



## Accessibility Plan

Name of plan	Accessibility Plan
Review committee	SLT
Last review date	September 2025
Next review date	September 2026

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

1.2 GUST Independent School (GUST) aims to treat all our pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

1.3 The plan will be available online on the schools website, and paper copies are available on request.

1.4 GUST is committed to ensuring all staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

1.5 GUST's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

## 2. Legislation & Guidance

2.1 This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on his or her ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities.

2.3 Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

2.4 Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustment to premises.

## 3. Information about the School

3.1 GUST Independent School occupies a reasonably sized building in a residential area in Ashington, Northumberland.

3.2 GUST is an independent school serving children aged 6-17 with a range of SEN and SEMH needs. We have capacity for a maximum of 40 pupils.

3.3 GUST often has a wait list with students based across 6 different Local Authorities (Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham) and acts as an Alternative Provision for local schools. The majority of pupils travel to school using SEN Transport arranged by their LA or School.

3.4 GUST is on two floors; on entering the school the ground floor has a reception area, headteachers office and small interview room. The main area of the secondary school is located

through the door of the reception and includes disabled toilets, kitchen, hair & beauty/interventions classroom, and English & Maths classrooms. Another door leads through to the Vocational Area which includes male and female toilets, the quiet/medical room, the construction workshop, garage and yard access.

In the reception, there are also stairs leading up to the nurture unit. This consists of four classrooms, a larger meeting room, a sensory room, kitchen, quiet room, student and staff toilets.

There is no lift between the two floors due to the type of building we are housed in.

We have mechanical, coded or magnetic locks on the majority of doors in the school, use safety glass throughout and have window restraints on higher windows for safety. We also have CCTV throughout the school.

The outside area consists of benches, artificial grass and a small playground.

All of our students visit off-site premises for sports activities and forest school.

## 4. Plan

4.1 This plan sets out the proposals of the Trustees of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school **curriculum**
- Improving the **environment** of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of any **information that is provided in writing**

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed, and revised as necessary. What follows are our action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan and what the timescales will be.

### Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

What we plan to do	Impact on accessibility
The school will continue to develop and build on the success of the rewards-based culture that motivates our students to engage with the curriculum in order to enjoy benefits such as relaxation, computer and games time, and points that can be converted to financial benefits that can be spent on visits out of school.	Children and young people understand and can engage with this model of engagement and participation. Staff can be creative and appeal to children's own learning styles and interests by developing rewards that appeal to the young person's own interests and motivation.
The curriculum extends beyond the four walls of the school as we continue to develop and maximise our pupils' enjoyment of the community assets and opportunities on our doorstep. We plan to	The use of facilities such as the community woodland, local shops, leisure centre and coastline provide enrichment and collaborative opportunities for building

continue to develop the assets and opportunities our children and young people access.	independence in preparation for adulthood.
Developing the Duke of Edinburgh Award to the school curriculum.	Impact on the sense of achievement and accomplishments young people experience through the curriculum and the new interests and risk-taking they experience.

Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

What we plan to do	Impact on accessibility
Our school is not a fully accessible building (there are steep stairs and some narrow access); however, we are fortunate to have skilled staff onsite with construction skills. We make the most of this opportunity to develop and change our classrooms and learning environments to meet the needs of the children who use them. This is an ongoing and continuous aspect of our school. Our young people are often involved and use the practical vocational skills they learn on site to improve and develop their own environment; this is empowering.	Classrooms can be made larger, brighter, more accessible and more nurturing. Responding to specific needs, such as preferring to eat in a private area of the dining room without social interaction and having a darker or brighter environment, can all be accommodated. This is an ongoing aspect of the way we improve and develop our environment.

Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of any information that is provided in writing

What we plan to do	Impact on accessibility
We will continue to promote and give young people access to new technology that provides innovative solutions for written and verbal communication. We are continuously learning from the experiences of staff who join us from other educational settings and are keen to network and collaborate with other SEND schools in the county to learn from and share best practices in this area.	A growing repertoire of options and resources is available to young people at GUST. Impact on literacy and written language outcomes.

## Appendix 1: Useful resources

Making printed information accessible.

Resources and guidance: [Accessible communication formats](#) (government guidance)

[Creating Accessible Documents](#) factsheet (AbilityNet)

[Abilities and assistive technology](#) (UK Association for Accessible Formats)

[Sensory Trust information sheet on designing with clear and large print](#)

[Dyslexia style guide](#) (British Dyslexia Association)

[What Works](#): A database of evidence-based resources for professionals from the Communication Trust

[CustomEyes Books](#): Schools and individuals can join the scheme, which can reprint (at RRP) large print tailor-made books, including:

- Picture books
- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Oxford Reading Tree
- GCSE and A Level English texts and textbooks
- Revision guides for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4

[Northumberland County Blind Association](#) undertakes commissions to transcribe documentation to Braille.

[Easy Read UK](#) can convert documents to easy-read format.

[Audit tool for sensory preferences](#)

If the sensory responses and preferences of neurodiverse communities are better understood, it will be possible to create shared environments that more closely meet everyone's needs. There is an online audit tool hosted by the BBC to ensure that building design considers physical accessibility for neurodivergent people.