilet facilities?	<p>Nursery House has two floors. All areas of the lower floor are accessible to all students. The first floor is not accessible to wheelchair users. <b>(AP4)</b></p> <p>There are disabled toilet facilities downstairs which can be accessed independently.</p>

	<p>West Barn is one floor, with accessible classrooms, art/science/DT lab, and disabled toilet facilities.</p> <p>The school site also contains three cabins which are used as classrooms. Two of these cabins are accessed via steps. In the situation where a wheelchair user requires access to these classrooms, a solution would be put in place.</p>
In the school building are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	<p>The school is designed to offer 36 places to students. The school has eight classroom spaces, two upstairs in Nursery House and two cabins currently accessed via steps (these can be accessed using a wheelchair ramp if required). Each area is clearly labelled.</p> <p>The school has two clearly signed disabled car spaces, a ramp with easy access to a dedicated entrance for wheelchair users.</p>
In the school building are emergency and evacuation systems employing auditory and visual components appropriate to inform all students including those with SEND?	<p>A full fire and other emergency procedure is in place, with regular opportunities to practise. Fire exits are clearly labelled and all students will understand what they need to do in the case of an emergency. Any student who needs additional support will have a risk assessment and a PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plan).</p>
Are there non-visual guides, e.g. tactile signs used to assist students to safely navigate around the school?	<p>There are not currently any tactile signs in school. <b>(AP5)</b></p>
Could any signage or décor be considered confusing or disorienting for students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	<p>All décor has been decided with the needs of autistic students in mind. The school has not been designed for a student with a visual impairment. <b>(AP6)</b></p>
Are all areas to which students have access well lit?	<p>All areas are well lit.</p>

Are arrangements made to reduce background noise for students with a hearing impairment?	<p>The school is small, with small class sizes and high staff ratios. The school setting is rural with fields bordering two sides. It is naturally quiet, further acoustic modifications can be made to improve background noise further should this be identified as necessary for an individual</p>
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	student.
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	All furniture and equipment is designed specifically for the cohort of students attending the school. Any additional modifications can be made as and when any additional needs are identified at any time

### **Provision of information:**

<b>How does the provision of information ensure accessibility?</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Can the school provide information in simple language, symbols, large print on audio tape or in Braille for students with difficulties with standard forms of printed information?	All information can be provided in all formats at the point of need.
Can the school ensure that information is presented in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. magnified stand to enlarge print for a child with a visual impairment?	All information can be provided in all formats at the point of need.
Does the school have facilities such as ICT to provide written information in different formats?	All staff and students have good access to ICT and all written information can be provided in different formats.
Can the school ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist students with disabilities?	All staff will be trained to use all available ICT within the school.
Does the school communication meet the needs of the students, parents and wider community?	All communication will meet the needs of all stakeholders and can be modified on request.

### **Action Point 1:**

The school currently operates from a leased building. Not all areas of the outside space are wheelchair accessible, although all of it is accessible with support. Should the school receive a request for the admission of a student who was a wheelchair user, the school would work with the student/parents alongside professional expertise to ascertain what improvements that could be made to the outside space to improve access for wheelchair users.

**Action Point 2:**

Traversing from the patio area to the grassed area is not 100% level. In order to ensure the bark remains in place, it is boundaried on one side by a length of wood. Although the height differential is small (4cm), this may cause wheelchair users some difficulty without support. Should a student or staff member who was a long term wheelchair user be on the school site, the school will look to alternative solutions to make this area more level.

**Action Point 3:**

There are two trampolines on site to support students with sensory regulation. At present these are above ground and not easily accessible to wheelchair users. It is not possible to install in-ground trampolines on the site. It is the aim of the school, when considering sites in the future to install in-ground trampolines ensuring greater accessibility.

**Action Point 4:**

The school currently operates from a leased building. The upstairs of Nursery House is not accessible for staff or students who have mobility difficulties. The school is able to ensure that downstairs classrooms are available for students with mobility difficulties and should the school move to alternative/bigger premises at any point in the future, it would be a priority for the school to ensure that all areas are accessible for all staff and students at the school.

**Action Point 5:**

It would be the aim of the school, that if a student with a VI (visual impairment) were to be offered a place at the school, this would be fully risk assessed, costed and, where possible, adaptations would be made prior to the student attending the school.

**Action Point 6:**

It would be the aim of the school, that if a student with a VI (visual impairment) were to be offered a place at the school, this would be fully risk assessed, costed and where possible adaptations would be made prior to the student attending the school.

**Training**

Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010/SENDA Act 2001.

**Audit of Children with Additional Learning Needs and those with Protected Characteristics as described by the Act**

All students at Hope Tree School have a diagnosis of ASD and some may have associated difficulties such as dyspraxia, ADHD as well as various medical problems. When required, we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure any student with a disability is able to access the School's educational provision, e.g.

improved signage in the School. Staff training is designed to ensure that staff can meet the needs of students in the school. Induction programmes are held prior to entry into the School to familiarise students with facilities and understanding the school day.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics**

The following characteristics are protected under the Equality Act 2010

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief Sex
- Sexual orientation

#### **Age:**

In relation to the protected characteristic of age –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular age group
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same age group
- A reference to an age group is a reference to a group of persons defined by reference to age, whether by reference to a particular age or to a range of ages

#### **Disability:**

##### **Definition**

- The person has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

In relation to the protected characteristic of disability –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who has a particular disability
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who have the same disability.

#### **Gender reassignment:**

##### **Definition**

- A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

- A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

In relation to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment:

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a transsexual person
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to transsexual persons

### **Marriage and civil partnership:**

A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

In relation to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who is married or is a civil partner
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are married or who are civil partners

### **Race:**

Race includes colour; nationality; ethnic or national origins.

In relation to the protected characteristic of race –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular racial group
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same racial group

A racial group is a group of persons defined by reference to race; and a reference to a person's racial group is a reference to a racial group into which the person falls.

The fact that a racial group comprises two or more distinct racial groups does not prevent it from constituting a particular racial group.

### **Religion or belief:**

Religion means any religion and a reference to a religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.

In relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular religion or belief
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same religion or belief.

### **Sex:**

In relation to the protected characteristic of sex –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.

**Sexual orientation:**

Sexual orientation means a person’s sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex; persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex.

In relation to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation –

- A reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who is of a particular sexual orientation
- A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same sexual orientation.



Signed:

Head of Learning



Head of Pastoral Care

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Review Date: October 2026