

Witham Prospect School Accessibility Policy

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Updated 2019)
- Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- DFE: Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations including Quality Standards April 2015.
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 Years, January 2015
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- UN Convention on Disability Rights

Applies to:

The whole school, staff, volunteers and pupils. All activities provided by the school, including those activities outside the normal school day, off-site learning and residential trips. This policy also applies to residential care, residential staff and volunteers.

Related Documents:

- SEND Policy
- Single Equality, Culture and Diversity Policy
- Accessibility Audit
- Behaviour Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents/carers, staff and pupils via the school website or upon request from the school office.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be monitored and refined on a continuous basis and reviewed annually by either the Directors, Registered Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This will take place earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirement or best practice guidelines so require.

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Purpose of this Policy

Witham Prospect School fully adheres to, complies with and supports the value that children and young people cannot be discriminated against because of their:

Disability	Gender re-assignment
Sex	Pregnancy and maternity
Age	Sexual orientation
Race (and culture)	Marriage or civil partnership
Religion or Belief	(protected characteristics)

This policy highlights how “inclusiveness” and “accessibility for all” is at the heart of all we do at Witham Prospect School. We believe that all children and young people, staff and volunteers are members of our community and are of equal worth. We actively seek to break down the barriers to learning, promote equality of opportunity and promote communication so that our children and young people are not discriminated against, or their thoughts and opinions are not heard. This policy applies to both the School setting and Residential Care.

This policy also outlines how we intend to comply with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. This means that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils (children and young people) because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation (and including the above protected characteristics). And that schools also have a duty to promote race, disability and gender equality.

Disability Provisions in The Equality Act

The disability provisions in The Equality Act 2010 mainly replicate the former Disability Discrimination Act. However, there are some key differences in relation to the law on disability discrimination and the rest of the Equality Act 2010. The key point of the Act is that it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled children and young people more favourably than non-disabled children and young people and may have to make changes to their practice to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what is offered to the same extent that a person without that disability can.

Another difference is centred around “failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified”. The fact that it must be reasonable provides the necessary test. This means that for schools they must ensure that:

- Where something a school does places a disabled pupil (child/ young person) at a disadvantage compared to other children and young people then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

Schools are not subject to the requirement of reasonable adjustment duty concerned with make alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties.

Definition of Disability

Many children and young people who have SEND may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Physical impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those effecting sight and hearing). An impairment is seen to affect normal day to day activities if 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, eyesight, memory, ability to concentrate, learn or understand, and perception of physical danger.

Witham Prospect School will fulfil its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and those same duties which existed under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Witham Prospect School will implement access and accessibility plans which are aimed at:

Increasing access to the curriculum.

Witham Prospect School mission statement is:

“To enable the children and young people entrusted to us to reach their full potential within a safe and nurturing environment”.

We will do this by providing equal opportunity and access for all children and set challenging targets for learning and development. The underlying principles to this commitment are that

- We will endeavour to attract and retain high quality staff who utilise a range of strategies to overcome a child/ young person’s individual barriers to learning.
- Staff will receive ongoing training and CPD development to develop their understanding and skills in order to help children and young people access the curriculum.
- Children and young people will only be offered a place at Witham Prospect School if the Senior Leadership Team feel that they can meet the needs of the young person once a full and detailed assessment has been carried out.
- We will employ a range of therapeutic interventions aimed at increasing social, emotional, physical and educational development.
- An emphasis will be placed on the curriculum to personalise and meet needs, interests and skills of individual children/ young people.
- Children and young people’s views, thoughts and opinions will be actively sought and taken into account with regard to their education and they will take part in decisions about their education.
- We will ensure that learning resources and communication resources are available to increase access to the curriculum and learning e.g., PCs/laptops, iPads, picture exchange communication system (PECS), communication in print, enlarged print and other augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) resources.

- As a school, we will look to develop inclusive practices for all our children and young people by our staff and self-reflect, review and develop our practice in order to achieve continuous improvement.
- We will look to promote inclusive practices by developing collaborative partnerships with other providers across education, from within the community and multi-disciplinary therapies, for example speech and language therapist to meet the learning needs for children / young people with communication difficulties and health therapists.

