

SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL



Accessibility Plan

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Review Date	Cycle	Reviewer	Adopted	Committee
November 2025	Annually	I Hardy	November 2025	Finance & Premises

Accessibility Plan

1. Introduction

As part of the Government's Priority Schools Building Program, Seaham High School opened on a new site in September 2016 with a new two storey building to accommodate 1200 students.

We welcome all students and value them as individuals, treating them equally and with respect. We believe that all children have the right to have their own particular needs recognised and addressed in order to achieve success.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all children, staff, parents/carers and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

2. Definition of Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010 children who have SEN may have a disability 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'.

3. The Purpose of the Plan

This Accessibility Plan has been drawn up in consultation with the Local Authority, children, parents/carers, regular visitors, staff and governors of the school. As part of transition procedures, we aim to clarify disability or health conditions in early communications with all parties concerned and ensure alterations are accurate and needs are addressed.

The purpose of the plan is to show how Seaham High School actively seeks to improve access and increase the accessibility of provision for all children, staff and visitors to the school where needed. The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant actions to:

- Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. All students are given the opportunity to participate in a range of in class and extra-curricular activities where appropriate and adjustments are made to allow participation where practicable.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for the students with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied students. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these students in accessing the curriculum. The new building has allowed for rise and fall desks in the ICT, Science and Technology food room including a rise and fall sink and eye level oven for wheelchair users.

- Improve the delivery of **written information** to students, staff, parents/carers and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, text books and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Inclusion Policy
- Special Education Needs & Disabilities Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- School Brochure and Mission Statement
- Teaching and Learning Policy

As curriculum policies are renewed, a section relating to access will be added to that on Equality and Diversity. The terms of reference for all governors' committees will contain an item on "having regard to matters relating to Access".

- The school brochure will make reference to this Accessibility Plan.
- The school's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.
- The Accessibility Plan will be monitored through the Curriculum and Buildings Committees of the Governors.
- The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority in developing and implementing this Accessibility Plan.
- OFSTED, as part of their inspection cycle, will monitor the Accessibility Plan.

4. Accessibility Audit and Action Plan

An audit will be carried out annually together with reviewing and adjusting the Action Plan both of which are attached and relates to key aspects of accessibility. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this first Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent Accessibility Plans.

New plans will be drawn up every three years and the audit will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Accessibility Plan for the following period.

We acknowledge that there is a need for ongoing awareness raising and training for staff and governors in the matter of disability discrimination and the need to inform attitudes on this matter.

The Buildings Committee review this policy every three years in the spring term or sooner if required.

Accessibility Audit – September 2022

The Facilities Manager has undertaken the accessibility audit and will routinely review the premises in relation to access and identification of potential barriers towards SEND. A detailed review of the audit is described below:

1. Building

Seaham High School comprises of a two-storey building to accommodate approximately 1200 students. The pathways from the car parks to the principal entrance of the school are adequate and lit. The student entrance is easily located and can be accessed by double doors leading into the main building and are used by both able-bodied and students with disabilities.

Classrooms on the ground floor are easily accessible. Classrooms on the first floor can be accessed using the stairs which all have handrails. A lift is available for any students who cannot ascend or descend stairs. This has a remote monitoring system in place whereby in the case of an emergency you can press a button which will dial the monitoring station and make them aware of the emergency. Corridors throughout the building are of adequate width for a wheel chair user and other people to pass through. Floor surfaces are either carpet or vinyl.

2. Physical Environment

The majority of the students walk to and from school, some students arrive and leave school escorted by parents/carers. There is a one-way system into the school grounds where parents/carers drop off students. There is an electronic gate which remains closed between the hours of 3.00 pm and 3.10 pm to stop any traffic when students are leaving the school.

There are three entrances for pedestrians, one gate at the main entrance to the school, there is a side entrance gate to the west and the third gate to the east is currently not in use due to a housing building development.

There is a designated car park which is signposted for staff which is situated to the left as you enter the school gates. Disabled parking bays are also available within this area for staff. At the front of the main building there are five designated disabled parking spaces and two spaces for visitor parking. There are also seven designated visitor car parks leading up to the main entrance on the left. There is a designated large parking space for deliveries with a dropped kerb and signage. There is a site speed limit of 5mph which is displayed via road signs.

