Southlands School

Policy name: Accessibility Policy and Plan



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Approval Date	Feb 2026
Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
Next Review Date	Feb 2029
Version No.	001
Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education

Policy
Education Universal - Accessibility

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval**,** or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

Site Lead approver	**Alison Priddle** ***Alison.Priddle@Cambiangroup.com***
Approval Date	**September 2026**
Next Review Date	**February 2029**
Version Number	**001**



Alison Priddle
Principal/Responsible Individual

Date 01/09/2026

Terminology

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

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.

1. Southlands School Profile

We are an Ofsted registered co-education autism specialist day and residential school with an Ofsted registered children's home. We are registered to provide education and care, supported by our multi-disciplinary clinical team, for children and young people aged 7-19 years who have a primary diagnosis of Autism (ASD) or whose profile of need can be successfully supported by the use of autism specialist strategies. Our current cohort is 7-16yr, however, we are able to offer Post-16 and more extended transition arrangements may be considered on an individual basis, where this is appropriate.

The majority of young people have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) with their primary special need being ASD and require support to access education, have difficulty initiating or limited social interactions and need support with organisation and problem solving, which can hamper independence. They may typically be working at or above age-related expectations or with moderate/learning difficulties.

They may have a variety of additional special education needs associated with their autism spectrum challenges.

'Supporting each other to flourish!'

Every child at Southlands will be given opportunities to develop, self- compassion, self-respect, respect for others and positive and socially responsible behaviour, enabling them to enjoy success and purpose in their wider communities.

We will achieve this through our unwavering commitment to the highest standards with shared responsibilities between learners, parents, carers, educational providers and other public and voluntary organisations. At Southlands we are "one team" across the education, residential and clinical settings and all staff who work at Southlands understand we are collectively responsible for the academic and social development of every young person. Southlands staff are committed to promoting positive mental well-being to all, students and staff alike.

At the heart of this vision is our Southlands' expectation that all our partners share our ambition and our commitment to work collaboratively, so the needs and aspirations of the children and young people in our learning community are at the centre of everything that we do.

We believe that everyone has a personal best and we work hard to promote learning in a holistic sense and as a lifelong journey. At Southlands we have identified key principles that are important for our school, these values are promoted and embedded within the school curriculum and are the foundation of our ROADS rewards programme.

We believe we should demonstrate the following values:

Kindness - Incorporating kindness into our everyday lives, through actions as well as special acts of kindness, helps create a foundation of compassion, empathy, and positive behaviour that extends beyond the classroom. It equips children with

important life skills that promote their personal growth, meaningful relationships, and positive contributions to the world around them

Respect - Accepting somebody for who they are, even when they're different from you or you don't agree with them Respect in your relationships builds feelings of trust, safety, and wellbeing. Respect doesn't have to come naturally – it is something you earn.

Resilience - Being happy and successful after something difficult or challenging has happened. Being prepared to try again and not giving up.

Safety - Keeping ourselves and others free from harm

Cherish - Really valuing, loving, caring and protecting each other

2. Purpose

This policy applies to **Southlands school** sets out how we will deliver accessibility for learners, colleagues, and the wider community across all sites. It provides a universal framework and outlines the expectations that apply to:

- Staff (teachers, tutors and the wider staff team)
- Senior leaders
- Learners
- Visitors and contractors (where relevant)

By using this policy, **Southlands School** meets statutory duties, upholds safeguarding responsibilities, complies with data protection requirements, and sustains high-quality, inclusive provision. In practical terms, that means accessible teaching and tutoring, a progressively more accessible estate, and information that people can actually use—digital and otherwise.

3. Scope

This organisational policy applies across all education sites, services and functions. It establishes the universal standards and expectations that must be followed consistently throughout the organisation.

Each site implements these standards in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the nation in which it operates as set out in **Appendix A**

4. Legal and Regulatory Context

Southlands school is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in **Appendices A–C**, which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

5. Our commitment

We want every learner, colleague, parent/carer, and visitor to feel the site was designed with them in mind. That commitment shows up in two ways: first, we **anticipate** barriers and remove them where we can; second, when barriers still arise, we **respond quickly** with reasonable adjustments so participation is the norm, not the exception. This policy gives each site a clear, practical framework for doing that consistently, in line with national law and inspection expectations.

6.1 Access to Learning (teaching, tutoring and support)

In classrooms and workshops, teachers and tutors plan for inclusion from the outset, not as an afterthought. Lessons assume a range of needs will be present; materials are prepared in accessible formats; assistive technologies are used confidently. Barriers—whether physical, sensory, cognitive, or related to communication—are anticipated and reasonable adjustments are implemented quickly. This reflects the anticipatory nature of accessibility planning in schools and the Equality Act's wider duties.

