

Marland School

Accessibility Plan 2025-28

**This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of
Marland School on 8th October 2025.**

Review Date: 8th October 2025

To be reviewed: October 2028

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 effect 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:
 - o not treat disabled students less favourably; *and*
 - o 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 keyboards, 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.

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.

REVIEW AND AUDIT UPDATE (2025):

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 an 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 considering the following factors:

Marland Primary School (Chanters Road, Bideford)

Day only – Catchment area: North Devon Co-educational age 5-11 (Y1-Y7) – 42 places.

- ☐ This existing building was originally built in the 1980's as an Adult Day Centre. It was newly adapted / converted in the summer of 2018 to become Marland's new Primary provision.
- ☐ All building adaptations undertaken during this extensive conversion / adaptation were, wherever viable, undertaken in accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements.
- ☐ The majority of classrooms can physically accommodate the use of wheelchairs or other mobility equipment if a SEMH risk assessment permitted (i.e. in relation to the volatile special needs of the school's SEMH cohort).
- ☐ There are existing DDA compliant toilet facilities close to the main entrance of the school building specifically designed for physically disabled people or large enough to facilitate wheelchair users but no suitable shower / bath facilities.
- ☐ A new build 2 classroom detached block was opened in September 2021. This building was newly designed and built in 2021 in accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements.

Marland Secondary School – Barnstaple (Springfield Court, Roundswell, Barnstaple)

Day only – Catchment area: North Devon Co-educational age 11-16 (Y7-Y11) – 40 places

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

Marland Secondary School – Bideford (Alverdiscott, East of the Water, Bideford)

Day only – Catchment area: North Devon Co-educational age 11-16 (Y7-Y11) – 40 places

- ☐ This existing building was originally built in approx. 2008 as an ASD Special School. It was newly adapted / converted in the summer of 2023 to expand Marland's secondary age capacity, its ability to encompass a broader range of social, emotional and trauma related need, and to offer viable provision for girls as well as boys.
- ☐ All building adaptations undertaken during this extensive conversion / adaptation were, wherever viable, undertaken in accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements.
- ☐ The majority of classrooms can physically accommodate the use of wheelchairs or other mobility equipment if a SEMH risk assessment permitted (i.e. in relation to the volatile special needs of the school's SEMH cohort).
- ☐ There is an existing DDA compliant toilet facility close to the main entrance of the school building specifically designed for physically disabled people or large enough to facilitate wheelchair users and includes a suitable shower.

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.
- ☐ A new purpose designed, DDA compliant Residential building with 26 individual student bedrooms was constructed, opened and occupied in April 2018. The remaining 14 students reside in the original residential building which was extensively refurbished and updated in 2018 and share limited accessibility associated with their original purpose and age. Access to this first floor is via internal and external staircases with no facility for a lift or ramp. The main school buildings include narrow corridors with many doors. All are problematic for students / others with severe physical disabilities and/or inaccessible for wheelchair users.
- ☐ 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. As stated in relation to the older residential accommodation, 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.
- ☐ In 2020 the old Art & Design classroom was relocated from the less accessible temporary external classroom block with restrictive, narrow stairs only access, to a more physically accessible classroom in the main school building. Whilst internal access is via a short staircase, there is level access via an external doorway if required.
- ☐ In 2021 the old Design Technology classroom suite with restrictive, narrow stairs only access was demolished and a new purpose designed level Technology Centre constructed and opened for use. Whilst access to the level the building is on is via a short but broad staircase due to sloping ground, there is level access throughout the building from this level. This building was newly designed and built-in accordance with the Equality Act and disabled access requirements.
- ☐ Most 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 older 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), the separate school gym (disabled shower and toilet facilities) and the new Residential Building.
- ☐ 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 20+ years and no records exist for any such prior referrals, however most students who are referred with SEMH related disability needs are accommodated according to the role and designation of the school on each site.

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.

- ☐ Further continued honing of our fully 'Personalised' and relational approach aimed at positive engagement with the complex SEMH needs of each and every individual student.
- ☐ Further continued honing of suitable 'Social & Emotional' development strategies (including THRIVE), aimed at reducing disaffection and increasing positive relationships and improved engagement with learning.
- ☐ Further continued honing of our 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:
 - Accessible 'Thrive' pods constructed on each of the secondary day school sites in 2024, both fully accessible.
 - Opening of a new site Secondary School in Bideford (September 2018) and subsequent new build expansion in 2023.
 - Development of a new partially accessible 'Forest School' in 2021.
 - Construction of a new Bike 'Pump Track' in 2021.
 - Construction of a new Technology Centre in 2021.
 - Relocation of the aging Art & Design classroom in 2020 as described previously.
 - Opening of a new site Primary School in Bideford (September 2018) and subsequent new build expansion in 2021.
 - Major refurbishment of our remaining Residential accommodation (Autumn 2018)
 - Construction of a new Residential Accommodation Building (April 2018)
 - 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 September 2026:

1. Ongoing accessibility honing and improvement where feasible on each of the 4 school sites (no specific actions identified at this stage).
2. Major ongoing development of the unified whole school 'Pathways' Curriculum to ensure that all students achieve their respective maximum potential on an individual needs led, personalised basis.

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 curriculum

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.