3. Furniture

The seating and tabling throughout the school is acceptable. There are rise and fall desks in all ICT classrooms, Technology food room and Science classrooms. There is also a rise and fall sink and hob and eye level oven for wheelchair users. During the audit it was noticed that there were no rise and fall desks in music.

4. Dining Hall/Main Hall

The dining is situated on the ground floor which is easily accessible and has two exits with a clear width of 1200mm which also allows for community use. The main hall is located on the ground floor with easy access for wheelchair users. There are double exit doors leading out of the building.

5. Toilet Facilities

There are two sets of 6 student toilets on the ground floor with hand washing facilities within the immediate vicinity of the toilets. There is one toilet that is designated for students with disabilities and has handrails and higher toilets. The toilet doors also open up outwards rather than inwards to allow more access. There are three sets of 6 student toilets on the first floor with hand washing facilities within the immediate vicinity of the toilets.

There are one set of three staff toilets located on the ground floor and hand washing facilities are in each of these toilet cubicles. One set of six toilets for staff are also located on the first floor. One of which is accessible for a wheelchair user.

There are 5 inclusive toilets located in the main body of the building in between each set of student toilets, these all have wheelchair access and disabled WC distress alarms. There is a 6th disabled toilet located at the end of the East wing near to the first aid room.

A toilet for visitors is located at the main reception, this is also accessible for wheelchair users and has also had a heavy-duty baby changing table installed. Disabled WC distress alarms have been installed and commissioned within all accessible toilets/hygiene rooms. Each room has incorporated a ceiling mounted pull cord, local wall mounted manual reset button and over door audible visual indicator units.

6. Sporting Facilities

There are 2 exits to the Sports Hall each with a clear width of 800mm. There is a pathway leading up to the sport pitches. There is a Fitness room and Dance Studio all with the same clearance and located on the ground floor. There are changing rooms and shower facilities for both students and staff located within the PE Department. There are also changing and shower facilities for wheelchair users.

7. Hygiene Room

There is a hygiene room/physiotherapy room located on the first floor which has been designed to accommodate a range of physiotherapeutic activities including lifting of children by the use of ceiling-mounted equipment. There is space for the use and storage of mobility equipment and there is also a shower wash basin and changing facilities including a bed. The school has installed a bio bidet toilet in consultation with the Local Authority.

8. First aid room

There is a First aid room located on the ground floor at in room G94 located at the end of the East wing next to the community entrance. This room has washing facilities and is located next to the accessible toilet. This is managed by the First aider

9. Lighting

Within areas used for public entertainment and accessible to parents/carers and the general public during the evenings i.e., the Main Hall maintains illuminated emergency exit signage which has been provided above the exit doors with the remainder of the emergency lighting incorporated in the high-level lighting. External lighting is also provided around the site and car park. Emergency lighting will be provided in the following locations:

- all escape routes,
- windowless accommodation,
- internal corridors more than 30m long,
- open plan areas more than 60m²,
- all toilet accommodation with a floor area over 8m²,
- windowless toilet accommodation with a floor area not more than 8m²,
- externally over final exit doors.

10. Signage

All exits and routes to exits are clearly marked with appropriate escape signs so that students, staff and visitors can easily determine their most direct route to a place of safety in the event of an emergency. The signage has been designed and installed in accordance with BS 5499: Part 1. Signs are located above:

- final exits from the building,
- storey exits,
- changes in direction of the escape route,
- doors from rooms where more than one exit is provided.
- Signs are not proposed over the door from rooms where only one exit is provided.

11. Information and Controls

Visitors are generally escorted around the school. Students with impairments would require assistance when first attending the school, transition days for students and induction days for new staff will quickly familiarise themselves with the layout of the building. Additional installations of intercom, assistance alarms and access control system were put in during the build.

12. Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

There is a small area of the school at ground floor level that is dedicated for SEN use and consists of two small SEN group rooms. The staff to student ratio is higher in these areas, in some cases 1:1. The rooms open directly onto the main circulation route. An effective managed escape with limited travel distances can be readily delivered from this area.

It is anticipated that students with Special Educational Needs in other areas of the school will have a higher staff to student ratio or even be accompanied by a teaching assistant, who can assist with escape in a fire scenario.

13. Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Visually Impaired

For students who are deaf and hard of hearing, there are flashing beacons to alert them to a fire evacuation. During the new build, furniture was considered for students with visual impairment, whereby the colour of furniture would contrast with the carpet and the chair colour shall preferably differ from tables. Individual PEEPs will be in place for visually impaired students.

14. Fire and Emergency

The ground floor has five exits to external air for students with additional exits at the main entrance, auditorium, kitchen and the Sports Hall. The first floor has three protected escape staircases; one at the end of each wing. There is also an exit from the internal plant room via an external staircase into the external sprinkler tank compound. Two accommodation staircases are also provided; one towards each end of the void within the main central spine.

15. Refuges

In the event of a fire there are designated refuge points. A refuge is a place of relative safety where those requiring assistance can wait for management/staff assistance. The school has had three evacuation chairs installed at the top of each staircase at the end of each wing. The refuge area is protected by a minimum of 30-minute fire-resisting construction and leads directly to a place of safety. There is a 2 way communication system installed at each refuge point that connects to a control panel at the front of the school. This panel is manned during all evacuations.

Evacuation from this point to a place of safety outside the building requires manual assistance from the school's personnel. The degree of manual assistance required depends on the type of disability and the available management resource.

The minimum capacity of a refuge under contemporary guidance is one space per escape stair and is not less than 900mm x 1400mm. Refuges are provided within protected escape staircases on all storeys above ground where access direct to external air is not available; i.e. at first floor level. All refuge spaces are identified by fire safety signs complying with BS 5449 Part 1 [5].

16. Evacuation Chairs

Evacuation chairs provide an effective method of assisting disabled persons out of the premises with minimal lifting. The school has three evacuation chairs and are located at the top of each staircase at the end of each wing. Three members of staff have had training in the use of the chair and manual handling techniques.

17. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Any student requiring assistance during an evacuation should have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Following discussions with an individual, a plan can be developed for the specific needs, which should contain the details of how they will evacuate the premises.

By taking into account a PEEP, management will be made aware of the amount of staff support required for each evacuation and will be able to make any reasonable adjustments to the premises or procedures that are necessary. PEEPs may be required for staff as well as students.

Accessibility Action Plan – September 2025

Key Aspects	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Staff Responsible
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the physical environment of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take into account the needs of students, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairment when planning and undertaking any future improvements and refurbishment of the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring anyone with a disability are able to access the whole school environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create access plans and risk assessment for any individual Corridors and areas are kept free from rubbish and any clutter Classrooms are spacious and free standing furniture kept to a minimum to allow movement Rise and fall desks in Music room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO/HT/Bursar/Facilities Manager
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students using the lift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure students who have to use the lift have an access card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO/Support Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure disabled students can be safely evacuated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review personal evacuation plans/staff responsibilities Ensure signage is visible and Fire Evacuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities Manager SENCO

		Procedures/Health & Safety policies are up to date		
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate deployment of support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO to liaise with staff • Up to date training and development of staff understanding students' needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO/whole school staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure high quality teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT Link/Local Authority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and support transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has transition days for new students. The SENCO has meetings with feeder primary schools if starting in the new year to identify any needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO/Year Leaders/Student Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish close relationships with parents/carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings, regular contact, parents' evenings, text messages, keeping parents/carers informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO/Year Leaders/Student Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish close relationships with outside agencies for students with additional needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure collaboration between all key personnel. Sharing information about the child where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO/Year Leaders/All Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all statutory policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all policies are reviewed and up to date tailoring to the school's needs. Policies are to reflect current legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO/SLT Link

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SEND students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO to review all student records, remove and add where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO/SLT Link
Written Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to information for parents/carers/staff and visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with parents/carers/staff and visitors in a format that is appropriate for them. Regular communication with parents/carers. Parents/carers have access to newsletters, noticeboards, parents' evenings, website, text messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO SENCO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review student records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure information is correct and up to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates provided when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO/Outside Agencies/Support Staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure medical needs of students are met fully within the capability of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct parent interviews, liaise with external agencies, identify any training needs and establish individual protocols where needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure parents/carers are involved in key decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with parents/carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCO