

Policy and Procedure on

Accessibility Policy

The Forum School

Policy Author	Mel McCarthy
Approval Date	September 2025
Approved By	Mel McCarthy
Version No	2
Policy Level	The Forum School
Staff Groups Affected	All Staff

Contents

1. Monitoring and Review	1
2. Terminology	2
3. Introductory statement.....	3
4. Student Profile	3
5. Background:	3
6. Strategies:	4
7. Special Educational Needs - Code of Practice	4
8. Timeframe.....	4
9. Anticipated Outcomes.....	4
10. Success Criteria	5
11. Welcoming and Preparing for Disabled Students	5

1. Monitoring and Review

The Interim Principal will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than three years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

- 1.1. The local contents of this policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head of Service.

Signed:



Mel McCarthy
Interim Principal, The Forum School

2.1. 2. Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

'Establishment' or 'Location'	this is a generic term which means the Children's Home/school/college. The Forum School is a school and children's home
Individual	means any child or young person under the age of 18 or young adult between the ages of 18 and 25. At The Forum School we have children and young people attending and/or residing between the ages of 7 and 19 years
Service Head	This is the senior person with overall responsibility for the school and children's home. At The Forum School this is the Mel McCarthy (Interim Principal) and Kerry Byron (Care Services Manager)
Key Worker	Members of staff that have special responsibility for Individuals residing at or attending the Establishment.
Parent	means parent or person with Parental Responsibility
Regulatory Authority	Regulatory Authority is the generic term used in this policy to describe the independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services. At The Forum School this is Ofsted
Social Worker	This means the worker allocated to the child/family. If there is no allocated worker, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	Placing Authority means the local authority/agency responsible for placing the child or commissioning the service

The Forum School has drawn up a three-year plan for compliance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 for the school site, to show how it will progressively meet the demands of the Disability Discrimination Act. A pre-requisite to drawing up the Accessibility Plan has been the completion of space audits at both venues.

3. Introductory statement

We are committed to providing an environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents/guardians/carers and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

4. Student Profile

The Forum School educates and cares for up to 68 young people from 7 to 19 years old, who are experiencing difficulties as a result of a diagnosis of severe autism, and other associated difficulties falling within the autistic spectrum, for example epilepsy, ADHD, PDD, and dyspraxia. Students range from low to average ability, but all demonstrate difficulties in a range of key areas of development affecting everyday life. These difficulties may embrace social understanding and communication, flexibility, coordination and sequencing, attention and concentration, repetitive and obsessive behaviours. Most students also experience global or specific learning difficulties of a severe to moderate nature. Challenging and controlling behaviour is also a common feature.

We believe that we 'actively enable each and every one of the students in our care to achieve their personal best; however it is defined by them and not for them.'

We believe that students with autism should have access to a calm, consistent, eclectic approach to meet their very individual needs and address their diagnosis. In order to achieve their full potential, we must have high expectations and an open, honest partnership with parents and all attached professionals. Communication is the key to all of our work and all staff are asked to respect each student's individual communication style.

The ultimate goal of The Forum School is to support our students, through specialist approaches, appropriate environments and staff expertise, to prepare them to meet the demands of everyday life as they move forward from the school into adult provisions. We want them to live as independently as possible, making decisions about their lives and having a degree of autonomy commensurate with their abilities.

5. Background:

The Forum School layout and facilities

The school has a ground floor and upper floors in several buildings. The following facilities include: classrooms, a food technology room, a science laboratory, a design and technology suite, an ICT suite, therapy rooms and outside play areas. There is access for disabled children and adults on both the ground and first floor. There are also disabled toilets.

We welcome children where we are able to provide appropriate provision to manage their disabilities and enable them to become as personally adequate, socially competent and independent as their potential will allow. We plan, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the school in the following areas. We are determined to further develop our expertise and facilities to meet the needs of these children. This is especially relevant as local authorities would choose our school because we are able to provide appropriate support for children and young people in Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Targets:

Our targets are:

- to always look for and consider ways to increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- to have in place contingency plans for students who have returned to school after an accident or illness, enabling them to have full access to the curriculum;
- to continually aim to improve the physical environment in order to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- to improve the delivery of written information to students, staff, parents/guardians/carers and visitors with disabilities, whenever required.

6. Strategies:

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

- Admissions Policy
- Disability Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

7. Special Educational Needs - Code of Practice

It is opportune that this provision coincides with the implementation of major reforms with regard to children and young people with special educational needs. We fully appreciate the challenge of an Interim Principal but are determined to fulfil this broad aim along with the specific objectives required for each child to make it a reality. We are determined to stay at the cutting edge of provision for children and young people who are placed in our school.

The Plan is to be monitored through yearly reports to the Proprietor. There will be a full review of the Plan in 2018 when a new Plan will be produced to cover the period from 2018 to 2019. We ensure ongoing liaison with organisations that are able to offer specialist advice and training and complete an accessibility audit to identify where physical, curriculum and communication adjustments should be.

8. Timeframe

- Links with disabled groups and organisations, along with those able to offer specialist advice, are to be ongoing;
- Continued Professional Development will be prioritised and ongoing.

9. Anticipated Outcomes

- Adapted, curriculum, electronic or other materials;
- Modified teaching delivery;
- Provision of additional services, if they are to be required, such as electronic and hard copy information being in the parent's/guardian's/carer's first language and in braille if required.

10.Success Criteria

Anticipated Outcomes in Place, with the school over the next three years being wholly accessible in curricular, premises and communication terms to all the people who may be served by it.

11.Welcoming and Preparing for Disabled Students

Where it is practicable we make reasonable adjustments to enable prospective students to take up a place at the school and satisfy the current admissions criteria. The school is committed to providing these reasonable adjustments. In order to meet the needs of disabled students, the school requires full information. The school asks all local authorities seeking admission for a child to the school to disclose whether the young person has any disability or other condition or educational need of which the school should be aware. In assessing a student or prospective student, the school may need to take advice and require assessments as appropriate. The school will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.