



Learning Opportunities

Accessibility Plan 2022 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

Learning Opportunities is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity is embedded within all facets of our organisation and of the service we provide. We believe each student is unique and are committed to encouraging all our students to be active learners, develop greater independence and to foster a vision of what they want to achieve in life.

We will work towards eliminating all discrimination and believe that all students, staff, and other service users should be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Through developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion, we aim to challenge any negative attitudes, which may exist. As a school we will not tolerate bullying, harassment or victimisation of any groups or individuals.

Learning Opportunities aims to be an inclusive employer that positively values the contribution of all employees. Through our employment policies and practices, we aim to achieve equality for all.

Our Accessibility Plan outlines our strategy for improving access to education. The Accessibility Plan has at its heart the principle that all teachers have a collective responsibility to assimilate best practice in relation to teaching students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The term 'access' is a broad one, including access to information, the curriculum and the general life of the school, as well as physical access to the buildings. It sets out our approach to ensuring that the school delivers to all sections of our community both in terms of achievement of students and in terms of our employment and continuing professional development practices.

This scheme links to other whole school policies and plans including our SEND Policy & Information and our LiP.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, the complaints procedure sets out the process for raising those concerns.

This Accessibility Plan has been drawn up to cover the period from September 2022 to August 2025. If alternative format is required, please let us know.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Learning Opportunities is a small independent special school for male and female students between the ages of 10-18 years. All students have EHCPs and have a combination of complex needs including social, emotional and mental health, moderate and general learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, developmental delay, dyspraxia, dyslexia, and ASD. We are proud of our ability to combine a unique level of education and pastoral support, which is evident throughout the school day.

Where a student has medical needs, an Individual Healthcare Plan may be agreed with their Parent/Carers and shared with staff on a need to know basis.

We have a few students who have asthma and some with allergies or food intolerances, where this is serious an EpiPen will be kept on site.

Learning Opportunities has competent First Aiders who hold current First Aid certificates.

All medication is kept in the KS4 office. It is kept in a secure place which is easily accessible for First Aiders and staff members. Administration of medicine consent forms are filled in by Parent/Carers outlining the illness and dose and administration details of medication. All medication that is given is recorded. Medication is administered in school at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Learning Opportunities is located in Ringwould, which is in close proximity to the local towns of Dover and Deal. Our catchment area covers Folkestone, Ashford, Sittingbourne, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Thanet, Deal and Dover. Most students travel by taxi provided and arranged by the local authority.

The school is not required to make physical changes to the existing buildings, but will continue to monitor and make reasonable steps to improve access for both the disabled and able bodied students, parents / carers and visitors.

ETHOS & VALUES

Learning Opportunities is committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parent/carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

The school will also remove or minimise any potential barriers to learning allowing all students to achieve and participate fully in school life, and to benefit from the educational experiences and service we provide. We will challenge negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and continue to develop and promote a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

We aim to provide a challenging yet sensitive framework of care, opportunities and consideration for all students, and an education which encourages students to:

- achieve their own potential in all areas.
- be a self-motivated learner.
- acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes which enable them to participate in an ever-changing world.
- be able to express their own informed ideas fluently and with confidence.
- have high self-esteem and respect for others.

Learning Opportunities is committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit our school.

Our commitment to Equal Opportunities is reflected in the setting of suitable / appropriate learning challenges that meet the diverse needs of our student group. The achievement of students is monitored, and data gathered used to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

In promoting equality and in fostering positive attitudes, we ensure effective communication between school and all stakeholders. This is achieved through regular phone calls, email, written communication, and where appropriate home visits.

At the heart of our vision lies a belief that the potential of all students needs to be recognised, respected and realised; that all people regardless of their personal circumstances have the absolute right to be treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that the ability to live and work in a diverse, challenging and changing world is the key for success and fulfilment for individuals and organisations in the 21st century.

We aim to deliver practical results and outcomes for all students. Our priority is to make a difference by improving outcomes for all. This does not mean treating everyone the same, but rather responding appropriately to the diverse needs of specific individuals and groups with positive regard to their race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexuality (including sexual orientation), age, religion and belief.

