



Buxton Community School

EQUALITY AND COHESION POLICY AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Last Reviewed	Reviewed 5 th January 2026
Reviewed by	Stephanie Reddy SENCo
Next review date	January 2027

Visions and Values

At Buxton Community School we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding principles

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy

These policies collectively ensure compliance with statutory requirements and promote inclusive practice.

In fulfilling our legal obligations, we are guided by eight principles:

Principle 1: All learners and staff are of equal value

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender, sexual orientation or gender reassignment status
- whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take

account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to for example:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents;
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment;

Principle 4: As an employer, our policies and procedures should be of equal value to all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development

- whether or not they are disabled;
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- whatever their gender or gender reassignment status.

We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a conditional job offer has been made.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination, recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men.

Principle 6: We consult widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled;
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- both women and men, and girls and boys.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled;
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- both women and men, girls and boys.

Principle 8: We acknowledge that it is the responsibility of all staff, students and community members to respect the rights of each other in and around school, by:

- speaking respectfully;
- behaving respectfully;
- respecting the school environment;
- having respect for our own and others' learning.

Equality Objectives

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference.

Each year we review the action we intend to take within the framework of the overall school improvement plan, setting out and publishing specific equality objectives.

Our current equality objectives are attached at Appendix A and are published on the school website.

The curriculum

EAL

The school recognises that pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) may have distinct needs that differ from SEND. EAL is not considered a special educational need; however, pupils with EAL may also have SEND. The school will:

- Assess language proficiency separately from cognitive ability.
- Provide targeted language support alongside SEND provision where required.
- Ensure collaboration between the SENDCo and other relevant staff to avoid misidentification of SEND.

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles above.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure that our principles are also key to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- learners' progress, attainment and assessment;
- learners' personal development, welfare and well-being;
- teaching styles and strategies;
- admissions and attendance;
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development;
- care, guidance and support;
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions;
- working in partnership with parents and carers; *The school will meet with parents of students on the SEND register at least three times per academic year to: Review progress and provision, update individual Support Plans or review EHC Plans and discuss and parental concerns.*
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice, for example:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;

- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islam phobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

Prejudice -related incidents will be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

Qualification Requirement for SENDCo

The SENDCo must:

- Be a qualified teacher.
- Hold the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCO) or be working towards it within three years of appointment, in line with statutory requirements.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos;
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur;
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- support students for whom English is an additional language;
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work;
- make reasonable adjustments to planning and practice to support vulnerable students and adults.

Attendance at SEND Tribunals

The school will:

- Cooperate fully with the Local Authority and legal representatives in preparing evidence for SEND Tribunal hearings.
- Ensure the SENDCo or a designated senior leader attends hearings when required.
- Provide accurate records and reports to support the tribunal process.

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all students and parents.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and support reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and Governing Body.

Monitoring and evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and adjust as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data relation to student achievement and staff recruitment, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

The effectiveness of SEND provision will be monitored through:

- Termly reviews of pupil progress and interventions.

- Annual policy review by the governing board.
- Oversight by the SEND link governor, who will:
 - Meet with the SENDCo at least once per term.
 - Report to the governing board on SEND provision and outcomes.
- Participation in Trust-wide quality assurance processes, including audits and peer reviews.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff to inform continuous improvement.

Appendix 1. Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028

Introduction

Buxton Community School is committed to providing a full, inclusive curriculum for all students and for all students to feel valued. We want all our students to achieve their full potential academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

The Governing Body recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010. As part of the Equality Act, a new combined public authority duty was introduced from April 2011, covering all protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Governing Body recognises its duty:

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students so they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- to publish an Accessibility Plan to increase access to education for disabled students.

Definition of Disability

The disability discrimination duties are owed to all pupils who are defined by the DDA as being disabled and under the planning duties schools and local authorities have a general duty to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils.

The 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’** (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. In the DDA ‘substantial’ means ‘more than minor or trivial’. ‘Long-term’ means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the pupil’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

A significant number of pupils are therefore included in the definition.

Normal day-to-day activity

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- perception of risk of physical danger.

Disability and special educational needs and/or disabilities

Many children who have SEND will also be defined as having a disability under the DDA. It is likely that many of the pupils who have SEND and a statement/EHC Plan or who are at SEND Support will count as disabled. However, not all children who are defined as disabled will have SEND. For example, those with severe asthma, arthritis or diabetes may not have SEND but may have rights under the DDA. Similarly, not all children with SEND will be defined as having a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act. In particular, some children whose emotional and mental health needs have their origins in social or domestic circumstances may fall outside the definition.

