WATERSIDE ACADEMY

ACCESSIBILITY

Plan

2026/27

Policy information	Details
Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team / SENCo
Applies to	All staff, pupils and visitors
Review cycle	Annual review; strategic plan 2026–2029
Status	
Academy	Waterside Academy

I CAN

Inclusion • Communication • Aspiration • Nurture

1. Purpose and statutory framework

Waterside Academy is committed to removing barriers to access and participation for disabled pupils, including pupils with sensory, physical, communication, cognition and learning, and social, emotional and mental health needs. This plan supports our inclusive, trauma-informed and relational approach and complements our SEND, Equality, Curriculum, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Admissions arrangements.

Under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the school must plan to: (1) increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum; (2) improve the physical environment so disabled pupils can access education, facilities and services; and (3) improve delivery of accessible information to disabled pupils. The plan is reviewed during its period and revised where necessary. Individual reasonable adjustments must also be considered without waiting for the annual review.

This is a three-year strategic plan with a specific 2026/27 action programme. The SENCo and SLT will seek views from pupils, families, staff and relevant professionals; actions will be proportionate to identified needs and available resources, with any unresolved barriers and funding requirements reported to governors.

2. Existing strengths and context

Detailed admission discussions and information gathering; smaller teaching segments; high levels of adult support and scaffolding; individualised learning pathways; IDL and literacy resources; visual timetables; a disabled toilet and ramps; alternative learning spaces; supervised movement around the building; headphones and access to school transport for visits.

During the refurbishment programme, further spaces and facilities have been developed, including teaching and practical learning areas. Accessibility and evacuation arrangements for all refurbished areas must be checked against actual use in 2026/27; their accessibility is not assumed by inclusion here.

3. Delivery, monitoring and accountability

The Headteacher is accountable for implementation, supported by SLT, SENCo, curriculum staff and the Business Manager/premises lead. The governing body reviews progress, barriers, resources and the access audit at least annually. Staff record individual adjustments through relevant pupil plans, risk assessments, provision mapping and reviews. Pupil and parent feedback should inform evaluation.

4. Area 1: Access to the Curriculum

Aim: enable disabled pupils to access a broad, ambitious and appropriately adapted curriculum, including core learning, vocational opportunities, enrichment, careers and off-site provision.

Priority / aim	2026/27 actions	Lead, timescale / review
Statutory SEND and individual plans	Implement and review EHCP provision, graduated response, personal learning and medical plans; track recommendations and escalate gaps in specified provision.	SENCo / SLT; ongoing; termly QA and annual reviews
Assessment on entry	Gather prior setting, family and professional information; use baseline literacy, attainment, communication and regulation profiles to inform first teaching and support.	Admissions leads / SENCo; from admission
Adaptive teaching	Embed scaffolding, worked examples, accessible vocabulary, flexible recording, planned movement/regulation breaks and removal of scaffolds as independence grows.	Curriculum leads / teachers; Autumn–Summer
Literacy and assistive technology	Identify reading and literacy barriers; provide appropriate targeted interventions and assess whether ICT, text-to-speech, dictation, enlarged text or overlays are needed.	SENCo / English lead; by Spring 2027
Transitions and timetable access	Agree personalised transition plans with pupils and families, including visits, key-adult contact, reduced anxiety, travel and reintegration support where appropriate.	Admissions / pastoral team; at each transition
Wider curriculum and off-site learning	Check accessibility of practical rooms, vocational/AP placements, visits, careers guidance, transport and activities; make reasonable adjustments and record decisions.	Curriculum / AP leads; before each activity
Staff expertise	Deliver targeted CPD on SEND, disability, communication, sensory differences, medical needs and effective adaptive teaching; keep attendance and impact records.	SENCo / DSL / CPD lead; termly

5. Area 2: Accessible Physical Environment

Aim: ensure the main site and any school-managed spaces are as accessible, safe and inclusive as reasonably possible, including entrances, teaching areas, facilities and emergency arrangements.

Priority / aim	2026/27 actions	Lead, timescale / review
Complete site access audit	Survey approach routes, parking, gates, entrances, reception, corridors, doors, stairs/lift provision, ramps, toilets, signage and evacuation; log barriers and required action.	Business Manager / SLT; Autumn 2026
Review refurbished provision	Check accessibility, circulation, acoustics, lighting, seating and safe access to practical, science, cooking, ICT, recreation and visitor areas.	Premises / SENCo; Autumn–Spring
Sensory environment	Audit pupil sensory needs; identify calm spaces and practical classroom adjustments, informed by pupils and OT/other professional advice where available.	SENCo / pastoral leads; termly
Emergency access and evacuation	Review personal emergency evacuation plans where required and check routes, alarms, staff responsibilities and drills for pupils and visitors with disabilities.	H&S lead / DSL / SENCo; termly
Off-site and transport access	Review access and transport considerations for 1:1 teaching sites, AP partners, sports, trips and residential activities before placement/visit.	AP / visits leads; before use
Prioritise and resource improvements	Risk-rate barriers from the audit, assign completion dates, cost options, record interim adjustments and report unresolved items to governors.	Headteacher / Business Manager; Spring–Summer

6. Area 3: Accessible Information and Communication

Aim: ensure disabled pupils can receive and understand information available to other pupils, within a reasonable time and in formats suited to their needs and preferences.

Priority / aim	2026/27 actions	Lead, timescale / review
Accessible classroom communication	Use clear visual timetables, chunked instructions, symbols, key vocabulary, checklists and accessible formats; check understanding rather than relying on written text alone.	Teachers / TAs; ongoing
Individual communication needs	Record relevant communication, sensory and processing adjustments in pupil profiles; seek pupil and family preferences and review their effectiveness.	SENCo / key adults; half-termly
Pupil voice and review documents	Make PEP, placement review, EHCP annual review and self-reflection forms easier to navigate using scaling, visuals, supported conversation and alternative recording.	Pastoral / SENCo; Spring 2027
Family-facing communications	Offer reasonable alternatives to standard written communications where needed, including accessible digital formats, larger print and supported explanation/translation.	Office / SLT; ongoing
Website accessibility	Review accessibility of key published documents and the website, including navigation and translation options; log improvements with the provider.	SLT / website lead; by Summer 2027
Accessible safeguarding information	Review pupil-facing help/report routes, safeguarding displays and QR-linked resources to ensure clear language, accessible formats and non-digital alternatives.	DSL / pastoral team; termly

Success evidence: examples of adapted learning materials and review forms; website checks; pupil and parent feedback; communication profiles; reasonable-adjustment records.

7. Premises Access Audit – Verification Schedule

Feature	Audit question / action	Current status	Owner / target
Corridor access / door widths	Inspect route clearances, obstacles, thresholds and furniture layout.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Stairs and lift provision	Check level changes and accessible routes to rooms in use.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Parking and drop-off	Check marked spaces, safe drop-off and accessible approach routes.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Entrances, ramps and gates	Inspect access controls, gradients, handrails, thresholds and alternative routes.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Accessible toilet(s)	Check access, fittings, maintenance, emergency call arrangements and suitability.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Reception and visitor access	Check entrance, desk and waiting area accessibility and support arrangements.	To be verified	Premises lead / Autumn 2026
Internal signage and information	Check legibility, consistency, symbols, wayfinding and visual contrast.	To be verified	Premises lead / Spring 2027
Emergency escape routes	Check evacuation plans, refuge arrangements if relevant, alarms and drills.	To be verified	H&S lead / Autumn 2026
Specialist/practical rooms	Check access and reasonable adjustments for science, cooking, ICT and vocational use.	To be verified	Curriculum / premises leads / Spring 2027

8. Points to be borne in mind in the implementation of The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 1.

1. In the forming the plans for Open Evenings or other admissions related activities they should be held in accessible locations and with an opportunity for prospective students with disabilities or their parents to disclose in private the nature of the disability and to discuss their support requirements

2. A clear arrangement should be known by all staff to ensure that if a disability, specific learning difficulty or significant medical condition is disclosed to them they should then contact the SEND coordinator. They would accurately record the information and within the limits of confidentiality would be responsible for ensuring that it is disseminated to those other staff colleagues who may require it.

3. Staff should be made aware of the resources within the School that are available to them should they feel that a student requires additional assistance

4. It is helpful to plan for teaching material to be prepared in electronic format so that it can be produced in alternative formats if required

5. The needs of students with disabilities should be borne in mind in the planning of curricula and consideration might be given to alternative forms of presentation and assessment.

6. Staff development opportunities will be made available to ensure the teaching practice can meet the learning requirements of individual students.

7. The Principal Designer for any change order works will review accessibility to relevant parts of the building.

8. Building accessibility will be reviewed as part of planned and preventative maintenance checks via the PFI contractor.

9. A curriculum review will ensure that students with disabilities have access to new courses/curriculum areas and resources.

9. Annual Evaluation and Next Steps

At each termly SLT/SEND review, update actions using the status: not started / in progress / completed / carried forward; record impact, barriers, costs and pupil voice. During Summer 2027, evaluate progress against all three statutory areas, refresh the access audit and present a report to governors with priorities for 2027/28. Publish the approved plan and ensure accessible versions can be provided on request.

10. Policy Approval

Item	Date	Evidence / lead
Approved by governing body	Date: __01/09/2026_____	Minute/reference: _____
Next annual review	Summer 2027	Lead: Headteacher / SENCo