Apart from academic related learning, Learning Opportunities promotes life skills and a range of other social responsibilities such as participation in charity events, promoting healthy lifestyles and awareness of ecological issues. We have a strong programme of educational visits and residential opportunities that are open to all students.

LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This Accessibility Policy and Plan are drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. (Refer to our race equality, cultural diversity & inclusion policy).

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. This means that “schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and therefore includes more young people than we may realise. It includes children and adults with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy. Some specified medical conditions such as HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

- Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and 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 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.

Learning Opportunities recognises its duty under the Equality Act 2010

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

This Accessibility Plan has been produced as part of that duty; its purpose is to show how the school intends to proactively improve the accessibility of three key areas of school life for those who have a disability over the next three years.

In line with the legislation the plan focuses on three key areas:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing

This duty is anticipatory, and the school has planned for the current and future needs of its students.

Attached as Appendix 1 is an Action Plan that sets out a programme of planned improvements and actions which the school will undertake over the next three years. A success criterion and a review period have been set so that progress and outcomes can be measured.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY?

Equality means treating everyone with equal dignity and worth regardless of particular characteristics. Students have different needs, backgrounds, life experiences and goals and it is our responsibility to ensure that we meet them. Achieving equality means the removal of discriminatory barriers that limit what students can do and achieve. We recognise that students can experience inequality in a range of ways including:

- Access to services
- Outcomes
- The degree of independence
- In how they are treated by others.

The aim of this scheme is to ensure that we tackle these inequalities in a number of ways that are relevant for our organisation.

How will we meet the specific duties set out within the Equality Act

Eliminating discrimination

Learning Opportunities operates a zero-tolerance policy in relation to discrimination. We perceive this part of our equality duty to be a minimum standard that all staff, students and visitors to the school will achieve.

We have a number of policies, procedures and processes in place for reporting and acting on complaints of discrimination and harassment. These include robust and confidential mechanisms for reporting, which include maintaining the confidentiality of the individual and protecting them from any reprisals as a result of their complaint (refer to whistle blowing policy).

Our planning addresses the following areas:

The Physical Environment - The Accessibility Plan includes measures to improve access to the physical environment of the school as necessary. This may involve making reasonable adjustments to the school and providing aids to assist access were appropriate.

Curriculum - The Plan also includes measures to increase access to the curriculum for all students to ensure that they are equally prepared for life. As well as teaching and learning this includes access to the wider curriculum such as participation in school visits. This may involve the provision of specialist aids and equipment where necessary.

Support services - working in a multi-agency way to access services within and external to the school to support families where additional support is required.

Awareness & Training - building awareness of staff through training and development and heightening student's awareness of issues related to disability.

Communication of information - how information is communicated within school and to a wider audience and supporting access to communication for families with a student, parent or carer identified as having a disability.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE WHICH SUPPORTS OUR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Curriculum

- Providing 1:1 targeted support
- Flexible class structures and deployment of staff
- Personalised learning programmes
- High levels of pastoral support
- Whole school Thrive approach
- Targeted interventions - Literacy, Numeracy, Walk & Talk, Zones of Regulation
- Liaising with external services and agencies regarding individual students (SALT, Educational Psychologists).
- Organising TA deployment to cover a mix of curriculum and learning needs.
- Ensuring that where appropriate, students have access national and internal assessments facilitated by relevant access arrangements (extra time, reader, and scribe).
- Setting clear learning objectives that are appropriately differentiated for individual students, and effectively tracking progress.
- Ensuring parents / carers and students are included in the target setting process.
- Encouraging the use of clear, well presented visual aids to support the learning of all students.
- Taking full advantage of opportunities outside the classroom to promote learning experiences.
- Developing the Forest School ethos (dedicated staff trained as Forest School practitioners).
- Using a range of teaching methods and styles to facilitate access for all students.
- Partnership working with relevant Virtual Schools teams.
- Relevant CPD for staff to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of supporting students with particular needs
- Favourable staffing levels which promote equality of access, and which allows for students with higher needs to be supported on a 1:1 basis

Transitional planning is overseen by the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher who consider the records of all new students entering the school and liaise with their current provider to check for information on possible needs - this pre-planning stage includes giving the student and parents / carers and social worker where applicable a tour of the school to see if there are any issues which might need addressing.