Special Educational Needs	Both SEN + Disabled	Disabled
Mild dyslexia Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD - social factors) Mild Dyspraxia Minor speech impairment Mild Learning Difficulties	Motor Impairment (long term) Moderate / Severe Learning difficulties Hearing Impairment / Deaf Visual Impairment / Blind Severe Dyslexia/Dyspraxia Epilepsy Moderate / Severe Speech, Language and Communication Needs ADHD Autism	Asthma Diabetes Cancer recovery Mental health Issues Disfigurement Eating disorder Lack of limbs Sickle cell Anaemia Gross Obesity Very Short Stature Incontinence

Information from pupil data and school audit

Within the current school population of approx. 1000 students, there are currently 40 students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 150 students on 'SEN Support'.

Disabled students currently in school have the following needs:

- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

- Attention Deficit and (Hyperactivity) Disorder (AD(H)D)
- Attachment Disorder
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC - including Aspergers Syndrome)
- Diabetes
- Emotional, Social and Mental Health Difficulties (ESMH)
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Physical Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia)
- Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Visual Impairment (VI)

Previously we have worked with students with Cerebral Palsy and Muscular Dystrophy and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. Currently one student is a wheelchair user, and several others have significant mobility difficulties.

The school's strengths and weaknesses in working with disabled students

- School staff have experience of working with a wide range of disabled students.
- Training is provided through an on-going cycle of staff INSET to raise awareness of needs and of strategies for effective support and intervention in and outside of the classroom.
- Every teacher is given a Learning Support Handbook and a Handbook with information and guidance on a range of needs together with strategies to promote the effective support of students with these disabilities.
- Support staff have the same training and information.
- At the start of the year, detailed information is distributed to the subject teachers of each student with additional needs and/or disabilities.
- Regular programme of training for Teaching Assistants to develop their skills in supporting students with additional needs.
- Regular liaison with a range of Outside Agencies who offer guidance, support and advice in meeting the needs of the students we support.
- Close links with Primary School and robust systems in place to ensure the smooth transition of pupils from primary schools to Buxton Community School. The SENCo usually attends the Year 5 and transfer review at the Primary School. Further meetings are then arranged during Year 6 and additional visits to BCS take place during the Summer Term prior to transfer to BCS.
- The SENCo works closely with the pastoral support team in the organisation of tutor groups and curriculum groups.
- All disabled students follow a full and balanced curriculum, appropriately adapted according to their needs.
- Subject departments have banks of resources to ensure work is appropriately adapted however work in this area is ongoing due to change in GCSE syllabi and curriculum reviews.
- All parts of the school are fully accessible with lifts which are maintained and serviced regularly. One chair lift in the large dining hall is showing its age, and this will hopefully be replaced when funding is secured. Until then, there is alternative access to the dining hall.
- Ramps have been built around school to allow access to buildings.

- Adjustments have been made in certain classrooms such as Science and Technology to ensure that students with physical difficulties can access the lessons (rise and fall tables, alternative seating etc).
- Students with SEN/D participate in extra-curricular activities and trips.

Areas for development

- Ongoing training and INSET for staff to ensure appropriate adaptation of work across the curriculum.
- Detailed information showing how well disabled students are accessing the curriculum, for example lesson observations and learning walks.
- Increasing inclusivity in the classroom and creating opportunities for students with TA (Teaching Assistant) support to work alongside their peers rather than working exclusively with the TAs.
- Continuing auditing of the school site in consultation with disabled stakeholders to ascertain key points of entry which would benefit from automatic door opening mechanisms.

The plan has three interlinked elements:

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum by:

- Providing for all students a curriculum which is appropriate to their needs.
- Ensuring that the curriculum is taught in such a way that all students, regardless of any disability may benefit fully from it.

2. Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services by:

- Ensuring that all the school buildings and grounds are fully accessible to students with mobility, sensory and other disabilities (impairments).
- Providing appropriate educational equipment and physical aids to ensure that the curriculum can be accessed fully by all students.

3. Improving the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students by:

- Providing for students and their parents/carers information about the school and its curriculum in a format that takes account of any disabilities.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address our priorities.

Accessibility Plan for Buxton Community School (2025 - 2028)
Section 1. Accelerating Progress of Vulnerable Learners-
Improving Access to the Curriculum

	Targets	Strategies	Outcomes	Impact
Curriculum	Regular cycle of SEND awareness training for students, staff and governors	Regular cycle of SEND awareness training for pupils, staff and governors. Use of citizenship/PHSE programme to raise awareness in students - INSET training and guidance for staff and governors	Greater acceptance and understanding of SEND / awareness of duties under the DDA / improved access to the curriculum for students with SEND	All staff / governors aware of their duties regarding SEND Students' understanding, awareness and tolerance increased
	Further development and implementation by teaching staff of a range of teaching methods and styles to meet the preferred learning styles of all learners.	Sharing of good practice and expertise across departments / peer coaching and mentoring / opportunities for INSET and training in meeting the needs of students with SEND	Learners are more engaged in their learning and able to access to curriculum with greater success	Students more engaged and enthusiastic in their learning. Pupils make good / outstanding progress
	To establish information showing how well SEND students are accessing the curriculum and to identify and overcome any barriers to learning	Lesson observations / work scrutiny / feedback from teachers and support staff	Targeted removal of barriers to learning through School SIP / Departmental Action Plans	Improved access to the curriculum for disabled students
	To monitor and celebrate the achievements of students with SEND in extra-curricular activities	'R' points reward system and prizes. Use of Arbor to monitor participation.	Celebration of wider success and achievement of students with SEND	Improved self-esteem of students
	To achieve appropriate access to ICT which will enhance / support learning	Reliable PCs and relevant specialist software available in Learning Support Department	Students able to access specialist software on a regular basis to build skills and expertise	Increased progress of students /raised self-esteem/ development of alternative methods of recording

Physical Access	Network of raised lines in outside spaces for use by visually impaired students.	Advice from LA Sensory Support Service on appropriate colour schemes /visual markers etc	Classrooms are made more accessible to visually impaired students – but benefits all students	Physical accessibility of the school improved
	Refurbish Learning Support	Guidance and advice from external agencies	Better provision for growing number of complex SEND needs	Improved attendance for some learners. Better environment for students with SEND
	To incorporate appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing, which will benefit students with visual impairments	Advice from LA Sensory Support Service on appropriate colour schemes /visual markers etc	Classrooms are made more accessible to visually impaired students – but benefits all students	Physical accessibility of the school improved
	To create favourable acoustic environments when refurbishing to benefit students with hearing impairments	Advice from LA Sensory Support Service on carpeting / wall coverings /	Classrooms are made more accessible to hearing impaired	Physical accessibility of the school improved
	To consider colours and design of signage around school and implement best practice in this area as changes are made	Colour-coded systems can be more easily read / Visual support or symbols also used where possible	All students, staff and visitors benefit from improved clarity of signage	Physical accessibility of the school improved
	Ensure wheelchair access to teaching and learning areas and facilities within school so the school is accessible for all learners.	Ramps and wheelchair access maintained by site team. Consider 'automatic' opening doors in key areas of school to enable wheelchair users to be more independent around the site. Ensure are regularly serviced and maintained and in good working order. Identify key entry and exit points which would benefit	All students, staff and visitors with a physical impairment benefit from improved access.	Physical accessibility of the school is improved.

		from automatic door opening mechanisms.		
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Access to Information	Information regarding support for students with additional needs / disabilities freely available on School Website, linked to information on wider services and support for pupils and parents across Derbyshire	Clear and easily accessible information on School Policies and support for learners on the school website.	Parents and students able to easily find the information they need	Delivery of information to disabled students and parents improved
	To offer written information in alternative formats when appropriate. Including Powerpoint for the website outlining support for students with SEND	School makes itself aware of the services available through LA for converting written information into alternative formats	Delivery of information to disabled students and parents improved	Parents feel supported and confident that they can find the information they are seeking

Management, Co-ordination and Implementation

Consultation has taken place in the production of the plan via discussions with staff, students and parents. The plan will be reviewed in Autumn Term 2026.

This plan is developed in line with other responsibilities:

The governing body has responsibility for the school accessibility plan. This plan, together with the school’s SEND Policy, will be reviewed and revised annually by the Learning Support Department in consultation with disabled stakeholders and representatives of the Senior Management Team and the Governing Body.

A copy of the Buxton Community School Accessibility Plan is available in the main school office and parents and other interested parties are welcome to request a hard copy. A copy will also be displayed on the school website as Appendix 1 to the Equality and Cohesion Policy.

Requests for information, including this plan, in a specific format e.g. large print or auditory versions will be dealt with at the time of request.