Curriculum

We sat as a whole school team to discuss what we wanted for our children and young people. The brilliant thing was....is that we all agreed on the same!

- ✓ That our Ch/YP are happy and excited to come to school each day.
- ✓ That they have a voice to communicate their wants, needs and opinions. That we use which ever means necessary to give them this, for example AAC, PECS, Makaton.
- ✓ That they feel safe and nurtured when at school and if they ever aren't, they can share this.

That we all have core principles, we believe need to underpin all we do across the school.

- ☐ That we provide them with the skills to take with them, after WPS, to live a good quality of life, as an adult.
- ☐ That we have ambition for all and have a culture of inclusion, despite any barriers they may face.
- ☐ That we promote regulation, as we know that some days our Ch/YP may find something a challenge. Challenges are ok and we should promote how we face them.
- ☐ That they make progress in all aspects of school life, no matter how small. That we will promote this through dedication to always improving our practice.
- ☐ That our curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious.
- ☐ That our curriculum builds upon learning to promote effective learning.
- ☐ That our curriculum is exciting and engaging.
- ☐ That we use outside agencies and our in-house therapy team to support the practice.
- ☐ That we support each other, across the whole school to be the best we can be. If we are the best we can be, then we will inevitably do the best for our Ch/YP.

Everything we do, always has to have a positive direct impact on our Ch/YP.

Communication and Interaction: Building Strong Foundations

At Witham Prospect School, we believe that effective communication and interaction are essential for our children and young people to thrive. Our dedicated staff work tirelessly to

foster a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to express themselves.

We recognise that communication can be challenging for individuals with severe learning difficulties and autism. That's why we employ a variety of strategies and techniques to support their communication and interaction skills. These include:

- Visual supports: Using pictures, symbols, and objects to aid understanding and expression.
- Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC): Employing tools and strategies to help individuals communicate who may have difficulty with speech.
- Social skills training: Providing opportunities for our young people to practice social skills, such as turn-taking, sharing, and expressing emotions.
- Speech and language therapy: Offering specialized support to help individuals develop their communication skills.

By focusing on communication and interaction, we're helping our children and young people to build strong relationships, express their needs and wants, and participate fully in their community. We believe that effective communication is the key to unlocking their potential and building a bright future.

Each class has a provision map for this area of SEND. It is key to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our ch/yp. Alongside a bespoke LTP for each class where key learning intentions are delivered, each class has their own provision map on how we teach and deliver C&I

PSHE

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is part of our core principles in the school curriculum dedicated to keeping children and young people safe, healthy and prepared for life's challenges and opportunities.

At Witham Prospect School, preparation for transition to adult life is the main focus of PSHE and some of this transition can be particularly worrying for young people with learning differences and neurodiversity who find change challenging. By providing good quality PSHE, we provide a safe environment to develop a sound understanding of safety, personal boundaries, risks, manipulation and more. We provide skills that young people are able to call upon to allow them to independently manage themselves in their new settings throughout adulthood.

Alongside PSHE, we teach RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) with the aim to help our young people with the physical and emotional changes they will experience as well as encourage an awareness and respect of self and others.

The intent of our curriculum is to create a vision that helps our young people understand and value how they fit into and contribute to the world enhancing their life-chances.

Physical Development

Physical Development is one of our core principles here at Witham Prospect School.

For our children and young people, at our school, a bespoke Physical Development curriculum is key to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

We ensure that the structure of our curriculum meets the needs of all our learners' promoting physical health, confidence and self-esteem. We are conscious that because of the complex needs of our children and young people, Physical Development is key to ensuring the very best welfare for them, not only during their time with us, but as they transition into adulthood.

Our PD curriculum ensures that skills and knowledge in fine & gross motor skills are embedded across all areas of the curriculum. It also teaches and promotes co-ordination, balance and independence in moving around in a variety of situations. We encourage the exploration of a healthy diet and healthy choices in aspects of life. We also teach the skills needed to play alongside and together with peers in a meaningful way. And finally, we truly believe that Physical activity is not just good for your body, but also for your mind, mood, and quality of life.

At Witham Prospect School we aim to foster an environment where everything we do works towards preparing our young people for life after school. Independence and preparation for adulthood is one of our core principles, and this is something you will see taking place throughout the school day. Our young people are encouraged to make their own drinks, tidy up their environment, prepare their snacks, take part in cooking lessons, access the community and so much more. Through our curriculum we are able to encourage our young people to work on these invaluable skills that they will need in order to thrive in their adult lives. By encouraging our young people to develop these vital skills we are able to enhance our young people lives in more ways than one. We aim to equip all our young people with the

range of skills that adults need throughout their lives, at a level appropriate to each individual.

For some this might look like putting their own clothes on, encouraging them to put their shoes and socks on, for others this might look like creating a meal plan and understanding how ingredients create a meal. Our independence and preparation for adulthood is bespoke for each class, and within that, each young person.

Through these life skills, we ensure that each young person has the opportunity to expand their horizons, thrive after school and build a life where they have as much independence as possible within school and in the wider community.

Transition Planning and Future Opportunities for All

At Witham Prospect School, we will support children and young people in planning for their future adult life as early as possible and by Year 9 at the latest. Our aim is to support our young people to go on and achieve their best possible outcomes and develop the skills that they will need in the future so that they can access:

“Life-long learning” opportunities at college.
Progress to supported living and possible employment.
Develop the skills for future independence.
Contribute to and fully participate in their local community.

Planning for future adult life at Witham Prospect School will focus on individual young people’s aspirations and abilities, what they want to be able to do when they leave post-16 education or training and the support they need to achieve their ambition. Transition planning will be an integral part of the EHC Plan Annual Review from Year 9 onwards.

Parents and carers will form a significant part of this planning process and the view of children and young people will always be ascertained; however this may not always be through direct discussion with a young person. In addition to the above four core outcomes this planning process at Witham Prospect School will also focus on:

Pathway planning with regard to the next stage of education, specifically choices concerning post 16 educational opportunities.
Supporting and maintaining good health and we will help our young people understand which health professionals will work with them as adults.
Supporting an understanding of the range of available mobility and transport opportunities to be able to access a range of social and community based activities.
Support to maintain and develop friendships and form positive relationships.

Increasing access to communicated information and written materials

At Witham Prospect School, we will make written information available in a variety of formats that will take into account children and young people’s level of understanding and their disability. This will include providing information for children/ young people with hearing and visual impairments, autism, speech, language and communication difficulties, sensory and physical needs.

Increasing access to the physical environment

At Witham Prospect School, we will ensure that we initially design a school and residential setting that not only meets but exceeds our statutory and regulatory requirements under the Equality Act 2010, which incorporates the previous Disability Discrimination Act. Thereafter we will undertake an annual review of our physical environment to identify any improvements that may be necessary in order to increase access to the physical environment for any children and young people with a physical, visual, auditory or sensory disability.

At Witham Prospect School, we will use available funds to ensure that the following areas relating to increasing access to the physical environment are reviewed on an annual basis by the senior leadership team and the premise's manager.

- The school admissions policy will operate in a fair, non-discriminatory and transparent manner to ensure “equal access or all”
- All major capital schemes will include measures such as ramps, lifts or toilets for the disabled to ensure that children and young people can access residential care and the school.
- Ongoing developments and improvements to physical access to the school and residential care. This may include setting down and picking up points, ramps, handrails, appropriately sized doors to allow wheelchair access and hoists where required.
- Ongoing developments and improvements for physical movement around the site, including adaptations for sensory disabilities such as improved colour schemes, floor and wall line guide markings and access to social areas, dining rooms, recreational and “play areas”.
- Ongoing developments and improvements to accommodation within the buildings including toilets and showering facilities for disabled children and young people, medical room and sound proofing for hearing impaired children/ young people.
- Provision of specialist furniture such as rise and fall tables, sinks and ovens where required.
- Consideration will be given to classroom organisation and furniture to enable disabled students fair access.
- Provision of disabled parking bays for staff, children and young people and visitors.
- Appropriate play equipment for children/ young people with a physical, visual, auditory or sensory disability.

As Witham Prospect School, we will ensure that children with disabilities are represented and encouraged to participate in:

- Performances
- Sports activities
- The school council
- Collective worship
- Extra-curricular activities
- All off-site activities within and out of school

However, as with all children, risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the safety of all participants in any activity.

The above policy is to be read in conjunction with the Witham Prospect School Accessibility Plan.