6.2 Access to the Physical Environment (estate and operations)

Entrances, circulation routes, toilets, teaching spaces, signage and wayfinding are progressively improved through estates plans that prioritise dignity and independence. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (where required) are in place, tested, and understood. Capital and maintenance plans explicitly show how accessibility is being improved over time in line with the regulatory and legislative frameworks where the site is located in Lymington.

6.3 Access to Information (communications and digital)

Letters, handbooks, timetables and assessments are designed to be readable and available in alternative formats on request, with clear turn-around times that we meet. Digital content follows recognised accessibility standards and is tested with real users where possible; teams use accessible templates by default and act on audit findings. *The DfE Accessibility & Inclusive Design Manual offers concrete, practical guidance on standards, testing and audits that teams can adopt across sites.*

7. Roles and Responsibilities (clear ownership and follow-through)

7.1 Staff (teachers, tutors and wider staff team)

Staff make inclusion visible every day: they plan for diverse needs, use accessible materials, and implement agreed adjustments. When barriers emerge, they log them, fix what they can, and escalate what they can't—promptly and constructively.

7.2 Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders make sure a Local Accessibility Plan (or locally required equivalent) is in place, published where required, and reviewed on the correct cycle for the nation.

They assign responsibilities, align budgets, and keep an eye on impact, not just activity.

7.3 Organisation Leadership (central)

The organisation owns the universal policy, provides model templates and training, and runs proportionate assurance so we can say—confidently—how well we are doing and what we're improving next.

7.4 Learners and Families

Learners and parents/carers know how to request adjustments, give feedback, and participate in reviews. Their insights shape our priorities.

7.5 Visitors and Contractors

Visitors and contractors receive clear instructions about accessibility expectations and comply with site procedures while on the premises.

8. Reasonable Adjustments (how people get help, fast)

Requests can come from learners, families, staff or partners. We triage quickly, agree what will be done**,** by whom and by when, and we confirm it in writing in a plain, respectful way. Where we can't do what's asked, we explain why and offer alternatives. This process is easy to find on the site website and reflected in induction for new staff. This brings to life the anticipatory and continuing responsibilities set out in national guidance.

9. Local Accessibility Planning and Publication

Southlands School maintains a Local Accessibility Plan. The plan is short, concrete and public-facing (where required), with 3–5 objectives spanning: learning, environment, and information. It names leads, resources, milestones and evidence. Review cycles follow national rules regarding publishing, review cycles and alignment to local authorities associated strategies. Appendix A provides guidance on requirements.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Assurance

We check progress termly at site level and twice-yearly across the organisation. Evidence includes learner voice, parent/carer feedback, lesson/learning walks focused on inclusion, estates progress, and digital accessibility checks. Findings feed straight into CPD, procurement, and capital planning. This ensures what's on paper is visible in classrooms, corridors and communications.

11. Training and Competence

Accessibility is part of induction for everyone and refreshed annually. Teachers and tutors get practical, subject-specific strategies for inclusive delivery. Estates and digital teams get training on standards, audits and fix-cycles. Leaders are briefed on their nation's legal and inspection expectations.

12. Feedback, Concerns and Complaints

Raising a concern is simple and safe. We publish how to do it, we respond in a timely way, and we treat every contact as a chance to learn. Trend analysis (what people ask for, how quickly we deliver, and where we're slow) informs the next iteration of the Local Accessibility Plan.

Refer to the Complaints Policy for further information.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour, Relationship
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Accessibility Plan / Accessibility Strategy
- SEND Policy (England) / ALN Policy (Wales) / ASN Policy (Scotland)
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Mental Health and Well-Being Policy (MHWB)
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) & Information Governance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Educational Visits / Trips & Risk Assessment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Examinations

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access,

safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.

Appendix A - England

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning Accessibility in England.

