

# **Mountjoy School**

## **Accessibility Policy**

**March 2023**



**This is a Mountjoy School Policy**  
**Reviewed by: Full Governing Board**

**Date: March 2023**  
**Date of next review: March 2026**

## Introduction

The Equality Act of 2010 requires every school to have an Accessibility Plan. We have three key duties:

- Increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils
- To improve the physical environment of the school to increase access for disabled pupils
- Make written information more accessible to disabled pupils by providing information in a range of ways

A person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal daily activities.

At Mountjoy, we subscribe to the social model of disability. This model says that people are not disabled by their condition or impairment but by barriers in society, such as:

- physical barriers - such as buildings not being accessible
- attitudinal barriers - for example, assuming disabled people can't do certain things
- systemic barriers - such as policies, practices and procedures resulting in disabled people being treated differently or sometimes excluded altogether
- communication barriers - where a disabled person cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others

There can also be barriers associated with relationships between disabled people and others, or themselves, which can affect self-esteem, personal confidence and feelings of security.

This plan details the aims of the Governing Body of Mountjoy Special School to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three required areas.

## Aims

Mountjoy School wants everyone in the school community to feel a sense of belonging. We plan, to continue increasing the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant actions to:

- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as all pupils. 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 our pupils to access the curriculum.
- Ensure the physical environment of the school remains fully accessible. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

## **Vision and values**

The values of Mountjoy School thread through everything we do:

- Passion
- Respect
- Optimism
- Understanding
- Determination

One of the school's main aims is to identify and remove barriers for disabled pupils in every area of school life now, and the pupils' future lives.

We try to achieve this by:

- setting suitable learning challenges now and to prepare pupils for the future
- responding to pupils' diverse needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment

All pupils participate fully in all aspects of school life. These opportunities include adventurous activities, art, music and creative work, residential trips and accreditation routes. Some sporting opportunities are hindered by lack of PE facilities.

Mountjoy School has an inclusive ethos and welcomes all children and visitors to the school regardless of need. Because of the nature of our pupils, the school has good physical access, in terms of its buildings, although due to the high numbers of pupils in relation to the physical space, some facilities have been reduced or removed. This does not lessen our desire to improve and develop the curriculum, the environment generally and the ways in which we provide information to parents and the wider school community.

We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act, and challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility. We work actively to develop a culture of awareness and celebration of diversity and a sense of belonging.

We ensure training for staff and governors keeps abreast of evolving knowledge and attitudes around different abilities.

## **Our current good practice**

### **Identification**

Mountjoy School requests information on disabilities or other conditions in early communications with parents and carers new to the school. Progress is observed closely and any concerns are shared as necessary. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan which is reviewed each year.

## **Curriculum**

The school continually strives to improve access to the curriculum for pupils with disabilities in various ways, for example:

- Mountjoy has a differentiated curriculum for all pupils, including providing different ways to record understanding
- The curriculum covers diversity and equality issues
- All teaching staff (teachers and TAs) have regular training
- We use resources tailored to the needs of pupils who require support to access the curriculum
- Curriculum resources include examples of people with diverse abilities
- Curriculum progress is tracked for all pupils, using differentiated assessment tools
- Targets are set effectively and are linked to outcomes on pupils' EHCPs
- The curriculum is reviewed annually to make sure it meets the needs of all pupils

## **Physical environment**

Mountjoy School site in Beaminster was opened in 2012 and was designed to be fully accessible.

When any adaptations are made we ensure we maintain accessibility. Examples include:

- Ramps
- Easy layout which is not confusing to pupils
- Appropriate corridor and door width
- Disabled parking bays
- Disabled toilets and changing facilities
- Library shelves at wheelchair-accessible height
- Accessible play equipment

## **Information**

Mountjoy School aims to make all written information accessible to disabled pupils through:

- All signage is accessible
- Large print resources
- Pictorial or symbolic representations
- Alternative / Augmentative Communication Systems
- All written information uses plain and/or simplified English
- Parent information goes home using text, so it can be 'read out' by readily available accessibility features in phones
- Staff have access to Communicate in Print software so they easily adapt written materials

## **Implementation**

Our Accessibility Plan describes how we will improve the identified areas for people with a disability, including pupils, staff and visitors. It explains how we will make reasonable adjustments to support them. Reasonable adjustments are positive actions which help pupils with a disability to fully participate in school life.

Our Accessibility Plan also advises other policies and plans within the school. Mountjoy School will work in partnership with the Local Authority and adopt the principles from the Local Authority Strategy for Accessibility.

## **Monitoring**

The Accessibility Plan is written to show developments over a three-year period. It will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body and amended as necessary.

The Governing Body will monitor Mountjoy's activity and compliance with regard to the Equality Act 2010. The Complaints policy will be used in the event of a complaint about the Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan complements other school policies and plans, including:

- SEN Policy and SEN information Report
- The Equal Opportunities Policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Health and Safety policy
- Behaviour policy
- School Development Plan

*This plan was completed following an audit of accessibility at Mountjoy School. It has been informed by the guidance Accessibility Plans: Local Authority Guidance for Schools 13.07.2021 Dorset Education Services: Kelly Lambert.*

In accordance with Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.