



Life Skills Enterprise Accessibility Plan

Prepared by: Life Skills Enterprise Senior Leadership Team

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Northdown House, Northdown Park Road, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent CT9 3TP

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1. INTRODUCTION

Life Skills Enterprise (LSE) is owned and operated by Cavendish Education. LSE is an independent specialist day school at Northdown House for children and young people aged 10 to 18 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a primary diagnosis of autism.

LSE provides a personalised curriculum designed around individual starting points, communication profiles, sensory needs, EHCP outcomes and preparation for adulthood. Accessibility is therefore considered as part of everyday curriculum planning, teaching, therapy, pastoral support, assessment and transition arrangements.

Northdown House is a Grade II listed historic building. The character and layout of the building place genuine constraints on physical accessibility. This plan does not describe the site as fully accessible where it is not. Instead, it records the current position accurately and sets out the reasonable and practicable steps LSE will take to reduce disadvantage, remove barriers and plan future improvements.

LSE currently uses the ground and first floors for pupil provision. There is no lift between floors. Some original doors and circulation spaces are narrower than would be expected in a modern purpose-built accessible school. Accessible toilet facilities, shower facilities and a medical room are available. On parts of the lower floor, small portable ramps can be used, where risk assessed as suitable, to bridge minor changes in floor level.

At present, the school in its current configuration is not fully accessible to wheelchair users. Where a pupil, parent/carer or visitor cannot safely access a room or service because of the physical layout, LSE will consider reasonable alternatives, including relocating teaching, therapy, meetings or other provision to an accessible ground-floor space where this is reasonably practicable.

Additional areas of Northdown House, including the second floor, are not currently used for pupil provision. Any future expansion of the registered premises or accommodation will be subject to the relevant Department for Education approval process and Ofsted inspection where commissioned, together with appropriate planning, listed-building, fire-safety and accessibility considerations.

2. AIMS

Under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, an accessibility plan must address three core areas. LSE will:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment so disabled pupils can take better advantage of education, facilities, benefits and services provided by the school; and
- improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils where that information is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

LSE also aims to make reasonable adjustments for disabled parents/carers and visitors, remove avoidable communication barriers and ensure that accessibility is considered proactively in admissions, transitions, curriculum planning, assessment, safeguarding, emergency evacuation and future estate development.

The school will consider requests and needs individually. An adjustment that is reasonable in one situation may not be reasonable in another, particularly where there are safety, structural or listed-building constraints. Decisions will be evidence-based, proportionate and kept under review.

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This plan has been prepared with regard to:

- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments and Schedule 10 requirements for school accessibility plans;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Children and Families Act 2014, where relevant to SEND provision and EHCP duties;
- Department for Education advice on the Equality Act 2010 and disability discrimination in schools;
- Department for Education guidance for independent schools, including material-change requirements where registered school details are proposed to change;
- Ofsted inspection guidance for non-association independent schools, including material-change inspections commissioned by the DfE;
- Kent County Council Education Accessibility Strategy 2025-2028 and SEND inclusion guidance as useful local context. LSE is an independent school, so KCC duties and funding arrangements for maintained schools do not automatically apply to LSE;
- Building Regulations Approved Document M and other relevant building standards when new work or alterations are proposed, subject to the particular requirements and constraints applying to a Grade II listed building; and
- fire-safety legislation and individual evacuation planning, including Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) where required.

For the purposes of 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. LSE recognises that disability includes physical, sensory, neurodevelopmental and other long-term conditions and that barriers may arise from the environment, communication, curriculum, routines or the way information is presented.

4. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This plan should be read alongside relevant LSE policies and procedures, including:

- SEND Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion / Equal Opportunities arrangements
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions arrangements
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation procedures, including PEEPs where required
- Online Safety and Data Protection arrangements, where accessible digital information is relevant

5. ACTION PLAN

This action plan reflects LSE as it currently operates. It distinguishes established provision from areas for development and does not imply that physical features are available where they are not.

Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability	
Current position / good practice	Current practice: • The curriculum is personalised to pupils' starting points, EHCP outcomes, communication profiles and preparation-for-adulthood needs. • Teachers use modelling, visuals, practical resources, technology, adapted recording methods, structured routines and adult support to remove barriers to learning. • Progress in reading, writing, mathematics and the wider curriculum is assessed and reviewed so intervention and support can be adjusted. • Therapy, pastoral support and SEND expertise inform classroom adaptations. • Reasonable adjustments may include changes to location, timing, task presentation, sensory environment, equipment, communication method and assessment arrangements.
Objectives	Short term: ensure every pupil's key access needs and reasonable adjustments are clearly known to staff. Medium term: strengthen consistent evidence of adaptations and participation across all subjects and qualifications. Long term: maintain an accessible curriculum as cohorts, KS4 and post-16/vocational pathways develop.
Actions to be taken	• Review pupil adaptations through EHCP, baseline and progress-review processes. • Maintain class and individual adaptation profiles so permanent, new and supply staff can access key information. • Audit curriculum resources for sensory, communication, literacy, physical and digital access. • Consider access arrangements and auxiliary aids early for external qualifications and assessments.
Person responsible	Head of Curriculum & Teaching and Learning; SENDCo; class teachers; therapy and pastoral team
Timescale	Ongoing with termly review; annual whole-school review by July 2027.
Success criteria	• Pupils can access a broad and ambitious curriculum at an appropriate level. • Reasonable adjustments are evident in planning and practice. • Participation and progress are reviewed for pupils whose disability creates additional barriers.

