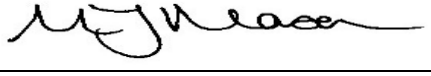
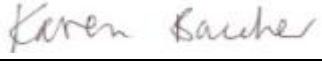
Southam College

Disability and Accessibility Policy

2026/27

Headteacher	Mel Mason 
Chair of Governors	Karen Boucher 
Person responsible for overseeing implementation	Amy Hawkes
Ratified date	2nd July 2026
Review date	8th July 2027

Southam College Accessibility Plan

Disability and Accessibility Plan 2026–27

Chair of Governors signature:
Headteacher's signature:
Date approved by Governing body:
Date of next review:
Person responsible for overseeing the implementation:

Ethos

Southam College aims to create a seamless educational experience for our students across all key stages to develop responsible, capable and confident young people who are active citizens in the 21st Century. We look to continually progress, building on success and acknowledge that provision changes over time. We will maximize student achievement in school through a rich and motivating curriculum and encourage all to strive by living our motto *'be the best you can be'*, demonstrating school values of kindness, confidence and resilience. The school will be recognised by our staff, parents and the local community as providers of a safe, creative and ethical environment reinforced by a vibrant Community Dimension. Overall, we will ensure that the school proactively adds value to each partner school so that the whole is always greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Aims

In line with the Equality Act 2010 the aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure all students, including those with a disability as defined within the Equality Act, have access to a full and broad curriculum
- Ensure that reasonable and suitable adjustments are made to the physical environment to ensure students with a disability are able to participate fully in school life
- Respond to individual student needs to make suitable adaptations to the physical environment
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for students with a physical or learning disability

Reasonable Adjustments

The school's duty to make reasonable adjustments is summarised in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Where something a school does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to non-disabled students.

Southam College is committed to making reasonable adjustments for students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities and in conjunction with the SEND Policy. These are explained further below.

Information of Students' Needs and Plans for Accessibility

Whole staff training is provided to share information on individual students. Where appropriate, specific advice is provided from Advisory services such as IDS (Integrated Disability Service), the Visual Impairment or Hearing Impairment Team.

Feedback from lesson observations or student tracking activities provide specific support on improving accessibility where appropriate.

Details of reasonable adjustments to be made by teachers and support staff are provided on ClassCharts in the SEND tab.

Summary reports of Health Care reports are written, shared with staff and stored in centrally accessed electronic files.

Individual students are reviewed by the SEND team and any relevant actions for modifying reasonable adjustments are made.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Physical Disabilities

During transition procedures, the Pastoral and Inclusion team request information from previous schools about any physical disabilities.

The Inclusion team review all information and arrange for a meeting with the student and family before the point of transition. Where the student also has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), the SENCo or Deputy SENCo attends the relevant review.

Where appropriate, students have access to physical aids such as adapted equipment and tools in Technology or Art. Where appropriate, students have access to IT to support with visual impairments.

During the first two weeks of transition to Year 7, the SEND team track and monitor how well students are accessing the physical environment and report back to the SENCo who liaises with support staff.

There are lifts in several buildings and the new main block is built to be fully accessible. There are accessible toilets across the school site.

Where appropriate, students are permitted to leave lessons 2 minutes earlier than other students to allow for ease of accessibility across the site.

All school visits are planned to accommodate any students with physical disabilities and have a named member of staff for support throughout.

Transport arrangements are made with the family or local authority where appropriate so students have easy access to the school buildings.

Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Learning Disabilities

The Inclusion Team alongside the SENCo, lead the development and management of the provision for students with learning disabilities.

CPD activities are available for staff at regular points throughout the year. This includes Neurodiversity awareness, and supporting students who are Neurodiverse.

The school promotes **dyslexia-friendly approaches and is working in line with Dyslexia Friendly Schools principles** as an effective way of providing Quality First Teaching for all students.

Support and advice on effective differentiation strategies are provided through workshops, through feedback from observations and learning walks and as part of whole staff training, ECT training and new staff training.

Where appropriate, a modified or alternative curriculum is provided to ensure students have equal opportunities to achieve.

At Key Stage 4, through consultation with the student and their family, students embark on an option package alongside core subjects.

Accessibility Action Plan 2026–27

1. Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Objectives

- To embed adaptive teaching as consistent, high-quality classroom practice
- To ensure all students can access a broad and balanced curriculum
- To further develop inclusive pathways for students with cognition and learning needs
- To embed Dyslexia Friendly Schools approaches across all curriculum areas
- To incorporate sensory-informed strategies to support engagement and independence

Actions to be Taken

- Implement a refined SEND quality assurance cycle focused on adaptive teaching, engagement and independence
- Track SEND progress in detail following each data collection and implement timely interventions
- Embed dyslexia-friendly strategies including accessible fonts, scaffolding and reduced cognitive load
- Expand the use of assistive technology such as text-to-speech and structured resources
- Develop and refine supported pathways, including Ready to Learn provision
- Deliver ongoing staff CPD on inclusive practice and neurodiversity
- Work with **Lisa Heywood (Occupational Therapist)** to train staff on sensory regulation, movement breaks and engagement strategies
- Develop student voice opportunities to inform curriculum adaptation

Leads

HW, LN, GN, Vic Shearsby, Lisa Heywood (OT)

2. Improving and Maintaining Access to the Physical Environment

Objectives

- To ensure all areas of the site are fully accessible
- To meet the needs of both current and incoming students
- To develop sensory-aware environments across the school
- To ensure practical learning environments are inclusive

