

The Pines School

Accessibility Plan



Version: September 2026

Ratified by the Governing Body

Chair of Governors - Natasha Harris

To be reviewed Annually

(September 2027 or sooner if legislation or best practice changes)

This policy has been reviewed and updated with consideration given to the principles and the ethos outlined in the UN Convention for the rights of the child - Article 28.

The Governing Body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

Lead Responsible

Mr. W Tulloch – Head Teacher

Version 1.0

Our commitment: The Pines School will identify and remove barriers so that pupils can participate, communicate, learn, regulate, move safely around the site and access the wider life of the school as fully as possible.

1. Purpose and statutory context

This plan sets out how The Pines School will improve accessibility over time. It is prepared under the Equality Act 2010, including the anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments and the planning duties in Schedule 10.

The statutory planning duty has three connected aims:

1. Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
2. Improve the physical environment so disabled pupils can take advantage of education, facilities, benefits and services.
3. Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils in forms that take account of their disabilities and preferred communication methods.

2. School context and accessibility principles

The Pines is an all-age autism-specialist school. Pupils present with a wide range of communication, interaction, sensory, learning, emotional-regulation, mobility, medical and personal-care needs. Many use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), visual structure or individualised sensory and co-regulation approaches. Some require close or continuous adult support. Accessibility therefore extends beyond step-free access: it includes predictability, communication, sensory safety, dignity, meaningful participation and readiness to learn.

The school's roll and complexity of need have increased substantially. Available teaching, small-group, therapy, sensory, dining and circulation spaces are under pressure. The plan therefore combines immediate practice improvements with a strategic approach to premises and capacity. It does not imply that every physical alteration can be delivered without feasibility assessment, funding or local-authority support.

To support prioritisation and any strategic funding case, the school will maintain baseline data on capacity and need. As at September 2026, the roll is 299 pupils against a planned capacity of 270; 299 pupils hold an EHCP and a high proportion require regular personal care, moving-and-handling or continuous adult support. These figures, with the trend over the previous 3 years, will be recorded and updated annually so that pressure on teaching, therapy, sensory, dining and circulation space can be evidenced rather than asserted.

- Pupil voice, including observation and communication methods suited to each pupil, will inform decisions.
- Families and relevant professionals will be involved when barriers or adjustments are reviewed.
- Universal design will be used where it benefits many pupils, with individual adjustments where required.
- High expectations will be maintained; accessibility will change the route to participation, not reduce entitlement.
- Changes will be evaluated for unintended sensory, safeguarding, evacuation or educational consequences.

3. Current accessibility arrangements

Curriculum and participation

The curriculum is organised through informal, semi-formal and formal pathways. Teaching is adapted through visual timetables, task breakdown, repetition, concrete resources, AAC, Makaton where appropriate, individual motivators, sensory regulation and personalised outcomes. Evidence for Learning and pathway-appropriate assessment support the recording of progress and participation.

Communication and information

Pupils may access objects of reference, photographs, symbols, communication boards/books, aided language, electronic AAC and simplified language. Home-school communication and family information can be adapted on request, including accessible electronic formats, larger print, translated information or explanation by telephone/meeting.

Physical and sensory environment

The site includes specialist teaching spaces, sensory rooms, therapy rooms, accessible hygiene and personal-care arrangements, a lifts serving the split-levels and outdoor learning opportunities. Access needs are considered through individual risk assessment, personal emergency evacuation planning where required, moving-and-handling arrangements, medical plans and transition planning. Constraints include congestion, limited breakout space, limited communal spaces and variable sensory demands across the site.

4. How needs and barriers will be identified

Accessibility is a continuous cycle rather than a one-off premises audit. The school will use:

- EHCPs, annual reviews, professional advice, medical plans and transition information;
- pupil and family views, including non-speaking communication and observation of engagement, distress and avoidance;
- curriculum monitoring, learning walks, attendance, exclusions/suspensions, incident and restrictive-practice data;
- site walks, room-risk assessments, evacuation reviews and checks of signage, lighting, acoustics, temperature and circulation;
- feedback from staff, governors, therapists, transport teams and visitors
- review of complaints and accessibility requests to identify recurring barriers.

Any urgent barrier creating a safety risk or substantial disadvantage will be escalated promptly to the Headteacher and relevant premises, safeguarding or clinical lead.

