

Accessibility Policy and Plan

SEND and accessibility

SMS Changing Lives School



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Accessibility Policy and Plan

SEND and accessibility



Approved by	Jonathan Davies, Proprietor
Date	23 September 2026
Last reviewed on	23 September 2026
Next statutory plan due by	1 March 2030

This policy and plan is communicated to staff through relevant meetings, line management and site briefings. It will be made available on the school website and on request. Site-specific arrangements are communicated to staff where an individual student requires them.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

SMS Changing Lives School is committed to ensuring that disabled students can access education, facilities, information and the wider life of the school as fully as possible. This document is the school-wide Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan for Central, Thrive and the Outreach Hub at Greek Street. It replaces separate site accessibility documents and provides one consistent framework with site-specific arrangements.

This document takes effect immediately and replaces the school's previous site-specific accessibility documents. It records the school's review of its accessibility arrangements for the remainder of the current prescribed period, 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027, and also constitutes the school's next accessibility plan for the prescribed period 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2030, prepared in advance of the 1 March 2027 deadline. It will be kept under review and revised sooner if necessary.

The school does not routinely rewrite this policy annually. The accessibility plan operates on the statutory three-year cycle and is kept under review during each prescribed period. The next full plan will be prepared by 1 March 2030. Earlier revision will take place where there is a material change in premises, provision, student need, legislation or guidance, or where monitoring identifies an accessibility barrier requiring a change to the plan.

2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy and plan has regard to:

- Equality Act 2010, including sections 6, 20, 85 and 88 and Schedule 10 (accessibility for disabled pupils).
- The Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Times and Periods for Accessibility Strategies and Plans for Schools) (England) Regulations 2005, as preserved for Equality Act accessibility planning.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, as amended.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, where relevant to the school's wider arrangements for welfare, health, safety and premises.
- Current Ofsted inspection information for non-association independent schools, under which the Department for Education may ask inspectors to check compliance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010.

Schedule 10 requires the school to have a written plan aimed at: (1) increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum; (2) improving the physical environment so that disabled students can take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services; and (3) improving the delivery of information that is readily accessible to students who are not disabled.

physical barriers and will not rely on the age or configuration of a building as a reason to leave an individual student without an appropriate educational arrangement.

3. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial and "long-term" generally means that the effect has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months.

The legal definition may include, depending on the impact on the individual, sensory impairments, neurodevelopmental conditions, mental health conditions and long-term medical conditions. The school will

consider the functional impact of a student's needs and will not rely only on diagnostic labels when identifying barriers and adjustments.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Proprietor is the responsible body for the accessibility plan and is accountable for ensuring that it is prepared, implemented, kept under review and adequately resourced.
- The Head Teacher oversees implementation across the school and ensures accessibility is considered in strategic and operational decisions.
- The SENDCO coordinates identification of individual access needs, reasonable adjustments, EHCP-linked provision and relevant professional advice.
- Centre Managers ensure site-specific arrangements are implemented and that access issues are escalated promptly.
- The Head of Curriculum and teaching staff ensure that curriculum design, teaching, resources, assessment and wider activities are adapted appropriately.
- The therapeutic team supports assessment of individual needs and the sourcing or recommendation of specialist equipment where required.
- All staff are responsible for following agreed adjustments and reporting any new barrier that may prevent a student from participating safely and meaningfully.

5. WHOLE-SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Access to the curriculum

Across all sites, the school uses a personalised and adaptive approach. Depending on individual need, provision may include:

- small-group, bespoke and 1:1 teaching arrangements;
- adaptive teaching, scaffolding and differentiated resources;
- visual timetables, Now/Next approaches and other visual supports;
- alternative methods of recording work, including typing, scribing, voice-to-text or other appropriate methods;
- laptops, ICT and other assistive technology where appropriate;
- reasonable adjustments to off-site learning, vocational activity, enrichment and wider school participation;
- input from the therapeutic team and external professionals, including occupational therapy, speech and language therapy or other specialist services where relevant.

5.2 Sensory and emotional accessibility

All three sites have access to lower-sensory spaces. Ear defenders, fidget resources and sensory equipment are available where identified through an EHCP, internal assessment or professional advice. The school will use these resources flexibly to support regulation, engagement and access to learning rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

5.3 Accessible information and communication

Information will be provided in an accessible form within a reasonable time where a student requires this. The format will be determined by the student's needs and, where appropriate, preferences expressed by the student or parent/carers. Adjustments may include larger print, simplified or chunked language, visual presentation, digital or audio formats, reading support, or other individually appropriate methods.

