

Barnsley Children and Young People's Trust Executive Group and Barnsley
Metropolitan Borough Council

**DRAFT Borough Accessibility Strategy for Children and Young People with
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2020-2022)**

Introduction

The Children and Young Peoples Trust's ambition for all children and young people in Barnsley is that they:

- Can attend a school or other education setting that is good or outstanding
- Achieve success in learning and work
- Live in a strong and resilient family

This is a fundamental part of our Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2022 and the Children and Young People's SEND Plan 2020 - 2022 which was developed with the valuable input of children and young people.

We want Barnsley to be a place where:

- All children and young people live in a safe environment, where they feel listened to, supported and respected.
- Children and young people make healthy lifestyle choices and are emotionally well and resilient.
- Children and young people enjoy life and its opportunities, achieve their potential and benefit from a good education.
- Young people have access to and secure good jobs.
- Children and young people become active citizens who contribute to creating a 'Better Barnsley'.

The key priority areas on which children and young people wanted to see progress were the following:

- Inclusion and engagement
- Improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs, including a disability or impairment so that they can make a successful transition to adulthood, enjoy independence, make a good living and feel part of their local community.

The values they feel should be promoted across the partnership and underpin this strategy are:

- Consideration
- Acceptance
- Consistency
- Fairness in all things
- Kindness
- Quality

These values provide a strong foundation for change and in the development and delivery of positive outcomes underpinned by high quality services. We encourage everyone who reads this strategy to consider how they adopt these values to support positive interactions with children, young people and families within their everyday practice.

The Voice of Children and Young People

In listening to children and young people with SEND and their experience of school we have heard the following:

Young people attending specialist provision were very positive about their experience of school. Other young people said they found college better than school, because they had more choice of subjects, and felt more accepted. Children with SEND in mainstream school felt that more understanding and better support was sometimes needed from staff and other pupils. Early identification was important to them, with some young people feeling that delays in identifying their needs led to them being labelled as difficult or their actions being misinterpreted.

For pupils at school, support from teaching assistants was really valued, as was support from key members of staff who they felt recognised and understood their additional needs. Many expressed the view that school staff needed more training in understanding special needs; how these needs can affect a young person's behaviour; and how to respond when a young person is struggling.

Young people expressed frustration about information about their conditions or how to meet their needs was not being shared with all their teachers, so support was inconsistent. Pupils who had good experiences and support were positive about what they had achieved, educationally and socially.

At school young people told us they want to feel:

Appreciated, understood, motivated to learn, acknowledged for who they are and their achievements, happy, safe and secure, wanted, confident, ready to work, listened to and equal.

Young people also made suggestions about what they would like to happen to address these issues:

- More support for SEND in schools
- Better training for all school staff on disabilities and what they can do to help.
- More consistency in implementing strategies and support.
- Better communication between staff (including supply teachers) about what things have been put in place to help us.
- To be asked and listened to.

Barnsley Alliance Education Improvement Strategy 2019

Building upon investment across the local SEND system, a strategic priority of our Barnsley Alliance Education Improvement Strategy 2019 will be to continue to develop the quality of practice in schools in order to better meet specific needs as part of promoting greater inclusion, through a process of consultation and engagement. One of the ways in which we can help achieve this is through a Borough Accessibility Strategy.

Legal Framework

The Equality Act (2010) consolidates a range of equality related duties and requirements within a single Act of Parliament. This Act introduced upon the Council and its partners, including mainstream schools and academies, a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into effect in April 2011.

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
2. Promote equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act and PSED and their peers.
3. To foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share one or more of the following protected characteristics and those who do not:
 - Race
 - Disability or impairment
 - Sex or gender (including gender identity)
 - Age
 - Religious belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Pregnancy and maternity

Purpose of the Borough Accessibility Strategy

In addition, the Equality Act and PSED requires us, as the local authority, to implement an accessibility strategy for children and young people whose special educational need relates to a disability as specified in Schedule 10 of the Act:

“An accessibility strategy which over a prescribed period:

- (a) Increases the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school’s curriculum*
- (b) Improves the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools*
- (c) Improves the delivery to disabled pupils of information which otherwise is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.*

The delivery of this information must be:

- (a) *Within a reasonable time*
- (b) *Delivered in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.*

The Accessibility Strategy will be the basis upon which all schools in the borough develop their own accessibility plan to ensure specific but consistent policy and activity. In developing the borough's Accessibility Strategy, we have taken into account the following factors:

Definition of Disability

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. A physical or mental impairment may include learning difficulties, mental health conditions, other medical conditions as well as hidden impairments, such as dyslexia, autism or speech, language and communication impairments.

