SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan

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Adopted	Cycle	Reviewer	Next review date	Committee
November 2026	Annually	I Hardy	November 2027	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, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial. "Long-term" generally means lasting, or likely to last, at least 12 months or for the rest of the person's life.

Special educational needs and disability may overlap, but they are not the same. A pupil may have a disability without having special educational needs, and may have special educational needs without having a disability.

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. The school will make reasonable adjustments, including suitable equipment and support where needed, to prevent disabled pupils from being placed at a substantial disadvantage. Accessibility needs will be considered in advance when planning lessons, extracurricular activities and educational visits. Adjustments will be reviewed with pupils and their parents or carers.

- Improve access to the curriculum so that disabled pupils can participate in learning and school activities and are prepared for life alongside their peers. 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 access to written and digital information for disabled pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors. This includes learning materials, timetables, letters and information about school events. The school will discuss individual needs and provide information in a suitable format within a reasonable time. Pupils and parents/carers can request support through the SENCO; staff and visitors can contact the school office.

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

- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Policy Statement
- Eden Learning Trust's Estates Management Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Inclusion Policy
- Special Education Needs & Disabilities Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- School Brochure and Mission Statement
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- School SEND Information Report
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- School emergency evacuation procedures

When reviewing school policies and planning changes, staff and governors will consider how this affects disabled pupils' access to learning, facilities and information. Any barriers identified will be recorded and addressed through the Accessibility Action Plan.

- The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website. A paper copy or a copy in an accessible format can be requested from the school office.
- The school's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.
- The Headteacher will oversee the Accessibility Plan. The SENCO will monitor access to learning and information, and the Facilities and Health and Safety Manager will monitor access to the premises. Progress and outstanding actions will be reported annually to the Governors' Finance and Premises Committee.
- The school will work with Eden Learning Trust, pupils, parents/carers and relevant specialists to develop and carry out this Accessibility Plan. Where changes to the premises are needed, the Facilities and Health and Safety Manager will coordinate with GTFM and the DfE through the agreed contractual

arrangements. Advice will be sought from Durham County Council where appropriate.
- The school will monitor progress against this plan and keep records of completed actions, outstanding improvements and their impact on accessibility.

4. Accessibility Audit and Action Plan

The school will review accessibility annually and update the attached Action Plan to reflect current needs, completed improvements and outstanding barriers. Each action will identify a lead person, a target completion date, the resources needed and how success will be checked. Where an action is delayed, the reason, revised completion date and any temporary measures to support access will be recorded.

The Accessibility Plan will cover a three-year period, with its start and end dates clearly recorded. Progress will be reviewed annually, and the plan will be updated sooner if needs or circumstances change. Before the three-year period ends, the school will review remaining barriers and use the findings to prepare the next plan.

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 Governors' Finance and Premises Committee will review the Accessibility Plan and progress against its actions annually, or sooner where significant changes are needed. A new three-year plan will be submitted for approval before the current plan ends.

Accessibility Audit – September 2026

The Facilities and Health and Safety Manager will review access to the premises with input from the SENCO, pupils, staff and parents/carers as appropriate. The review will identify barriers affecting disabled people and record any improvements needed in the Accessibility Action Plan. The findings below describe the premises at the date of the audit and will be updated following subsequent reviews.

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 has double doors leading into the main building and is used by pupils with and without disabilities. Access routes and doorways will be kept clear, and any barriers identified will be recorded in the Accessibility Action Plan.

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 pupils who cannot use the stairs. If the lift is unavailable, the school will arrange suitable ground-floor teaching spaces and access to necessary facilities so that affected pupils can continue their education. Individual evacuation arrangements will be set out in Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), where needed, and will follow the school's fire evacuation procedures. 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. The audit identified a need to review access to suitable desks in Music.

4. Dining Hall/Main Hall

The school uses three areas for dining: the existing dining hall, the main hall and the new, separate dining building. The existing dining hall and main hall are on the ground floor of the main school building. The new dining building is single-storey and has step-free access.