Where a communication barrier is identified, the school will record the relevant preference or adjustment and ensure that staff who need to know are informed. Parents/carers may also request information in an alternative format where this is needed to support effective involvement in the student's education.

5.4 Specialist equipment

The sites do not currently have permanent hearing loops, fixed specialist visual-access systems or height-adjustable specialist teaching equipment as standard. Where a student requires specialist equipment, the school will assess the need and, where appropriate, arrange advice or equipment through the therapeutic team and/or relevant specialist services. Any equipment provided will be incorporated into the student's normal educational arrangements and reviewed when needs change.

6. SITE-SPECIFIC ACCESSIBILITY PROFILE

The following profile records the position at the time of this review. It is used alongside individual assessment; it is not a substitute for considering the needs of a particular student.

Feature	Central	Thrive	Outreach Hub - Greek Street
Site / use	67 Ayres Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 9NH. On-roll school provision.	Unit 2, Aniseed Park, Broadgate, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 9XA. On-roll school provision.	29 Greek Street, Stockport SK3 8AX. Outreach Hub used by students.
Wheelchair entry	Accessible entry is available.	Accessible.	Not currently wheelchair- accessible because of the entrance and building configuration.
Accessible toilet	Yes.	Yes; current arrangements are compliant.	No accessible toilet.

Feature	Central	Thrive	Outreach Hub - Greek Street
Access between floors / areas	No lift. A number of areas, including upstairs, cannot be reached by a wheelchair user. All learning can be delivered within accessible areas of the school.	Lift available and all education areas are accessible.	No lift. The premises are an older rented building and significant structural alteration is not currently practicable.
Parking / drop-off	Accessible drop-off can be provided but must be arranged in advance.	Accessible parking / drop-off arrangements are available and compliant.	No dedicated accessible parking arrangement recorded at the site.
Low-sensory provision	Low-sensory space and access to ear defenders, fidget and sensory resources.	Low-sensory space and access to ear defenders, fidget and sensory resources.	Low-sensory space and access to ear defenders, fidget and sensory resources.

Feature	Central	Thrive	Outreach Hub - Greek Street
Specialist fixed equipment	No permanent specialist hearing/visual or height-adjustable equipment as standard; arranged if needed.	No permanent specialist hearing/visual or height-adjustable equipment as standard; arranged if needed.	No permanent specialist hearing/visual or height-adjustable equipment as standard; arranged if needed.
Current access approach	Plan teaching and activities in accessible parts of the building for any wheelchair user.	No known physical barrier to access across the current education areas.	Where a student's mobility or physical access needs cannot be met safely at Greek Street, the Outreach offer will be arranged from an accessible school site or another suitable accessible location following individual assessment.

No major capital accessibility works are currently planned at any site. This does not prevent the school from making individual adjustments, obtaining specialist equipment, changing room or site arrangements, or reviewing premises decisions where a student's needs or a material change in circumstances makes this necessary.

7. INDIVIDUAL ACCESS NEEDS, ADMISSIONS AND SITE ALLOCATION

Accessibility is considered during referral and admission, when an EHCP or professional report identifies a need, and whenever a student's circumstances change. The school will consider the student's EHCP, professional advice, student and parent/carer views, internal assessment and the demands of the proposed curriculum and site.

A disability will not, by itself, be a reason to refuse access to the school's educational offer. Where a particular physical site cannot meet a mobility or access need, the school will consider reasonable alternatives, including delivering the same educational offer within accessible parts of another school site or at another suitable accessible location. Decisions will be individual, evidence-based and recorded.

8. ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN: SEPTEMBER 2026 TO 31 MARCH 2030

The plan focuses on practical improvement and maintenance of access rather than unnecessary capital work. Actions apply from the date of approval for the remainder of the 2024-27 prescribed period and continue into the 2027-30 prescribed period unless completed, superseded or revised earlier.

8.1 Increasing access to the curriculum

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Identify accessibility barriers and required adjustments at referral/admission and whenever needs change, using EHCPs, reports, student/parent views and internal assessment.	SENDCO / Head Teacher	Ongoing	Access needs and site suitability are identified before they create avoidable barriers.
Maintain adaptive teaching, alternative recording methods, ICT and reader/scribe or other access arrangements where evidenced as the student's normal way of working.	Head of Curriculum / SENDCO	Ongoing	Students participate in learning and assessment using appropriate support.
Plan reasonable adjustments for vocational, off-site, enrichment and wider school activities so that disability does not unnecessarily restrict participation.	Centre Managers / Curriculum leads	Ongoing	Participation decisions show individual consideration and reasonable adjustment.
Maintain low-sensory spaces and individual sensory resources, including ear defenders and fidget/sensory equipment, according to identified need.	Centre Managers / Therapeutic team	Ongoing	Students have appropriate regulation support and improved access to learning.