Definition of SEND

A child or young person has a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty or disability which requires specialist education provision to be made for them, as stated in the SEND Code of Practice (2014).

The Local Context

The school population in Barnsley has been increasing year on year since 2011. In January 2019, there were 34,451 pupils on roll in Barnsley schools compared to 33,980 in January 2018 (this includes State-funded Primary, Secondary and Special schools, (including academies, Independent Schools and Pupil Referral Units). Of these, 14.9% had a special educational need or disability compared with 14.9% nationally. 4.0% of pupils had a statement or Education Health Care Plan in comparison to 3.1% nationally, whilst 10.9% required SEN Support in comparison to 11.9% nationally.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

Local authorities, schools and academies should adhere to the duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure pupils with SEND particularly a disability or impairment, can fully participate in the education provided by their setting and can, also, enjoy the range of associated benefits, facilities and services which the setting provides for its pupils. These reasonable adjustments should include the following:

1. Provisions
2. Criteria
3. School practices, policies and procedures

4. Auxiliary aids and services, including assistance and support from equipment, new technology or member of staff.
5. Support for health-related needs in partnership with health partners.

Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Schools and academies in Barnsley are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all children and young people, including a wider curriculum (with provision for after-school clubs) for children and young people with SEND.

Improving the Physical Environment

As part of the Accessibility Strategy, schools should consider the needs of individual or groups of pupils when planning improvements to the school's environment. As indicated earlier, schools and academies have a duty under the Equality Act and PSED to consider reasonable adjustments for individual disabled pupils and groups of pupils.

As part of this, we will ensure that the maintenance of, as well as improvements to the Council's schools estate comply with current building regulations and are physically accessible to disabled pupils. We will also advise and influence all partner organisations, including single and multi-academy trusts on accessible school environments and reasonable adjustments.

Improving Access to Information

Schools and academies also have a duty to ensure all written information which is normally provided to its pupils, is available to children with special educational needs, including a disability, in a range of ways and within a reasonable timeframe. Schools' Web sites must be reviewed annually and should include the school's SEND report.

In addition, Barnsley Children and Young People's Trust will:

- Continue to support schools and academies in improving access to the curriculum for children and young people with SEND through the provision of high quality, targeted training and development which will embed the principles established in the Department for Education's SEND Code of Practice.
- Continue to develop our Local Offer to children and young people with SEND by improving the capacity of schools and academies to best meet the needs of pupils and to enable parents and families to access services, support and guidance available to them to help their children achieve their aspirations and potential.
- Alongside our partners, to continue to engage with children and young people with SEND in order to jointly plan and develop meaningful services which can make a difference to their lives.

- To support school leaders, including SENCOs, concerning the application of policies, plans and strategies and to enable SENCOs to meet regularly in order to keep up with developments and share best practice.
- To provide opportunities for governor training in relation to accessibility and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- To enable the Education Inclusion Team to work closely with schools in order to ensure the accessibility of pupils with a disability or impairment to the curriculum and the range of services provided to pupils.
- To ensure Education, Health and Care Plans specify any adaptations required to make the school environment more accessible to individual pupils with a disability or impairment.
- To monitor transition arrangements for children entering school for the first time and those moving across the school phases.
- To help in carrying out assessments for school trips to ensure they are accessible for pupils with mobility, sensory or medical difficulties.
- To support schools and academies in monitoring and reviewing the skills and expertise of staff in supporting pupils with a disability or impairment.
- To work with schools and other partners to prepare children and young people for adulthood and greater independence.

Obtaining Advice and Support

Parents and carers of children with SEND can obtain advice and support on the PSED and schools and academies duties concerning accessibility, from:

Barnsley Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (Telephone: (01226) 787234 or e-mail SENDIASS@barnsley.gov.uk)

Further details concerning Barnsley's Local Offer to children and young people with SEND can be viewed through clicking the link below:

<https://fsd.barnsley.gov.uk/kb5/barnsley/fisd/localoffer.page?localofferchannels=1783>

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any suggestions on ways to improve this Strategy, including examples of good practice. If you have any comments about your child's accessibility to the school curriculum, please e-mail SEND@barnsley.gov.uk.