The Leadership Team make sure all staff are aware of the student's needs through admission profiles, and meet regularly with the class teachers to ensure that students are achieving their potential.

Physical Access

- Disabled toilet facilities available in Key Stage 3.
- Availability of rooms to conduct confidential meetings.
- Space available for small group and individualised work for targeted students.

- Student's work is shown to be valued by use in displays around the school.
- The environment is adapted to the needs of the students as required.
- Calm places are available both internal and within the grounds of the school.
- The school grounds are predominantly flat and access points to the site are low.
- Annual risk assessments are completed, and action taken where necessary.
- Evacuation plans in case of a fire are displayed throughout the school.

Information Sharing

- Website updated.
- Visual timetables and information provided where applicable to support written text.
- Improved communication with parents and carers through text messaging, emails and parental forums.
- Clear internal signage located throughout the school.

AWARENESS & TRAINING

The Leadership Team will ensure that all students with disabilities have access to appropriate resources within the classroom and will monitor their progress to ensure expected progress is maintained.

We aim to ensure that all staff are aware of the possible needs of persons with disabilities. Staff will therefore receive training to ensure that they are able to reduce the barriers to learning for all individuals and plan appropriate provision so that all students are able to make progress.

Through diversity and equality curriculum opportunities, we also seek to heighten student's awareness of issues in relation to disability.

LINKED POLICIES

Risk assessment policy
 Health & Safety policy
 Learning Improvement Plan (LiP)
 SEND policy & Information
 Equal Opportunities Policy
 Supporting students with medical needs policy

Monitoring and Review

Our Accessibility Plan covers the period September 2022 to August 2025.

The success of the plan will be kept under review by the Leadership Team and the implementation of the plan will be formally reviewed by the Proprietor in the summer term.

The review will look at each action and assess whether the success criteria has been met. Any actions that are incomplete or require further attention will be assessed to see if they are still valid and if so carried forward with a new review date.

Areas identified on the Accessibility Plan are also referred to where appropriate in the School Improvement Plan and implementation is monitored by Leadership Team throughout the year.

Quality of Education			
Aims	Objectives	Actions	Impact / Success Criteria / Review
<p>To Increase student access and participation in all areas of the curriculum</p> <p>To reduce barriers to learning through a robust whole school mental health strategy that strengthens understanding of signs/symptoms and support mechanisms available.</p>	Ensure information about student needs and strategies to support them are easily accessible to all team members.	Student surgeries will be used to share good classroom practice and effective strategies that work with specific students.	Students make sustained progress as a result of the school providing an ambitious and engaging curriculum that is informed by the effective use of individual student assessment.
	Ensure strategies and interventions are used consistently across the curriculum to support all students.	Support staff will be deployed effectively to support students' participation and achievement.	All students will have equal access to a range of activities that will support their social, emotional health and wellbeing.
	A balanced and relevant curriculum is accessible to all students with reasonable adjustments being made where appropriate.	<p>Whole school and individual CPD delivered throughout the year.</p> <p>Assistant Headteacher / T&L Lead will coach and develop staff in order to further develop their pedagogical understanding of T&L and curriculum expertise.</p> <p>Bespoke literacy / numeracy programmes will be delivered to support student access to the curriculum.</p>	<p>Parents / carers are able to support their child and have a good understanding of their child's strengths and needs.</p> <p>Data from lesson observations and feedback sessions demonstrate that all staff have a greater understanding of their curriculum and are able to articulate the rationale behind its design and delivery.</p>
	Students will be effectively supported to access all examinations.	<p>Training for invigilators to be provided by the examinations officer.</p> <p>Access arrangements to be secured in advance of examinations.</p> <p>Staff to provide effective support for students in revision skills and exam techniques.</p>	<p>All members of the school community feel safe and well supported and will demonstrate tolerance and respect of others as evidenced through daily logs and students' ability to demonstrate knowledge of the groups that make up and are represented within British society.</p> <p>All members of the school community will demonstrate commitment to continual learning and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>
	Parents / carers are fully informed about the school curriculum and how it is structured to support their child's learning.	<p>Introduction of parental workshops supported by Thrive practitioners and the Leadership Team.</p> <p>Aspects of the curriculum to be promoted through open days, information available via the school website and through the provision of regular informative education reports.</p>	Diversity and inclusivity continue to be celebrated.

