

THE NEW RUSH HALL SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan

Policy Reviewed: November 2016
Next Review date: November 2017

Headteacher: Mr J V d'Abbro
Chairman of Governors: Mr Greg Sage



Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the values and philosophy of The New Rush Hall School (NRHS) and the ongoing actions of the Governing Body to increase access to education for all pupils in relation to Accessibility. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. This policy is drawn up in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 as amended by the SEN and Disability Act (SENDA).

NRHS caters for pupils experiencing Social, Emotional and Mental Health and/or Behavioural Difficulties (SEMH) and as a 'special school' focuses its resources to ensure equality of access for all pupils regardless of disability, with their individual needs assessed, and resourced in order to ensure that pupils make progress with their behaviour management and academic attainment.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"A person has 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." In the context of NRHS, we recognise that many people do not see or recognise mental health and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as a disability; it is, as it were an, 'invisible disability'. As a school community we will challenge these assumptions and try to bring more understanding of the issues relating to our work.

Aims and Purpose of our Accessibility Plan

We aim to reduce and eliminate barriers to learning so that access to the curriculum, and full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability is maintained within an inclusive learning environment that maximises the participation of learners on NRHS courses and programmes of study, including The National Curriculum.

We further and more specifically aim to:

- Provide a high quality learning experience for learners with particular needs
- Embed to the extent reasonable, inclusion and accessibility in learning opportunities.
- Enhance the reputation of the NRHS as an exemplar of inclusive learning.

Equality and Diversity Principles

As a school and learning community we value diversity and we recognise that different learners bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength. We will not unlawfully discriminate or exclude based on individual characteristics or circumstances, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage or civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, caste, nationality,

ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status, or other distinctions.

Such discrimination represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfillment and is at odds with our commitment to equal opportunities. We will aspire to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment by taking steps to identify barriers to learning and addressing these. We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will work to prevent these differences being manifested in a way that violates any person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for others. We expect commitment and involvement from all our partners and members of the learning community in upholding our equality and diversity principles.

We recognise that at times the behaviour that pupils exhibit, may test our commitment to these underlying principles, but we will strive to see children for how they can become rather than make judgments of them as people because of their presenting behaviours. Staff will strive to hold a position of unconditional positive regard at all times and hold both the children and their needs in mind.

We will over time, and in line with reviewing this plan on an annual basis, ensure that where this plan and the principles contained within it are highlighted in other policies these will be made clear to staff, Governors and other members of the school community.

The major parts of our Accessibility Plan are outlined within the staff handbook. Directed time meetings for staff will be allocated to the plan on an annual basis.

Any complaints with regard to this Accessibility Plan will be dealt with through the existing school complaint procedures.

Achieving our objectives and principles

This section outlines the 3 main activities, which the school undertakes to promote accessibility and is plans to undertake, to achieve our accessibility plan and the principles outlined above.

1. Education & related activities - Curriculum

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, and other external professionals that can support the school to ensure equality of access and developmental achievement commensurate with their potential ability. Specialist and support staff are deployed to support a range of curricular needs – ie literacy, numeracy, speech and language programmes. Special considerations are in place for pupils taking part in test and examinations.

2. Physical environment

The school is located on the ground floor of a former 1950s build secondary school. There is wheelchair access by the main entrance, the Primary department entrance and the Early Years' entrance. The School will continue to take account of the needs of

pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities, services and fittings.

3. Provision of information

The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested. We will advise Parents/Carers at admission interview that if there are written matters, which they do not understand that we will offer support, e.g. translation into different languages. We will strive to ensure that we do not use jargon in correspondence, and use fonts and typeface that are easily viewed.

4. Publication

The School makes its Accessibility Plan available in the following ways:

- A copy is provided on request from the school office
- A copy is issued to all parents/carers at admission
- The full plan is available in a variety of formats, e.g. large print;
- A copy is on the school website.

Senior Member of Staff Responsible: John d'Abbro, Headteacher