5. Accessibility action plan: curriculum participation

Priority and action	Success criteria / evidence	Lead	Timescale	Monitoring
1. Complete an annual accessibility review of each curriculum pathway, including enrichment, PE, educational visits, careers, work-related learning and school events.	Audit identifies barriers and actions. Participation data shows no unexplained disability-related gaps. Adjustments are recorded before activities.	DHTs / TLR leads	Annual, autumn term	SLT curriculum review & governor report
2. Strengthen consistent use of total communication and AAC across classes and shared spaces.	Communication profiles are current; core vocabulary and systems travel with pupils; staff model AAC consistently; pupil communication increases.	SALT / AHT	2026–27, then ongoing	Learning walks, SALT review & pupil evidence
3. Embed sensory-informed and co-regulation practice across routines, transitions and curriculum delivery.	Pupils have usable regulation plans; avoidable distress and lost learning time reduce; environments show planned sensory adjustments.	SLT/Pastoral /EP & OT	2026–28	Behaviour Watch trends, observation & stakeholder feedback
4. Deliver a planned programme of accessibility training so all staff, including new, temporary and supply staff, can consistently apply the school's communication, sensory-regulation, personal-care, moving-and-handling and evacuation approaches.	Training plan links induction and refresher CPD to identified needs; records show coverage of AAC, sensory/co-regulation, moving-and-handling and evacuation; practice is consistent across classes, and new and supply staff are briefed before pupil contact.	SLT	Ongoing	CPD records, learning walks & governor report

6. Accessibility action plan: physical environment

Priority and action	Success criteria / evidence	Lead	Timescale	Monitoring
5. Undertake an annual access and sensory-environment walk with pupil/parent governor input and premises representative.	Prioritised register covers routes, thresholds, doors, toilets, hygiene, signage, lighting, acoustics, shade, seating and evacuation. High-risk issues are time-bound.	Site lead / DSL	Annual, autumn term	Resources committee; action log
6. Review accessible toilets, changing, personal-care storage and dignity arrangements against current and forecast need.	Capacity and equipment gaps are costed; servicing and training are current; privacy and safeguarding are maintained.	HT / site lead	By March 2027; annual refresh	H&S committee & care-plan audits
7. Establish a costed three-year programme for feasible physical and sensory improvements.	Priorities are linked to evidence, funding routes and responsible parties; completed works are evaluated with users before sign-off.	HT / Finance & Operations Manager/ Governors / LA	Plan by July 2027	Resources committee
8. Review individual and whole-site emergency evacuation arrangements, including pupils who may freeze, abscond, resist transitions or require mobility support.	PEEPs are current where needed; drills test varied scenarios; staff understand refuges, evacuation aids and communication supports.	Health and Safety lead / DSL	Termly and on change	Drill records & PEEP audit

7. Accessibility action plan: information and communication

Priority and action	Success criteria / evidence	Lead	Timescale	Monitoring
9. Ensure accessible-information is in standardised for pupil-facing and family-facing communication.	Ensure key documents use plain language, readable layout and descriptive headings; alternative formats are offered; urgent messages use more than one channel where needed.	Business Support Manager / SLT	By Jan 2027	Sample audit & family feedback
10. Review classroom and shared-space visual information for consistency and sensory load.	Essential signs and visuals are recognisable across school; clutter and conflicting symbols reduce; changes are introduced with preparation.	SALT lead / DHTs	By July 2027	Environment walks; pupil voice
11. Ensure every pupil has a current one-page profile that is available to relevant staff, including supply and transport interfaces where lawful and necessary.	Profiles state how the pupil communicates, understands information, indicates pain/distress and accesses transitions; versions are reviewed after change.	Class teachers / SLT	Termly	File audit & induction checks
12. Establish a clear process for requesting translations, easy-read, large-print, audio or alternative digital formats.	Request route is published and understood; requests are logged and fulfilled within an agreed timescale; recurring needs are anticipated.	Business Support Manager	By Dec 2026	Request log & complaints review

8. Responsibilities and resources

The Governing Body is responsible for approving, overseeing and publishing the plan. The Headteacher is accountable for implementation and for ensuring accessibility is considered in strategic decisions. Senior and middle leaders translate actions into curriculum, staffing, premises and communication practice. All staff must implement agreed reasonable adjustments and report barriers. Contractors and external providers must follow relevant school access, safeguarding and safety requirements.

Actions will be delivered through existing budgets where reasonable. Larger premises works will be prioritised through the school's condition, capital and local-authority processes. Decisions will consider effectiveness, practicability, cost, available resources, disruption, health and safety, the needs of other pupils and whether another effective adjustment is available. Financial or site constraints will be recorded transparently.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Action leads will update progress at least termly and retain evidence against the stated success criteria.
- SLT will review the plan every 3 years and after any significant change to the site, pupil population, curriculum or legislation.
- Governors will receive an annual progress report, with exceptions or delayed actions clearly explained.
- Impact will be judged through participation, attendance, progress, incidents, complaints, pupil/family feedback and direct observation.
- The plan will be revised when evidence shows that an action is ineffective or a new barrier has emerged.

10. Publication

The approved plan will be published on the school website and made available in alternative formats on request. The plan will be shared with stakeholders and relevant professionals.

Concerns about accessibility or reasonable adjustments should first be raised with the class teacher or relevant leader and may then be addressed through the school's complaints procedure. Safeguarding or immediate health-and-safety concerns should be reported without delay. Raising a concern will not adversely affect a pupil's provision.

Appendix A: annual updates

Review date	Participants	Evidence considered	Changes agreed	Governor oversight