Aims	Objectives	Actions	Impact / Success Criteria / Review
	<p>To ensure a seamless transition for those students joining the school.</p>	<p>Previous school information carefully considered, reviewed and shared with staff prior to admission.</p> <p>Meeting to be arranged with key members of staff from the feeder provision and the student.</p> <p>Create student profile and complete risk assessment where required.</p>	
	<p>Students who are transgender, gay or bisexual, non-binary and gender neutral will feel fully supported and accepted within the school.</p>	<p>Where relevant, MTPs to highlight opportunities for students to learn about and absorb diversity in all its forms.</p> <p>The PSHE curriculum will educate students and celebrate the LGBTQ community.</p> <p>Toilet provision to be reviewed throughout the school.</p> <p>Staff to complete training to increase their knowledge and confidence of LGBTQ+ inclusion into their professional practice.</p> <p>Discussions about barriers to learning will be framed in positive, student-centred ways.</p>	
	<p>Continue to regularly review our curriculum to ensure that it remains inclusive and accessible to all and that it reflects and supports an inclusive and diverse range of coverage, materials and opportunities for all.</p>	<p>Review resources within the school to ensure that a wide range of cultural materials are accessible, and which reflect diversity.</p> <p>Review the events and themes to be addressed in the school calendar, including Tutor time themes.</p> <p>Encourage whole school involvement in developing curriculum themes and events.</p> <p>Wider networks to be established within the community</p>	

Information Sharing			
Aims	Objectives	Actions	Impact / Success Criteria / Review
To provide information in accessible formats.	To ensure that all wording in school documentation and policies continues to make provision for all members of our school community and is therefore not discriminatory.	Review of our website to ensure that all information on the website is accessible.	<p>All students' parents / carers and other interested parties are able to access information in a form that they can access.</p> <p>We will be aware of accessibility gaps in information delivery on the website and through the review will ensure that our website is fully accessible to everyone.</p> <p>Students and their parents / carers feel supported and included in the EHCP review process and are able to contribute confidently.</p>
	Ensure EHCP review information is as accessible as possible.	Offer a range of differentiated review formats that allow the student's view to be gathered.	
	To ensure parents / carers who are unable to attend the school can access educational meetings.	Arrangements will be made to host meetings via Teams and all written information will be made available to parents / carers in advance and following meetings.	
	To ensure a seamless transition into school for all new students, parents and carers.	<p>To review and update our welcome packs for parents / carers.</p> <p>To develop a child-centred welcome pack for new students that includes visual cues where necessary.</p>	

Physical Environment			
Aims	Objectives	Actions	Impact / Success Criteria / Review
To ensure that all areas of the school building and grounds are accessible for all students and adults.	To maintain a safe and stimulating environment for all students, staff and visitors.	<p>Any modifications needed will be made to the school building and grounds to facilitate ease of access for all.</p> <p>Maintain all facilities and equipment as required.</p>	Everyone on our School site is supported via our Safeguarding measures, policies and ethos.
	Classrooms will be organised to promote participation and independence of students.	Class teachers to review the layout of furniture and equipment to ensure it meets the needs of all students and supports the learning process.	
	To maintain robust and effective safeguarding Procedures which ensure the safety of all students and adults.	<p>Continue to complete and review relevant school premises risk assessments to meet safeguarding needs.</p> <p>External safe spaces will be monitored and maintained accordingly.</p>	
	To ensure appropriate parking is available for all disabled visitors.	To repaint disabled parking bays	

