Seghill First School

Access Policy Statement

2015 – 16

**1. Introduction**

This Access Policy statement is based on a belief in equality and inclusiveness for all and confirms that everyone should have equal access to facilities and services regardless of disability, age, gender or race. With this in mind Seghill FirstSchool puts accessibility for all at the heart of the planning and design process.

The school is committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, 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.

**2. Definition of Disability** Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Equality Act 2010: The Act defines disability as when a person has a „physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Seghill FirstSchool also considers other legislation in all decision making processes e.g. the SEND Act 2001, the Education Act 2011 (with particular reference to the Education Act 2011 Equalities Impact Assessment) and this Policy will be updated when new legislation is passed to account for any further duties / requirements of the School.

**3. Key Objectives**

The school recognises that many of its students, visitors and staff, whether disabled or otherwise, have individual needs when using school facilities. We recognise that for all pupils, the nature of their disabilities may mean that they experience specific difficulties related to accessing education, and the physical environment. As part of the ongoing commitment to the delivery of an inclusive educational service, we will endeavour to ensure that all our pupils receive as high a standard of education as their counterparts in mainstream schools. In order to ensure that the educational services it provides effectively meet the needs of disabled students the school will:

Inform all staff of this access policy so that the provision of educational services ensures the inclusion of all of our pupils. Such communications will address the legal obligation of staff, and the school.

Make all prospective employees aware of the disabilities of the pupils in the school. Any applicant for a new position will be made aware of their role in delivering the curriculum, personal care, therapy programmes and maintaining the health and safety of the pupils at all times.

Provide appropriate training for staff which will explain the school access policy and ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of it.

Encourage all visitors to school including suppliers and contractors, to adopt similar policies towards disabled students.

Consult with disabled pupils, parents, staff and disability organisations.

Regularly review whether its education (and other) services are both accessible and effective, and take appropriate action.

Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this plan on a regular basis.

Operate an accessible complaints procedure whereby disabled people can make improvement suggestions and request assistance.

Ensure that the school prospectus makes reference to this Accessibility Policy.

Ensure that the school’s complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Policy.

Ensure that information about the Accessibility Plan is published on the school’s website.

Ensure that the terms of reference for all governors‟ committees will contain an item on “having regard to matters relating to Access”.

Address acts of disability discrimination via existing policies, the school development plan and the asset management plan. As curriculum policies are reviewed, a section relating to access will be added to that on Equality and Diversity. .

**4. Access to Non-Educational Services within Educational Buildings**

Since October 2004, schools, in the provision of non-educational services to the public, have had to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to access the service.

The provision of non-educational services may include activities such as:

Governors meetings;

Services offered to parents, such as meetings to present the annual report, admission and exclusion hearings where an appeal is by the parents;

Fund raising events.

**5. Improving the Physical Environment of Schools**

Seghill FirstSchool as an SEN establishment has been designed to be accessible for all users having space in which people can easily move, interact and use the physical features. Employees are part of the school, both in terms of their own interaction with pupils and parents, and also the ease with which they work within their physical environment.

The school has an entrance and exit point for vehicles and pedestrian access. Some children arrive on LA provided transport and are met at the front door by the school secretary who monitors the smooth entrance and exit of children on and off the premises.

All areas around the school are on one level and accessible to all. Ramps are provided for use by wheelchair and ambulant users. Access around the school can be restrictive as the school has to take into account the children and security issues around the site. Consequently there are areas where there are high door handles and extra security is installed to prevent a child running away.

Seghill FirstSchool has its own grounds which can become outdoor classrooms to reinforce the curriculum and offer experiences at break and lunchtimes. Staff ensure that the ethos of the school is carried into the grounds in all key stages.

The building is on one level and the dining area is accessible to all.

Accessible toilet facilities are located throughout the building for pupils, staff and visitors.

Lighting is suitable for purpose in all rooms with blinds in most rooms to allow for adjustable lighting.

Rooms have contrast colours / paint identifying doors from walls to allow for children/people with a visual impairment to distinguish doorways easily.

The school is aware of the affect that noises e.g. lights buzzing, can affect the ability of the children to work and concentrate. This is kept to a minimum and the caretaker undertakes repairs as soon as possible.

The evacuation procedures are displayed around the school and there is a fire drill every term.

All outside areas are maintained regularly by the caretaker and the gardening team and monitored by the Head teacher.

The caretaker monitors the general internal condition of the school on a daily basis, also monitoring Health and Safety issues and completing statutory building checks. The school staff note any maintenance items on job request sheets for the Caretaker to attend to. Contractors are brought in for issues not within the remit of the Caretaker.

**6. Access to the Curriculum.**

Seghill First School offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils.

Individual targets are set to allow all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in all lessons.

All pupils take part in music, drama and physical activities as part of the access to the curriculum.

School visits are accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment.

There are high expectations of all pupils.

Staff constantly seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation.

**7. Flexibility of Teaching**

Seghill First School teachers and support staff are flexible enough to adapt their teaching approaches to enable our pupils to learn effectively in their classrooms.

Seghill First School has high expectations, school staff present work in many different ways using a variety of equipment. Work can be carried out individually, in small groups or the whole class group.

Seghill First School staff enable the pupils to show their interest, knowledge and skills despite their difficulties with communication.

Visual timetables and clues to 'next 'activities are given to ensure the pupil is aware of the routines required throughout the day.

Reward systems are in place to support the children with positive strategies.

Some pupils have behaviour plans to tackle any behavioural issues. The plan is drawn up in conjunction with the child, parents and adults from school and any other outside agencies.

**8. Arranging the Classroom**

Each classroom is set out to provide the most positive environment to work in, to ensure the child learns effectively.

Classroom*s* have sufficient space for all the children.

Toilet facilities are available close to each classroom.

A variety of resources are used to ensure that the pupil learns effectively. There is input from teachers of the visually/hearing impaired when required.

IT support is invaluable in providing access to the curriculum.

**Access to Education**

Seghill First School recognises that all disabled children should have access to education in accordance with the Equality Act and adheres to the code of practice which advises on the statutory responsibilities of education bodies in the preparation of accessibility strategies and seeks to:

Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education as identified in the Asset Management Plan and the School Development Plan.

Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils are as equally prepared for life as are able-bodied pupils in mainstream schools; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and assistive technology**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

Improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

**10. Making adjustments**

The Equality Act states that Schools are not expected to change their premises. They are however expected to make long-term proactive plans for improving access to their buildings through their planning duties and this document should be read in conjunction with the School Development Plan and the Asset Management Plan.

Seghill FirstSchool will continue to make „reasonable adjustments‟ to ensure that disabled students, parents or visitors attending the school are not discriminated against. Making reasonable adjustments could include:

* changes to practices or procedures
* changes to physical features
* changes to how learners are assessed
* providing extra support and aids (such as specialist teachers or equipment)

**11. The Action Plan**

Seghill FirstSchool Accessibility plan is detailed separately,