

Grow
Independent
School



Accessibility Action Plan

2023 - 2026

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1. The Purpose of this Plan

This plan sets out how our school will increase access to education for disabled pupils in three key areas:

- a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- b) improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- c) focusing on how we deliver information, which is often only provided in writing to improve accessibility for all including disabled parents.

Our school accessibility plan will be reviewed every three years and reported on annually.

2. What does accessibility and inclusion mean for our school?

Grow Independent School is committed to being inclusive as we see a diverse population of both students and staff as one of the school's greatest strengths. In order to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of all the school's activities.

We are committed to providing a school that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their ability or disability.

When reviewing or redesigning our school environment (such as our building, technology, information, communication or culture) we will be guided by the following:

- (a) Provide the same means of use to enable access for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not
- (b) Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users
- (c) Provisions for privacy, security and safety shall be equally available to all users
- (d) Ensure dignity in use for all users.

3. Definition of disability

The definition of disability is set out in the Equality Act 2010, Part 6:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Reasonable adjustments for disabled people

Where something the school does places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person, we will take all reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage. This may mean changing the way we work, providing extra equipment or removing physical or other barriers.

4. Information about our school

We are a small school of 12 students and 6 staff. We are based in a converted mill premises in Barrowford, Pendle. Our students have been unable to thrive in a mainstream setting, and for many different reasons they require an alternative approach to their education.

Some of our students will have SEND, or be on a pathway to a diagnosis, they are also likely to have an EHCP or be in the process of an application. Many of our students will have social, emotional and mental health needs.

At Grow Independent School, we see every student as unique. We understand that each young person we work with has individual needs, ways of learning and challenges to overcome. We design our curriculum in a way that can be flexible and tailored to the student.

We create an environment which is nurturing, supportive and responsive to the individual needs of our pupils and their families. At Grow, every day is a new day; acceptance, empathy and good humour is embedded throughout our school approach.

We aim to enable our students to achieve their potential with a bespoke learning pathway which is closely linked to their EHCP outcomes. Our fully qualified teachers deliver this with a focus on emotional wellbeing and building relationships. We understand that a student that feels happy and safe with a strong sense of belonging, they are in a much better place to learn.

5. What we have in place to make our school accessible

The very nature of our school is to ensure that the needs of the individual are being met by taking a holistic approach to their education. Our Equality and Diversity Policy clearly sets out our aims for creating an inclusive environment for all learners, and our core values of 'Achievement, Belonging and Compassion' are at the centre of our planning and decision-making.

In addition to this, we have the following measures already in place to ensure that our school is providing increasing access to all learners:

Curriculum and Learning:

- Visual adaptations for students with a range of SEN with visual needs including but not limited to: Coloured overlays, coloured paper, large print resources, dyslexic friendly typefaces.

- Adaptations for students with SEN around writing, pen-grip, dysgraphia including but not limited to: Laptop and software to improve touch typing, easy-grip pens/pencils, a range of writing equipment, technology for students to dictate their written work and technology for voice recording.
- A personalised curriculum for each student which aims to meet needs set out in students individual education plans.
- Personalised timetable to take into account students' requirements for breaks.
- Adapted activities to take into account students' sensory or neuro-diverse needs, including but not limited to: small teaching groups, low noise levels, carpeted rooms, noise cancelling headphones, varying light levels in different spaces, variously sized rooms including a spacious and open area.
- A comprehensive RSE, Citizenship and PHSE curriculum to ensure students develop an awareness of the protected characteristics, the seriousness of bullying and hate crime and how to be citizens who uphold the laws around equality and diversity in this country.

Location and Building:

- Car park with 6 reserved spaces for Grow staff and parents at a distance of 6 to 8 meters from the entrance. Cones are available to reserve spaces 1-2 meters from the door if necessary. See pictures below:



- No steps between the car park and ground floor area.
- Accessible seating area on the ground floor for short meetings or for people waiting for students indoors. See picture below.



- Meeting rooms on ground floor available for use at the front of the building with pre-arrangement. Accessible toilets also available in the front of the building in the same area.

- There is a local riverside walk and small outdoor area that students can access without any steps and with even ground. See access to path below.



Provision of Information:

- Information is provided to students in adapted formats dependent on their disability or impairment. Font sizes are altered, paper colour and the use of overlays also provide adaptations when necessary.
- Our displays and signs include QR codes which link to audio files explaining what is on the display/poster. See below:



- We subscribe to Twinkl Platinum which allows us to use their audiobook facility, their visual impairment resources and their editable braille documents. This allows us to share information with students and parents in a variety of accessible ways.

6. Challenges to accessibility that we want to address

The main learning area is on the first floor of a building accessed by two flights of stairs. Although there is a small ground-floor area, this is not sufficient to be able to accommodate students or adults who will be with us on a regular basis. We need to consider how we can, in the longer term, make our space more accessible for wheelchair users or those who find stairs physically difficult. The financial implications of installing a lift means this is not currently a reasonable adjustment that we can make.

7. Action Plan

	What needs to be addressed	What will it mean for students	Who is responsible for achieving it	When it will be achieved
1	Investigate available software for people with hearing/sight impairment.	Parents and students will be able to communicate and receive information more effectively.	Head Teacher	September 2024
2	Audit school library to ensure availability of large fonts, easy to read fonts and audio books.	All students will have access to a range of high-quality literature.	Literacy lead (SLT member)	September 2024
3	Consider longer term plans for addressing inaccessible staircase. This could be by installing a lift, renting further space within the mill on the groundfloor, or it should not be overlooked that ultimately we may need to consider a different building for our longer term school development plans.	Improving access to the physical environment of the school.	Head teacher and governing body	Ongoing To be reviewed June 2024

This action plan will be reviewed upon the opening of the school and after the first term of accepting students when we will continue to consider the needs of current and prospective students.

The accessibility plan may need to be referred to when considering whether our school is a suitable placement for an individual.