Actions to be Taken

- Conduct a full accessibility audit of the school site
- Complete a sensory environment review led by **Lisa Heywood (OT)**
- Implement recommendations including calm spaces and adapted environments
- Continue collaboration with Integrated Disability Service and specialist teams
- Review and adapt practical subject spaces to ensure accessibility
- Develop low-stimulation and regulation spaces for students
- Strengthen transition processes to identify environmental needs early

Leads

HW, IDS, Lisa Heywood (OT)

3. Improving the Delivery of Information to Pupils with a Disability

Objectives

- To ensure communication is accessible for all students
- To support students with processing and sensory needs
- To promote awareness of visible and hidden disabilities
- To reduce barriers to understanding across lessons and school systems

Actions to be Taken

- Review and adapt communication methods including signage and learning materials
- Embed dyslexia-friendly communication approaches across all areas
- Increase use of visual supports and simplified instructions
- Provide staff guidance on reducing cognitive load
- Work with **Lisa Heywood (OT)** to adapt communication for sensory and processing needs
- Develop peer awareness and inclusion programmes
- Ensure assistive systems (e.g. induction loops) are fully operational

Leads

HW, Lisa Heywood (OT)

Monitoring Arrangements

This document will be reviewed annually with the Director of Inclusion during one of the school's visits. It may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body.

Links with Other Policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Risk assessments and policies
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives statement
- SEND policy and Information Report
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy

Autumn Term Actions (Assessment, Audit and Foundations)

1. Accessibility Audit

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of the school site to identify barriers to physical access (entrances, corridors, classrooms, toilets, signage).
- Review fire evacuation procedures to ensure safe exit for all pupils, including those with mobility or sensory needs.
- Audit classrooms for sensory load (lighting, noise, seating arrangements).
- Evaluate digital accessibility (website, homework platforms, online communication systems).

2. Student Needs Identification

- Update SEND register with clear identification of access needs (not just diagnosis).
- Review EHCPs and support plans to ensure accessibility requirements are clearly specified.
- Gather student voice regarding barriers to learning and environment.
- Liaise with external professionals (e.g. SALT, Autism Specialist) to ensure recommendations are implemented.

3. Staff Training and Awareness

- Deliver whole-staff training on reasonable adjustments and inclusive classroom practice.
- Provide targeted CPD on:
    - Autism-friendly environments
    - ADHD support strategies
    - Communication needs
- Ensure all staff understand responsibilities under the Equality Act.

4. Curriculum Accessibility Planning

- Ensure all departments review schemes of learning for accessibility:
    - Differentiation strategies
    - Scaffolded resources
    - Alternative formats (visual, simplified text, chunked tasks)
- Introduce expectations for use of:
    - Visual supports
    - Checklists and timers
    - Explicit instruction

5. Communication Systems

- Ensure all communication with families is accessible:
    - Clear language
    - Consistent platforms
- Review availability of alternative formats (printed materials, coloured paper, digital access).

6. Immediate Adjustments

- Implement quick wins identified in audit:
    - Seating plans adjusted
    - Quiet spaces identified
    - Movement breaks introduced

Spring Term Actions (Implementation and Development)

1. Environment Improvements

- Begin physical adjustments identified in Autumn audit:
    - Improve signage (clear, visual, consistent)
    - Adapt classrooms for sensory needs
    - Ensure accessibility of key areas (toilets, entrances)
- Develop designated safe/regulation spaces for students.

2. Quality First Teaching

- Monitor implementation of inclusive teaching strategies through:
    - Learning walks
    - Book looks
    - Student voice

- Provide coaching for staff where gaps are identified.

3. Targeted Interventions

- Implement structured interventions based on identified needs:
    - Literacy support
    - Social communication interventions
    - Emotional regulation support
- Ensure interventions are time-bound and reviewed regularly.

4. Assistive Technology

- Introduce and embed use of assistive technology where appropriate:
    - Text-to-speech tools
    - Speech-to-text software
    - Visual planning tools
- Train both staff and students in effective use.

5. Family Engagement

- Strengthen communication with families:
    - Regular review meetings
    - Clear guidance on support strategies
- Provide support for families to understand adjustments being made.

Summer Term Actions (Review, Embedding and Sustainability)

1. Impact Evaluation

- Evaluate effectiveness of accessibility actions:
    - Student progress data
    - Behaviour and attendance data
    - Feedback from students, staff and parents
- Identify what has improved access and where gaps remain.

2. Transition Planning

- Ensure strong transition planning for:
    - Incoming students
    - Students moving between key stages
- Share accessibility needs clearly with receiving staff or institutions.

3. Embedding Practice

- Ensure successful strategies become standard practice:
    - Update teaching expectations
    - Integrate into staff induction
- Create accessible resource banks for staff use.

4. Staff Development

- Provide refresher training based on identified needs.
- Share best practice across departments.
- Develop internal expertise (e.g. SEND champions).

5. Strategic Planning

- Use evaluation findings to inform next year's accessibility plan.
- Prioritise longer-term improvements (e.g. building adaptations, technology investment).

6. Reporting and Compliance

- Produce formal accessibility report:
    - Clearly outline actions taken
    - Demonstrate impact
    - Identify next steps
- Ensure compliance with statutory duties and inspection expectations.

Success Criteria

- Students with SEND can access the full curriculum alongside peers.
- Reduction in identified barriers (physical, curricular, communication).
- Increased staff confidence in inclusive teaching.
- Positive feedback from students and families.
- Clear evidence of reasonable adjustments in practice.

Monitoring Responsibility

- SENCO / Assistant Headteacher
- SEND Team
- SLT Link for Inclusion
- Governors (oversight and accountability)

Monitoring will take place termly, with adjustments made as required.