



WESSEX
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Accessibility Plan

Adopted By: Board of Trustees

Date: November 2024

Review Date: November 2027

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Date of Issue:	November 2024
Policy applies to:	All schools in Wessex Multi-Academy Trust
Policy Version Number:	1
Purpose of the document:	To set out how, over time, our schools will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increase access to the curriculum b) Improve the physical environment of the school c) Make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways
Summary of the main points:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Vision and aims 3. Objectives 4. School context 5. Pupil data 6. Audit 7. Consultation 8. Previous actions 9. Sources of advice and information 10. Other policies 11. Implementation and monitoring
Approved by:	Wessex MAT Board of Trustees
Reviewer:	Karen Weir/Mike Foley
Summary of amendments:	n.a
Next review due:	November 2027

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1. Introduction

1.1. All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law - Equality Act 2010. Accessibility Plans support current and future pupils with a disability.

1.2. The Equality Act says that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

1.3. Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:

- increase access to the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school
- make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways

1.4. This is our school Accessibility Plan.

2. Vision and aims

2.1. Our aim is for everyone at Damers First School to feel part of the school community. We are committed to making our school as accessible as possible. We want our pupils with a disability to:

- be fully included in school life
- actively take part in high quality learning
- thrive and enjoy their learning
- develop the skills to go on and lead fulfilled lives as adults
- be empowered, confident and able to function as independently as possible

2.2. We want our pupils with a disability to access all elements of school life. This includes school clubs, activities and trips. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

3. Objectives

3.1. At Damers First School, all staff and governors will be aware of, and working in line with:

- this Accessibility Plan
- the wider disability provisions set out in the Equality Act
- the United Nations Conventions on the rights of:
 - the child
 - persons with disabilities

3.2. Our SEND Governor will champion the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. They will be involved in developing and reviewing this Accessibility Plan.

3.3. Our staff will remove disadvantage faced by pupils with a disability by:

- adopting a 'can do' attitude

- having a flexible approach to teaching
- modifying the curriculum and environment

3.4. Person-centred systems will be in place to support the inclusion of pupils with a disability.

4. School context

4.1 Damers First School is a purpose-built learning environment which was opened in April 2017. It is set on one level in Poundbury, Dorchester. The building is set in a basic “U” shape with two main classroom corridors with year group classrooms on each side. There are two halls, one large, one smaller.

4.2 Our Vision and Aims

Damers First School wants everyone within our school to feel welcome, valued and included in the school community. We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment to enable this to happen. Our pupils are provided with high quality learning opportunities so that each child achieves their full potential. We want all our pupils to feel confident and to have a positive view of themselves. Our vision is:

We are brave, unique, caring and kind - all learning together

Through positive actions we want to enable pupils with a disability to access all elements of school life, including school clubs, activities and trips. We recognise that in order to treat children equally it is sometimes necessary to do things differently. We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010, by removing disadvantage faced by pupils with a disability and eliminating discrimination.

4.3 Values

All of our aims are underpinned by our core values. Our values are very important to us and direct our work every day. They enable us to ensure that we continuously do our best for every child but also for all within and beyond our school community. We reviewed our values and decided on six that meant the most to all of us and we now focus on these over six half-terms.

4.4 Pupils on roll

480

5. Pupil data

- 5.1. We ask for information about any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parents and carers. We also carefully observe our pupils' progress.
- 5.2. Where our pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, we use the information within this to ensure that we have a good understanding of their disabilities and how to support them.
- 5.3. As a school, we have an above average rate of pupils with SEND at both SEN Support and EHCP levels. Whilst our SEND register is a fluid and flexible recording and monitoring system in early 2026, we had the following percentages of pupils on our SEND Register:

	SEN Support	EHCP Support	Total
Damers	22%	7%	29%
National Average¹	14%	5%	18%

- 5.4. Our pupils have the following areas of need:
- short, medium and long-term conditions, including but not limited to: juvenile arthritis, cerebral palsy, hearing and vision impairments, pupils with chromosome deletion diagnoses, pupils with cancer and pupils with tumours or other neurological based conditions that are being managed by medical professionals.
 - a range of neurological differences, including but not limited to: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sensory processing disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC), dyslexia and developmental coordination disorder.
 - a wide spectrum of pupils with speech and language needs.
 - pupils with less easily diagnosable conditions but that we may still be required to support and manage, including emotionally based school avoidance, anxiety and trauma-based challenges.