8.2 Improving the physical environment and use of premises

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Central: maintain accessible entry and toilet; arrange accessible drop-off in advance where needed; timetable all required learning in accessible areas for a wheelchair user.	Central Centre Manager	As required / ongoing	A wheelchair user can access a complete educational programme without needing inaccessible areas.
Thrive: maintain lift, accessible toilet, routes and compliant parking/drop-off arrangements; escalate defects that affect access promptly.	Thrive Centre Manager	Ongoing	Current full physical accessibility is maintained.
Outreach Hub: assess physical site suitability before allocating Greek Street to a student with mobility/physical access needs. Where the site cannot meet the need, arrange the Outreach offer from an accessible school site or another suitable accessible location.	Outreach Centre Manager / SENDCO	Before placement and when needs change	Students are not denied the Outreach educational offer because Greek Street is physically inaccessible.
Consider accessibility explicitly in any future lease renewal, move, refurbishment or significant premises decision, particularly in relation to the limitations at Greek Street and Central.	Proprietor / Head Teacher	When premises decisions arise	Future premises decisions evidence consideration of accessibility and available resources.
Put in place individual evacuation arrangements/PEEPs where required and review them when the student, timetable or premises use changes.	Centre Manager / H&S lead	As required	Emergency arrangements reflect individual mobility, sensory and communication needs.

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Whole school: complete one recorded site-access walk-through in 2026/27. Address practicable low- cost barriers such as keeping routes clear, room/furniture layout, signage and drop-off arrangements. Repeat after any material premises/use change.	H&S lead / Centre Managers	By 31 March 2027; thereafter on material change	Practicable physical barriers are identified, recorded and addressed.

8.3 Improving accessible information and communication

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Provide information to disabled students in an accessible format within a reasonable time, taking account of the student's disability and student/parent preferences.	SENDCO / relevant staff	As required	Students receive information in a format they can use and understand.
Record significant communication/accessibility preferences and ensure relevant staff know the agreed adjustment.	SENDCO / Key staff	When identified	Consistent communication support across lessons and sites.
Provide alternative formats for parents/carers where needed to enable meaningful participation in school processes.	Office / SENDCO	As required	Parents/carers can access key information and participate effectively.

8.4 Specialist aids, professional advice and staff practice

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Seek therapeutic or specialist advice and obtain appropriate auxiliary aids/equipment where a student requires support not already available on site.	SENDCO / Therapeutic team	As need arises	Required equipment or specialist advice is secured and implemented.

Action / commitment	Lead	Timescale	Evidence / intended outcome
Ensure staff are briefed on agreed adjustments at induction to a student, on transfer between sites/classes, and when a significant need or adjustment changes.	SENDCO / Centre Managers	As required	Staff practice reflects current individual accessibility arrangements.
Escalate newly identified school-wide or site-specific barriers to the Head Teacher so that the plan can be revised where necessary rather than waiting for the three- year replacement date.	All staff / SLT	Ongoing	Material barriers trigger timely action and, where needed, formal revision of the plan.

9. MONITORING, REVIEW AND RESOURCING

The Proprietor and Head Teacher will ensure that adequate resources are considered when implementing this plan. Accessibility is monitored through existing admissions, SEND, EHCP/IEP, risk assessment, premises, curriculum and safeguarding processes rather than through a separate annual policy rewrite.

The plan will remain under review throughout its life. It will be revised earlier where necessary, including where:

- the school opens, closes, moves or materially changes the use of a site;
- a student's needs expose a barrier not adequately addressed by the current plan;
- a complaint, incident or risk assessment identifies an accessibility concern;
- significant building work, a new lease or premises decision creates an opportunity or need

to improve access;

- legislation, statutory guidance or inspection requirements materially change.

The next full statutory accessibility plan will be prepared by 1 March 2030 for the following prescribed period. The policy may be amended before that date without resetting the statutory cycle.

10. COMPLAINTS

11. PUBLICATION AND AVAILABILITY

This plan will be made available on the school website. The Proprietor will also make a copy available for inspection at reasonable times on request and will provide a copy to the Secretary of State or Department for Education if formally requested in accordance with Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010.

12. LINKED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy / PEEP arrangements
- Complaints Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Document control: Consolidated whole-school policy and accessibility plan covering Central, Thrive and the Outreach Hub. Reviewed September 2026 for the remainder of the 2024-27 prescribed period and prepared in advance for the 2027-30 prescribed period. Site- specific accessibility information should be updated within this document if premises or access arrangements materially change.