Improve and maintain access to the physical environment

Current position / good practice	Current position: • Northdown House is a Grade II listed, multi-storey historic building and is not currently fully accessible to wheelchair users. • LSE currently uses the ground and first floors for pupil provision. There is no lift. • Some original doors and circulation spaces are not of modern accessible width. • Accessible toilet facilities, shower facilities and a medical room are available. • On parts of the lower floor, portable ramps can be used where suitable following risk assessment to bridge minor changes in floor level. • Rooms and activities can be relocated to accessible ground-floor areas where this is a reasonable and practicable adjustment. • Access is considered individually for pupils, parents/carers and visitors.
Objectives	Short term: maintain safe, clear accessible routes on the ground floor and accurate knowledge of barriers. Medium term: identify reasonable, heritage-sensitive improvements to thresholds, signage, handrails, door operation and internal circulation. Long term: ensure accessibility is a standing consideration in estate planning and any future expansion of pupil accommodation.
Actions to be taken	• Complete and review a site accessibility audit identifying accessible rooms, toilets, medical/shower facilities, thresholds and restricted areas. • For any pupil with significant mobility needs, complete an individual access assessment before admission/transition and agree rooming, movement and evacuation arrangements. • Use portable ramps only where assessed as safe and suitable; inspect them routinely and keep routes free from obstruction. • Develop a PEEP where an individual cannot use standard evacuation routes independently. • Seek Cavendish Estates/competent-person advice on feasible adaptations and obtain conservation/planning advice before works affecting listed fabric. • When refurbishing or repurposing rooms, consider accessibility at design stage and prioritise accessible ground-floor provision where practicable. • Any future use of additional floors for pupil provision will form part of the relevant DfE/Ofsted and premises approval process and will include accessibility assessment.
Person responsible	Headteacher; SENDCo; Health & Safety / Estates lead; Cavendish Central Team / Estates
Timescale	Access audit and route checks by December 2026, then annually. Individual assessments/PEEPs before access is required and whenever needs change. Estates feasibility review by July 2027.
Success criteria	• Known physical barriers are recorded and managed rather than discovered reactively. • Accessible facilities and routes remain safe and usable. • Where a room is inaccessible, an alternative arrangement is made wherever reasonably practicable so the pupil can access equivalent education or services. • Building alterations comply with safety, planning and listed-building requirements.

Improve the delivery of accessible information	
Current position / good practice	Current practice: • LSE routinely uses visual supports, clear language, structured routines and adapted resources to support autistic pupils and pupils with communication needs. • Information can be shared through written, digital and face-to-face methods with pupils and families. • Staff can adapt font size, amount of text, layout, symbols/pictures and method of presentation according to identified need.
Objectives	Short term: make communication preferences and accessibility needs explicit in pupil information. Medium term: establish a consistent approach to accessible documents and key parent/pupil information. Long term: ensure new digital and printed information is designed with accessibility in mind.
Actions to be taken	• Record preferred communication and access arrangements for pupils and, where relevant, parents/carers. • Use plain English, visual/pictorial support, enlarged print, digital copies, reduced-clutter layouts or audio/video formats when required. • Provide specialist formats or communication support, such as Braille, hearing support or AAC, when identified as a reasonable adjustment and with specialist advice where needed. • Review internal signage for clarity, contrast and consistency. • Check important website and policy documents for accessible structure and readable formatting.
Person responsible	SENDCo; Head of Curriculum & Teaching and Learning; administration/website lead; class teams
Timescale	Communication needs: ongoing. Signage and document review by July 2027.
Success criteria	• Pupils and families receive key information in a form they can understand and use. • Reasonable requests for alternative formats are responded to promptly. • Staff use consistent accessible communication approaches.

Support disabled parents/carers, young carers and families

Current position / good practice	Current practice: • LSE works closely with families and recognises that disability, illness or caring responsibilities can affect access to meetings, communication and school engagement. • Pastoral and SEND staff can coordinate support and liaise with external agencies where appropriate.
Objectives	Ensure family circumstances do not create avoidable barriers to communication, participation in reviews or engagement with school processes.
Actions to be taken	• Offer telephone or online meetings, or an accessible ground-floor meeting room, where attending a standard meeting location is difficult. • Use flexible communication methods where reasonable. • Signpost or liaise with relevant local SEND, family-support or young-carer services, with consent where appropriate. • Consider reasonable adjustments for disabled parents/carers attending school events, reviews or meetings.
Person responsible	Pastoral Lead; SENDCo; Headteacher; administration staff
Timescale	Ongoing; reviewed as individual needs arise.
Success criteria	• Parents/carers and young carers can participate in key meetings and communication. • Reasonable adjustments are recorded and acted on where identified.

6. MONITORING, APPROVAL AND POLICY REVIEW

This plan will be kept under review and updated when there is a significant change in pupil need, the use of the premises, legislation/guidance, or planned building work. A formal review will take place at least annually so that actions remain current and achievable.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor progress against the action plan. Site-specific matters will be considered with the SENDCo, Health & Safety / Estates leads and Cavendish Central Team as appropriate. Where an individual pupil requires a reasonable adjustment, the school will not wait for the annual policy review before considering and implementing appropriate action.

Policy approver(s)	Life Skills Enterprise Senior Leadership Team / Cavendish Education Central Team
Storage location	School website, internal shared drive and hard copy at school
Effective date	1 October 2026
Next formal review	October 2027, or sooner if required
Plan period	2026-2029, with annual progress review

7. REVISION HISTORY

Version	Change	Author	Date of change
V1.0	Personalised for Life Skills Enterprise; template completed; current site limitations and accessibility actions recorded.	Life Skills Enterprise Senior Leadership Team	October 2026

Reference note: This plan should be read with current statutory guidance. Key external references include the Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 10), DfE guidance for independent schools, Ofsted guidance for non-association independent schools, and Kent County Council's Education Accessibility Strategy 2025-2028.