Equality Act 2010 (incl. PSED and reasonable adjustments)

- **Means:** UK anti-discrimination law covering protected characteristics and the Public Sector Equality Duty; applies to all sites (schools and FE).
- **Requires:** Sites to prevent discrimination/harassment, make reasonable adjustments, and evidence due regard in decisions and practice. Inspectors expect inclusive culture and compliance in day-to-day operations.
- **Our stance:** We treat PSED as a live decision test; every inclusion decision is recorded with the equality rationale.
- **Implementation example:** School/College publishes annual equality objectives and logs reasonable-adjustment decisions with outcomes for Learners.
- **Links:** https://www.legislation.gov.uk/en/ukpga/2010/15

Equality Act 2010 — Schedule 10 (Accessibility planning)

- **Means:** Specific duty on schools to plan for access to curriculum, environment and information (accessibility plans).
- **Requires:** A published plan with measurable actions; leaders monitor delivery and impact on participation and attainment. Inspectors look for implementation, not just intent.
- **Our stance:** Every School/College maintains a Local Accessibility Plan and reports termly progress.
- **Implementation example:** Site plan shows completed estates works, alternative format timelines, and curriculum access adjustments with impact notes.
- **Links:**https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10/crossheading/accessibility-plans

Children and Families Act 2014 — Part 3 (SEND)

- **Means:** Legal framework for identifying, assessing and meeting SEND; establishes EHC plans and core principles of participation and outcomes (applies to schools and FE in England).
- **Requires:** Graduated response, joint working, timely assessments, and securing provision in EHC plans; inspectors expect evidence of effective identification and support.

- **Our stance:** We operate a consistent graduated approach and track provision-to-progress for all Learners with SEND.
- **Implementation example:** Provision mapping links interventions to assessed need, with half-termly progress reviews chaired by the SENCO/ALNCo.
- **Links:** https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3

SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (Statutory Guidance)

- **Means:** Statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures for organisations supporting children and young people with SEND (schools and FE in England).
- **Requires:** Sites to "have regard to" the Code—graduated approach, co-production with families, and outcome-focused planning. Inspectors triangulate practice against the Code.
- **Our stance:** We align our inclusion processes and templates to the Code and audit annually for fidelity.
- **Implementation example:** EHC and SEN-Support plans show co-produced outcomes, provision, review dates, and evidence of impact.
- **Links:**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

- **Means:** Sets how Ofsted inspects schools and FE, including expectations for quality of education, behaviour/attitudes, personal development and leadership with inclusion threaded throughout.
- **Requires:** Providers to show ambitious, inclusive curricula; effective support for SEND; and statutory compliance (including equality/access).
- **Our stance:** We evidence inclusion through curriculum intent / implementation /impact, SEND case tracking, and behaviour/pastoral analytics.
- **Implementation example:** Inspection pack includes curriculum maps with adaptation principles, SEND deep-dive samples, and equality duty logs.
- **Links:**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 *(independent sites only)*

- **Means:** Prescribes standards for quality of education, welfare/health/safety, premises, information, complaints, and leadership/management.
- **Requires:** Proprietor and leaders to secure inclusive quality of education and compliance with equality/SEND requirements; inspectors check evidence against Parts 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8.
- **Our stance:** Independent Schools map Inclusion Policy controls to ISS parts and maintain termly compliance assurance.
- **Implementation example:** ISS compliance tracker with evidence links (policies, plans, records, walkthroughs) overseen by the Headteacher/Principal.
  Links: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283

Appendix B – Southlands school Accessibility Plan

Target	Tasks	Timescale	Related Policies	Finance	Responsibility	Monitoring	Success Criteria
ACCESS TO ICT Ensure access to computer technology appropriate for pupils with disabilities including auxiliary aids or communication devices where needed and equipment designed to engage students in extracurricular activities.	▪ School staff to update on available technology on a termly basis. ▪ICT Teacher is involved in the Middle Leader Group and improving ICT across site and school. Attend SMT meetings where necessary. Lead on School ICT based CPD.	As required	School Equality & Diversity Framework Curriculum policy	Up to £1000 ICT designated budget (further funds available as this is a key priority area)	Head of Education	Principal	Access to appropriate computer technology will be improved for all disabled pupils where needs are identified. Students demonstrate improved engagement in education and outcomes. Increased attendance and engagement in extracurricular ICT based activities.

ACCESS TO CURRICULUM Reflect identified areas of need in lesson planning and delivery.	▪ Incorporate protected characteristic awareness into all planning of lessons including extra support, 1-1 teaching, extended times and home-based learning. ▪ Ongoing programme of staff training in disability awareness to reflect diverse needs of students within the school & anticipatory duties. ▪ Purchase of resources to increase student participation. ▪Regular meetings between teachers and the Head of Education to ensure curriculum is appropriate and relevant. ▪Subject policy in place for each curriculum area.	September 2026 – to be reviewed yearly	Equality & Diversity Inclusion Curriculum policy Individual Subject Policies Remote Learning Policy	Learning and Development budget. Education budget. Pupil Premium Budget	All teaching staff. Wellbeing Team	Head of Education	Improved access to curriculum for all pupils including those who are pregnant, pupils who have recently given birth, pupils under Gender reassignment and pupils with partial hearing. Positive feedback from students, parents and carers regarding school's response. Pupils access the school or remote environment.