In all three areas, access routes, entrances and seating arrangements will be kept clear so that disabled pupils can move around and use the facilities. Suitable seating and assistance will be provided where needed. The main hall also has double exit doors leading outside.

Any barriers identified in these areas will be recorded in the Accessibility Action Plan, with a responsible person and target completion date.

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.

The separate dining building also provides an accessible toilet with support rails and an assistance alarm. This facility will be included in the school's arrangements for cleaning, accessibility checks, alarm testing and maintenance.

Accessible toilets will be kept available and clear of stored items. Alarm pull cords will remain within reach, including from floor level. The Facilities and Health and Safety Manager will ensure that checks and maintenance are arranged through the responsible provider and that faults are reported promptly. Staff will be informed how to respond when an assistance alarm is activated.

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.

The school also has a floodlit 3G sports pitch with a ramped access route, steps with handrails and a surfaced spectator area. Access routes and gates will be kept clear. Staff will consider individual access and support needs when planning activities so that disabled pupils can participate. Any barriers identified will be recorded in the Accessibility Action Plan, with a responsible person and target completion date.

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.

Staff using the hygiene room will receive training appropriate to the equipment and the person's support needs. Lifting and personal-care assistance will follow agreed care plans and risk assessments. Equipment will be checked and maintained, and faults

reported promptly. If the room or lift is unavailable, suitable alternative arrangements will be agreed to protect the person's care and dignity.

8. Medical Room

The medical room is located in the new dining building, which has step-free access. It provides a designated space for pupils who are unwell or require first aid or medical support. Access routes and the room layout will be kept clear to accommodate wheelchair users and anyone needing assistance. Use of the room will follow the school's First Aid Policy and Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy.

9. Lighting

Lighting will be maintained in the main school building, new dining building and external access routes to support safe movement, including for people with visual impairments. Individual lighting needs will be considered, and any barriers identified will be recorded in the Accessibility Action Plan.

Emergency lighting will be inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the school's fire safety arrangements. The Facilities and Health and Safety Manager will monitor checks and arrange for faults to be addressed by the responsible maintenance provider.

10. Signage

Signs will be clear, easy to read and positioned to help pupils, staff and visitors find entrances, rooms, accessible toilets and other facilities. Individual needs, including visual or learning difficulties, will be considered when reviewing signage.
Fire exit signs will be maintained in accordance with the school's fire risk assessment and evacuation arrangements. Signs and routes must remain visible and unobstructed. Missing, damaged or unclear signs will be reported to the Facilities and Health and Safety Manager for action.

11. Information and Controls

Pupils, staff and visitors who need help finding their way around the school will be offered suitable information and support. Transition and induction arrangements will take account of individual needs, including access to the main school building, new dining building and outdoor facilities.
Intercoms, assistance alarms and access controls will be kept accessible and maintained. Where someone cannot use a control independently, suitable assistance or an alternative arrangement will be provided. Faults or access difficulties will be reported to the Facilities and Health and Safety Manager.

12. Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

The school provides support spaces and teaching arrangements to meet pupils' individual needs. The SENCO will work with staff, pupils and parents/carers to identify barriers to learning and access, and agree suitable support.
Where a pupil needs assistance during an emergency, their evacuation arrangements will be recorded in a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). The plan will identify the assistance required, responsible staff and cover arrangements. Staff must not assume that a teaching assistant will always be available.

13. Hearing and Visual Access

The school will identify the support needed by pupils, staff and visitors with hearing or visual impairments. This may include suitable seating, clear signs, contrasting colours, accessible information and communication support.
Flashing fire alarm beacons are provided within the main school building. Individual evacuation arrangements will identify how anyone who may not hear or see an alarm will be alerted and assisted. Alarm arrangements in the new dining building and other areas will be checked against individual needs, with additional measures provided where required.

14. Fire and Emergency

Emergency evacuation arrangements will cover the main school building, new dining building and outdoor facilities, including the 3G pitch. Escape routes and exits will be kept clear and available whenever these areas are occupied.

