

Accessibility Plan 2016-17

(This plan is linked to the Marland 'Equality Policy')

Introduction

Marland School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and respected. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

We accept that all our students have Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health issues with associated behavioural outcomes (SEMH). Some also have additional special needs that require additional support. The school's ethos is based around personalisation and meeting the respective needs of each and every student wherever feasible and wherever resource levels permit. Where a student's needs fall outside of the school's resourced levels, the school is committed to raising this immediately with the Local Authority Commissioner in order to seek positive solutions for the child concerned. We recognise that the quality of our provision should be available to students who might be described in other establishments as "disabled".

The definition of disability is:

"A person suffers a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on students' everyday lives. For the purpose of this plan 'disability' also encompasses 'special and/or additional needs'

We recognise:

- our duty under the Equality Act 2010
- Schools and LAs must:
 - not treat disabled students less favourably; *and*
 - take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
- that the Local Education Authority and School Governors have the duty to publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans
- that compliance with the Equality Act 2010 must be 'reasonable' for ALL students (existing cohort as well as new referrals) and not breach health & safety, risk assessment and/or duty of care responsibilities.

Scope of the Plan

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

1. Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education, learning and associated services.

Marland is committed to providing aids to improve the physical environment of the school on all sites and physical aids to access learning wherever feasible. The physical environment may include things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture. Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils

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2. Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in school curriculum.

Marland is committed to improving access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum for each and every individual student according to their respective interests, aspirations and special needs wherever feasible or to plan and prepare to respond to the particular needs of individual students where this is not immediately possible. This covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training.

3. Improving the delivery of information to students with disabilities.

Marland is committed to planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its students – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled students. This may, where appropriate and feasible, include alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information will also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the students' disabilities and students' and parents' preferred formats.

Related school policies

Equality for disabled students should be taken into account and be implicit within all relevant / related school policies.

Aims

Marland School aims to include all students, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this will include:

- having high expectations of all students and promoting their [realistic but challenging] aspirations
- finding ways in which all students can take part in the full broad and balanced curriculum
- planning out-of-school activities including all school trips and excursions so that students with disabilities can participate
- setting admissions policy and criteria which does not discriminate against students with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for students with disabilities
- planning the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of students with disabilities
- raising awareness of disability amongst school staff (teaching and non-teaching) through a programme of training
- by providing written information for students with disabilities in a form which is user friendly.
- by using language which does not offend in all its literature and make staff and students aware of the importance of language.
- by examining our library and reading books to ensure that there are examples of positive images of disabled people

Monitoring

Marland School recognises that it is essential to ensure that students with disabilities are not being disadvantaged and will make consistent efforts to ensure that all aspects of school are monitored accordingly.

Accessibility Plan 2016-17**REVIEW AND AUDIT UPDATE (2016):**

Please detail any significant physical barriers to full participation in the curriculum for students attending your school or wishing to attend, which you believe will require support from the LA.

Marland School is a SENtient Co-op Foundation Trust LA Maintained split site special school providing for the needs of students who have a Statement of SEN or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) for SEMH and/or associated complex needs.

The severity and complexity of the SEMH special needs of our current cohort, including unpredictable outbursts, aggression and targeted verbal and physical aggression, could place students with vulnerable disabilities / special needs at untenable risk of severe bullying or physical accidental / deliberate injury. All student referrals are risks assessed at the outset of the referral process and prior to the offer of a placement interview taking into account the following factors:

Marland Day School (Springfield Court, Roundswell, Barnstaple)

Day only – Catchment area: North Devon Co-educational age 8-16 (Y4-Y11) – 36 places

- This site was newly designed and built in 2012 in full accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements.

Marland Residential School (Peters Marland, nr Torrington)

Termly residential only – Catchment area: Devon County+, Boys only / age 10-16 (Y6-Y11) – 40 places

- This site consists of a broad range of temporary and permanent buildings spread out across a sloping site, many of them only accessible via steps or staircases. In addition, all residential bedrooms are currently only on the first floor of the main building. Five classrooms are separate from the main buildings and can only be accessed by external steps / stairs (there are no lifts or ramps) and the school gym via a public road with no pavement. The main school buildings include narrow corridors with many doors. All are highly inaccessible to students with severe physical disabilities and/or are wheelchair users.
- The majority of classrooms are too small to allow the use of wheelchairs or other mobility equipment (as identified in the Asset Management Plan suitability survey) and the narrow corridors could place such users at risk, especially in relation to the volatile special needs of the school's main SEMH cohort.
- There are no toilet or bathroom facilities in the main school building specifically designed for physically disabled people or large enough to facilitate wheelchair users. However, best use has been made of the elderly building's [severe] limitations and toilet facilities have been added to the ground floor of the main building, although these are not large enough to facilitate wheelchair access. There are such facilities in the more recently built 'Transition Centre' classroom block (disabled toilet facility) and the separate school gym (disabled shower and toilet facilities).
- We have no facilities or residential accommodation for female students (this school site is currently designated for male students only).
- We have no facilities for students with severe sensory impairments.
- Signage has been upgraded wherever possible to meet the needs of the visually impaired.

No referrals have been received for prospective students with severe physical or sensory disability in the past 12+ years and no records exist for any such prior referrals, however the vast majority of students who are referred with SEMH related disability needs are accommodated according to the role and designation of the school on both sites.

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Please detail any minor physical barriers to full participation in the curriculum for students attending your school or wishing to attend which you will deal with locally using Devolved Formula Capital Grant, Modernisation funds or other school resources.

- There are advanced plans to build a new 28 bed residential unit in the grounds of the school commencing November / December 2016. This has been designed and constructed in full accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements (see School Development Plan / SDP).
- Implementation of a fully ‘Personalised’ approach aimed at positive engagement with the complex SEMH needs of each and every individual student.
- Introduction of a range of suitable ‘Social & Emotional’ development strategies (including THRIVE), aimed at reducing disaffection and increasing positive relationships and improved engagement with learning.
- Introduction of an extensive range of strategies that have successfully reduced the need for physical intervention / restraint to control unsafe and/or potential dangerous and violent outbursts of behaviour.
- Many physical areas of the school have been updated to improve suitability to the needs of our current SEMH student cohort (see SDP & SDP evaluation), these include:
 - New Sports Hall / Gym new build (September 2014)
 - Extensive roof anti-climb measures installed (2013-2016)
 - Transition Centre Classroom block new build (2009)
 - Creation of a Horticulture Area (2008)
 - Conversion / construction of a Motor Vehicle workshop provision (2007)
 - All bedrooms & 3 Shower / Bathrooms extensively refurbished to a higher SEMH standard (phased between 2006-2014)
 - Separate KS2 classroom created at the Day School (September 2015)

ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN**Short Term Targets**

To be achieved by April 2017:

- 1 Governors and SLT to audit and discuss outstanding issues and progress to date.
- 2 Students to carry out “Disability Audit Week” in December 2016 as part of their PSHE / Citizenship curriculum.
- 3 Action Plan to be devised and any relevant points added to the School Development Plan.

Long-term targets***Improving the physical environment***

To continue to improve the accessibility of the whole school (especially the Residential site buildings) within the parameters highlighted previously.

Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curricula

Ensure that all students can access a range of subjects and activities that are personalised to meet their identified individual needs, in addition to their individual interest, preferences and aspirations wherever realistically possible.

Improve the delivery of information to students with disabilities

Ensure that all resources are accessible to all students on an equal basis and without discrimination.