Improve provision for the students	▪Curriculum Intention Plans to reflect current access and progress and identify next step actions. ▪Further embed working practices with the Wellbeing Team to ensure appropriate guidance ▪ASD friendly environment – environment audits to be completed by the Wellbeing Team and Education staff ▪Curriculum tailored to the needs of pupils through termly check ins. ▪ SENDCo to implement, track and create next steps for interventions across the school. ▪Blended learning approach ▪Implementation of online learning tools ▪Increased purchase of laptops for staff and students.						

INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL Prioritise student participation in school activities. Ensure all students are aware of diverse groups, by educating pupils we can eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct Raise awareness of disability through the curriculum Ensure the quality of therapeutic services continues to improve, thus improving	▪ Promote student awareness of the rights of the child, especially Article 23: Children should have special care & support if they need it. ▪ Ensure student activities are accessible to all students including workshop, outdoor activities and PE. ▪Update behaviour/anti bullying policy and make students aware of changes. . ▪Assemblies, celebration days and theme weeks focused on disability. ▪Charitable events are already in place, where pupils take ownership of events to promote equality. ▪Wellbeing Team on site working cohesively with Edu and Care Teams.	September 2026 – to be reviewed yearly	Social thinking & PSHE Participation & Involvement framework. School risk assessments. Anti bullying. Behaviour Policy/ pupil version	N/A.	Head of Education Deputy Head of Education Staff Care staff	Principal	Increased participation in school life for students with disabilities. Inclusion in all school related activities eg assisting with childcare for maternity based students. Pupils attend assemblies, and can articulate the theme of the week. Pupils are aware of the theme, and can discuss and debate issues surrounding these with adults and peers. Assessment used to enhance accessibility of provision for pupils. Teacher adapt and differentiate learning activities in collaboration with therapists.

student's involvement in school.	▪Further embed therapies into the curriculum through increasing universal, targeted and specialist provision. Dedicated intervention time attributed to timetables.						
SCHOOL POLICIES Ensure all policies consider the implications of Disability Access, Inclusion for all groups, appreciating for equality & diversity and anti-bullying behaviour.	▪ To update all school policies to run in line with the 2010 Equality Act and to consider all protected characteristics. ▪ To ensure all students are free from Direct, Indirect discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation.	Ongoing	All Policies.	n/a.	Principal	Regional Lead	Access to all aspects of school life for all students.
SCHOOL BUILDINGS Review and ensure that access to school buildings and site can meet diverse pupil needs including access for wheelchair bound pupils.	• Accessibility & clarity of signs around school. ▪ Clear identification of room functions. ▪Clear pathways without obstruction ▪half termly educational walk around ▪Environmental audits	Ongoing - when required	Inclusion Risk assessments	Applicable budgets	Head of Education Deputy Head of Education Wellbeing Team All staff	Principal	Access to school buildings and site improved including toilet, computer and learning facilities.

CLASSROOMS Ensure that classrooms are optimally organised for disabled pupils within current restraints. Identify needs & actions for future improvements.	▪ Plan classrooms in accordance with pupil need and within reasonable adjustments ▪ Organise resources within classrooms to reflect student need. ▪ Incorporate accessibility into any proposed structural alternatives within reasonable adjustments. ▪ Provide quiet areas within the school. ▪ Look at accessibility in all areas of school life including Workshop facilities/PE arrangements and qualifications. Environmental audits.	Ongoing	Teaching and learning policy Individual subject policies.	Education budget as needed.	Head of Education Deputy Head of Education SENDCo	Principal	Appropriate use of resources for diverse needs of pupils with disabilities. Comic strip conversations, Social Stories and visual guides prepare students for any changes. Appropriate classroom displays designed to support students learning needs balanced with their therapeutic needs. All learning areas have improved accessibility. Students accessing and using quiet spaces around the school.

NEWSLETTERS & DOCUMENTS Availability of newsletters and school documents in alternative formats to be sent to all pupils in the company to be more aware of school life when required.	▪ Letters in first language. ▪ Large print & audio when required. ▪ Social Media/website ▪ E-mail.	Ongoing.		As required – Education budget	Head of Education. SENDCo	Principal.	Information to pupils with disabilities and parents / carers will be improved.