Anyone who needs assistance will have suitable evacuation arrangements agreed in advance. These will identify safe routes, the assistance required and responsible staff, including cover for absences. Arrangements will be checked through drills and reviewed when needs, staffing or building use change.

15. Refuges

Designated refuge points are provided within the main school building for people who need assistance to evacuate. These are temporary waiting areas forming part of an agreed evacuation plan, not the final place of safety.
Refuge spaces and access routes will be kept clear. The two-way communication system will be checked and maintained, and designated staff will monitor the control panel during evacuations.
Individual evacuation plans will identify the refuge to be used, how assistance will be requested, the staff responsible and how the person will reach a place of safety outside. Cover arrangements will be in place for staff absences.

16. Evacuation Chairs

Three evacuation chairs are provided at the designated staircase locations in the main school building. They will be kept accessible, checked and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Only staff who have received appropriate training will operate the chairs. The school will maintain enough trained staff to carry out its evacuation plans, including cover for absences. Refresher training and practice will be arranged as needed.
An evacuation chair will only be used where it is suitable for the person's needs and forms part of their agreed evacuation plan. Alternative arrangements will be made where a chair is unsuitable.

17. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be prepared for any pupil or member of staff who needs individual assistance to evacuate, including where the need is temporary. Suitable arrangements will also be agreed for visitors who need assistance.
Each plan will be developed with the person concerned and, where appropriate, their parents/carers and relevant specialists. It will explain how they will be alerted, the route and equipment to be used, the assistance required, and the staff responsible, including cover for absences.
Plans will cover the areas the person uses, including the new dining building and outdoor facilities where relevant. They will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if needs, staffing or access arrangements change. Relevant staff will be briefed, and arrangements will be practised safely.
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Accessibility Action Plan – September 2026

Key Aspects	Targets	Strategies	Timescale	Staff Responsible
Physical environment	• Improve the physical environment of the school	• 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	• Ongoing	• SLT
	• Ensuring anyone with a disability are able to access the whole school environment	• 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	• Ongoing	• SENCO/HT/Business Manager / Facilities Manager
	• Students using the lift	• Ensure students who have to use the lift have an access card	• Ongoing	• SENCO/Support Staff
	• Ensure disabled students can be safely evacuated	• Review personal evacuation plans/staff responsibilities • Ensure signage is visible and Fire Evacuation	• Annually	• Facilities Manager • SENCO

		Procedures/Health & Safety policies are up to date		
Curriculum	• Ensure appropriate deployment of support staff	• SENCO to liaise with staff • Up to date training and development of staff understanding students' needs	• Ongoing	• SENCO/whole school staff
	• Ensure high quality teaching	• CPD sessions	• Ongoing	• SLT Link/Local Authority
	• Plan and support transition	• 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	• Upon transition	• SENCO/Year Leaders/Student Guidance
	• To establish close relationships with parents/carers	• Meetings, regular contact, parents' evenings, text messages, keeping parents/carers informed	• Ongoing	• SENCO/Year Leaders/Student Guidance
	• To establish close relationships with outside agencies for students with additional needs	• To ensure collaboration between all key personnel. Sharing information about the child where necessary	• Ongoing	• SENCO/Year Leaders/All Staff
	• Review all statutory policies	• Ensure all policies are reviewed and up to date tailoring to the school's needs. Policies are to reflect current legislation	• Annually	• SENCO/SLT Link

	• Review SEND students	• SENCO to review all student records, remove and add where necessary	• Annually	• SENCO/SLT Link
Written Information	• Ensure access to information for parents/carers/staff and visitors	• 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	• Ongoing • Ongoing	• SENCO • SENCO
	• Review student records	• Ensure information is correct and up to date	• Updates provided when required	• SENCO/Outside Agencies/Support Staff
	• Ensure medical needs of students are met fully within the capability of the school	• Conduct parent interviews, liaise with external agencies, identify any training needs and establish individual protocols where needed	• Ongoing	• SENCO
	• Ensure parents/carers are involved in key decision making	• Meeting with parents/carers	• Ongoing	• SENCO