We work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure that all of our pupils are included and feel a part of the school. We ensure we make reasonable adjustments and adaptations and work with our parents and carers so that all pupils can take part in events, performances and trips at a level that works for them.

6. Audit

- 6.1. To help us develop our Accessibility Plan, we undertook an environmental audit of Damers First School This told us that:

Curriculum

Damers First School has improved access to the curriculum for disabled pupils through the following means:

- using multimedia activities and interactive ICT equipment (Interactive Whiteboards, Chromebook and iPads) to support specific curriculum areas, e.g. numeracy and literacy;
- providing an adapted curriculum, designed according to need and where necessary with

- specialist input, for those pupils that require this;
- offering a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme to ensure that all staff are able to demonstrate both knowledge and understanding of the impact of specific difficulties and potential barriers to learning such as attachment disorder, hearing/ visual impairments, speech and language disorders;
- organising classrooms and shared learning areas so that they promote the participation and independence of all pupils;
- promoting and developing ASD-friendly practice across the school including bespoke spaces for sensory breakout time;
- staff INSET training regarding sensory impairments and the school environment;
- enriching the curriculum to provide pupils with quality, real life experiences and ensuring that all children are fully included;
- providing a high level of support from a strong team of support staff;
- modifying learning resources to meet the needs of individual children.

Physical Environment

Damers First School is a purpose-built learning environment which was opened in April 2017. The building has been designed to ensure that the physical environment increases access for all pupils by:

- providing flat or ramped access to all school entrances;
- step-free access to all areas, including classrooms, hallways, and outdoor spaces.
- wide corridors and doorways suitable for wheelchair users
- smooth and even surfaces across playgrounds and pathways.
- dedicating 3 parking bays close to the main school entrance for pupils and families, and visitors with a disability;
- providing 3 accessible toilets, one with a shower and changing facilities;
- ensuring that there is good lighting throughout school, making use of natural light where possible and reducing glare through the use of roller blinds in the shared learning spaces and classrooms;
- removing and fixing potential trip hazards and keeping all floor spaces uncluttered;
- applying acoustic panels to walls and ceilings to improve sound quality for pupils with a hearing impairment and incorporating a hearing loop into the main hall and a distributed sound system in the small hall;
- providing fabric blinds, carpets and rubber seals to doors to improve sound quality;
- visual fire alarms in key areas for hearing-impaired individuals. • Height-adjustable furniture in classrooms for pupils with mobility needs. Clearly visible signage and contrasting colour schemes for individuals with visual impairments.
- provide staff training on adaptive teaching strategies and assistive technologies.
- ensure resources are available in accessible formats, including large print, braille, and audio recordings.
- sensory-friendly spaces for pupils with autism or sensory processing disorders.
- possible: Install tactile paving in outdoor areas to guide visually impaired pupils.
- maintain and improve outdoor sensory areas to cater to diverse needs including sensory garden new for Spring 2025.
- offer school communications in multiple formats (e.g., braille, large print, and electronic formats).
- utilize text-to-speech technology on the school website. • Ensure staff are trained to effectively communicate with families and pupils with disabilities.

7. Consultation

7.1. In developing our Accessibility Plan, we have consulted with:

- our pupils
- parents and carers
- our SENCO and SEND support staff
- other staff at the school, including the leadership team
- our SEND Governor and wider governance committee
- relevant specialist services

7.2. These consultations told us that:

- Parents **value our communication**, but want **more visibility of accessibility support**.
- Many accessibility features are in place—but **parents don't always know**, so transparency matters.
- Small actions (signposting seating, explaining adjustments, predictable layouts) create a big impact.
- Consistent communication from all staff will directly improve parent trust and confidence.
- High proportion of “neutral” responses indicate that parents are not aware of measures in place

8. Previous actions

8.1. Access to the curriculum

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability through the following means:

Issue identified	How it was done	When
Not all staff members have the skills to support pupils with complex SEND	SENCO role in subject sweeps refined INSET provided to staff members Training for teachers on adapting the curriculum	2024/25 completed
Pupils with complex SEND cannot access all extra-curricular clubs	Needs of pupils with complex SEND are incorporated into the clubs planning process	Summer 2025

<p>Pupils do not all understand the range of SEN needs of their peers and possible associated behaviours eg. 'Hidden Disabilities' - Autism, Diabetes, etc...</p>	<p>Embed more neuro-diverse understanding into our curriculum for children, staff and parents.</p>	<p>Ongoing delivery.</p>
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8.2. The physical environment

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for pupils with a disability by:

Issue identified	How it was done	When
<p>Sensory room not used to maximum capacity</p>	<p>Sensory room to be timetabled for more sessions throughout the day to support children in addition to the base</p>	<p>Autumn 2024</p>
<p>Learning environment of pupils with visual impairments is not fully accessible</p>	<p>Accessibility audit Adaptations linked with whole school practice - assemblies / seating plans</p>	<p>Autumn 2024</p>

8.3. Access to information

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we made information more accessible to pupils with a disability by:

Issue identified	How it was done	When
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Leaders do not know whether all school information is accessible to current and future users	Audit of information and delivery procedures	Spring 2023
School does not know how to make written information accessible	Schools seeks advice from external advisors	Spring 2023
School not maximising the different types of assistive technology and communication systems that can be used to support pupils with their learning needs	Explore assistive technology options for pupils with ICT co-ordinator / OT	Summer 2023

9. Sources of advice and information

9.1. Our Accessibility Plan has been written following guidance from the Local Authority and considering the Dorset Local Authority Accessibility Strategy. Additionally, the following sources of advice and information have been used:

10. Other policies

10.1. Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- Special educational needs and disability policy and SEN information report
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions policy
- Equality information and equality objectives

It can also be read alongside the following school documents:

- Child Protection policy
- Staff professional development policy
- Health and Safety policy (including off-site safety)
- Behaviour policy
- School Improvement Plan

11. Implementation and monitoring

- 11.1. Our Accessibility Plan shows how we will continue to improve accessibility at Damers First School for pupils with a disability (and for staff and visitors to the school) over the next 3 years. It may be used to inform other school planning documents.
- 11.2. We will work in partnership with the Local Authority/ Wessex MAT in implementing the Accessibility Plan. Where necessary, environmental works will be guided by relevant buildings regulations.
- 11.3. Sufficient resources will be allocated to implement this Accessibility Plan.
- 11.4. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly (and updated if needed).
- 11.5. This Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years and will be updated in 2027. Once updated, we will advise our parents/ carers of this via our usual communications and on our website.
- 11.6. The Damers First School complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

12. Accessibility Action Plan

Area 1 - Increasing access to the curriculum

Outcome 1	
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Ensure all pupils have equitable access to the whole curriculum
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assistive Technology: ○ iPads/laptops with built-in features (zoom, colour filters, screen readers). ○ Digital readers and simplified texts. ○ Interactive apps for literacy, numeracy, or language acquisition. ○ Alternative recording tools: Clicker, Widgit, voice notes, dictation tools. ○ Widgit app purchased for all teachers ○ Provide adapted texts: ○ Simplified language versions. ○ Symbol-supported or large-print formats. ○ Use visual supports ○ Widgit or Boardmaker symbols. ○ Visual timetables and graphic organisers. ○ Dyslexia friendly exercise books and reading supports. ○ Challenge stereotypes and discuss alternatives through planned and focused opportunities, such as Stay and Play sessions, assemblies, visitors and other events.
How can we tell if this is successful?	<p>Improved outcomes</p> <p>Improved attendance</p> <p>Improved pupil survey/pupil voice</p> <p>Future parent surveys</p>
When will this work be done?	2025/26
Approximate cost	£1000

Responsible person(s)	SENDCo/HoS	Date complete	
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Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	SEMH/Mental Health: Provide resources for mental health support and emotional well-being, ensuring students with disabilities are supported both socially and emotionally.		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance parental engagement to ensure equitable home learning opportunities ○ Establish a dedicated well-being space within the school in addition to ELSA room and sensory rooms ○ Train staff on supporting the social and emotional needs of pupils with disabilities (training 2025/26 academic year) ○ Further embed staff referral system for pupils who require additional mental health support in addition to worry boxes in classrooms. Develop a pathway for pupils to report worries to trusted adults. 		
How can we tell if this is successful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pupils with disabilities report feeling supported and able to access mental health resources ○ Improved well-being and social-emotional outcomes for pupils with disabilities 		
When will this work be done?	By September 2026		
Approximate cost	£500		
Responsible person(s)	Head of School & Mental Health Champion	Date complete	
Outcome 3			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Raise awareness for whole school of diverse SEND needs and associated behaviours		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver assemblies and workshops to educate pupils and staff about different SEND needs and associated behaviours (e.g., autism, diabetes) ○ Highlight lessons on diversity and inclusion in PSHE curriculum (Investigating change to Myhappymind NHS scheme September 2026 – high cost £6,000) ○ Encourage peer-to-peer mentoring (SEND/nonSEND) ○ Make accessibility visible in everyday practice Proactively/visibly explain classroom adjustments (visuals, seating, lighting, sensory strategies). ○ Parent / carer workshops 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated website pages with much clearly content and resources available to use ○ Engage external professionals to do class / year group / whole school sessions where required (i.e. Hearing and Vision Support Service Session) 		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Reflected in diversity assemblies/pupil/parent surveys		
When will this work be done?	September 2026		
Approximate cost	£7000		
Responsible person(s)	Head of School SENDco	Date complete	

Area 2 - Improving the physical environment

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	By the end of this plan, the school will ensure that Forest School and any new play provision are fully accessible and inclusive for all pupils, including those with additional needs or physical disabilities		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review all new purchased play equipment to ensure accessible for all pupils ○ If required due to future pupils joining us with physical disabilities, purchase bespoke equipment ○ For future sensory room provision updates consider all pupils needs ○ Engage forest school lead when required to ensure provision meets needs of any pupils with a physical or unseen disability (i.e. full risk assessment, provision plan) ○ Engage club leaders and others to ensure all additional provision meets needs of any pupils with a physical or unseen disability (i.e. full risk assessment, provision plan) 		
How can we tell if this is successful?	All children can access all Forest school/play equipment with support		
When will this work be done?	Summer/Autumn term 2026		
Approximate cost			
Responsible person(s)	Head of School & SENDco	Date complete	
Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Signage and clear, explicit information regarding SEND spaces and measures in place		

What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SEND display celebrating range of needs provided for at Damers ○ Updated website pages reflecting our provision ○ New simple and accessible information sheets regarding SEND at Damers and our provision ○ Support for teachers to improve information sharing with parents regarding provision and home learning support ○ Clearly identified spaces around school for provision for pupils with SEND (these are in place but not always explicit) 		
How can we tell if this is successful?	All stakeholders are clear in provision made by school		
When will this work be done?	End Summer 26		
Approximate cost	£300		
Responsible person(s)	SENDco	Date complete	

Area 3 – Improving communication for whole school community

Outcome 1	
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Making information more accessible for whole school community
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the school's website, school comms and social media are accessible for all and reflect and engage the school community. ○ Explore use of new social media channels, such as Instagram and TikTok to deliver key messages on certain areas, such as Emotional Based School Avoidance or Online Safety ○ New simple and accessible information sheets regarding SEND at Damers and our provision ○ Consider updating accessibility standards for all external communications (both content and appearance) to ensure accessibility is considered (i.e. font size, paper colour, language, etc)
How can we tell if this is successful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School community and families can easily access and engage with school communications and resources ○ Feedback from families indicates improved accessibility and engagement ○ Website and social media analytics show increased engagement from members of the school community

When will this work be done?	Spring and Summer term 2026		
Approximate cost	Staff time		
Responsible person(s)		Date complete	
Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Whole school community is aware of provision in place and usage of space in school		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share “We heard... we adjusted...” examples in newsletters or at drop-off. ○ SEND display celebrating range of needs provided for at Damers ○ Updated website pages reflecting our provision ○ New simple and accessible information sheets regarding SEND at Damers and our provision ○ Support for teachers to improve information sharing with parents regarding provision and home learning support ○ Clearly identified spaces around school for provision for pupils with SEND (these are in place but not always explicit) ○ Promote our provision more as a school in school or community events, i.e. Stay and Play, visits to Pre-Schools etc 		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Parent surveys, pupil voice, staff all report positive impact Improved outcomes		
When will this work be done?	Spring/summer 2026		
Approximate cost	£300		
Responsible person(s)	SENDco	Date complete	End summer 2026