



Blue Hills Federation



DISABILITY POLICY & ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Autumn 2024

The Blue Hills Federation

The Blue Hills Federation is a collective of three primary schools – Clunbury CE Primary School, Newcastle CE Primary School and St Mary’s Bucknell CE Primary School. All three schools share one Executive Headteacher and one Governing Body. When using the term ‘Blue Hills Federation’ within this policy, it is in reference to all three schools. When policy only applies to one school that school will be named specifically. Newcastle CE Primary School does not have a nursery or a preschool, therefore any references to nursery or pre-school do not apply to Newcastle CE Primary School.

Our Vision

Proverbs 22:6 - Good News Bible

‘Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives.’

We are a caring Church Federation bringing together and serving many communities. We provide nurturing environments that facilitates learning for all. We encourage everybody to become confident, sociable and responsible citizens who achieve to the best of their ability in preparation for a fulfilling future.

Our Values

Trust and Truth; Joy and Happiness; Love and Respect; Thankfulness; Friendship and Family; Perseverance and Resilience

Review Date: Autumn 2025

Introduction

The Blue Hills Federation is committed to making our schools as inclusive and accessible for children with disabilities and / or special educational needs, and parents / carer, teachers, and other professionals who may have a disability or additional need.

Our federation ethos values diversity and difference, and we are committed to taking steps and improving our physical environment and understanding and knowledge of disabilities and special educational needs. We aim to remove barriers that may exist that prevent and exclude access to the curriculum and full participation in the schools' community for pupils, prospective pupils and disabled adult users.

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010.

School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act.

The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that "schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation".

Principles

We aim to uphold UNICEF Convention on the Rights of Children Article 23 (A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide free care and assistance to children with a disability).

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as:

"A person has a disability 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 carry out normal day-to-day activities".

In performing their duties, governors and staff will:

- Not treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled students so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- Plan to increase access to education for disabled students

Our Federation Vision

The Blue Hills Federation is a safe and creative environment: a happy, positive, vibrant and forward-thinking community where each child and adult is valued and able to learn, play and achieve.

We aim to provide every child with high quality teaching and learning. It is the federation's philosophy to give our pupils a measure of independence, a high level of self-confidence, a deep sense of self-worth, and an understanding and deeper appreciation of our Christian heritage.

To achieve this, we aim to:

- Enable all children to achieve their full potential, both academically, socially, personally, and morally in order that children expect the best of themselves.
- Promote spiritual development and the ability to grow and flourish as human beings.
- Support children in building relationships which reflect Christian values.
- Deliver a broad, relevant and challenging education which is of a high standard and appropriate to an individual child's needs.

- Promote high standards of behaviour based on mutual trust and respect, developing responsibility and fostering self-discipline.
- Promote good citizenship, thus enabling individuals to make valuable contributions to wider society.
- Ensure equal opportunities for all.
- Provide a welcoming and stimulating learning environment in which everyone feels safe, happy and secure.
- Develop a sense of pride in belonging to the Blue Hills Federation.

To achieve these aims staff and governors will work in partnership with parents, carers and the local community for the benefit of all our pupils.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the schools will address the priorities identified.

Objectives

The Blue Hills Federation is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

The federation recognises and values parent's knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities and respects the parent's and child's right to confidentiality.

The Accessibility Plans show how access is to be improved for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to the schools within a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

The Accessibility Plans contain relevant and timely actions to:-

- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as the able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or schools visits – it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

Our Schools Population at the Blue Hills Federation

Our schools are small rural primary schools that are an integral and valuable part of the communities. We currently have pupils with known disabilities / and or additional needs. Within our schools, children have a range of impairments, and special educational needs, ranging from autism, dyspraxia, speech and language delay, to general learning disabilities

Information gained from the assessment

Clunbury CE Primary School

The school is a single storey building on a gentle slope. The playground has been modified to take out two steps and replace with a gradual slope to improve access. There is easy access to the back/playground door, however, none of the outside access doors have easy access for wheelchair users as the doors do not open automatically. The single gate from the car park to the main site is difficult for wheelchair users to open/close.

Once in the school, it is easily accessible for wheelchair users and those with mobility issues, with access available to all rooms in the school, as it is all on one level. However, none of the internal doors open automatically. The outdoor play areas are large, with a gentle slope and all accessible.

There is currently no designated disabled parking bay. Parking is limited, and exempting a space for disabled parking would have implications for other parents/ staff members. However, this should be considered.

The pupils and staff, when discussing what it meant to be disabled, had some good ideas and suggestions, and the children were able to identify with adults they knew who were disabled and some of the children within the school. Some of the children with additional needs were able to explain what it meant for them, and some of the difficulties it created.

When considering their school, the children were able to identify some of the access issues, including the fact that some of the internal doors are made up of swing doors, which are difficult to negotiate with a wheelchair and don't open automatically. They also said that the slope of the playground would be difficult for wheelchair users to safely use. Some concerns were raised about the school buses parking amongst staff cars and that this could cause an accident.

Physical Access – Clunbury CE Primary School

Access Report Ref.	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Expand disabled toilet to include wet room.	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to Shropshire Council.	Spring/Summer 2025 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the funding in 2024/2025.	£7000 - £12,000 approx
2.	Improve parking facilities to create a disabled parking space nearer the gate.	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to the Diocese in order to gain LCVAP funding.	Spring/Summer 2025 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the grant in 2024/2025.	£500 - £1,000 approx
3.	Create a bus pull-in along the driveway.	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to the Diocese in order to gain LCVAP funding.	Spring/Summer 2026 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the grant in 2025/2026.	£7000 - £12,000 approx

Information gained from the assessment

Newcastle CE Primary School

The school is a single storey building on a flat site, and there is a ramped access up to the back/playground door. However, none of the outside access doors have easy access for wheelchair users as the doors do not open automatically. Likewise, the front entrance internal door does not open automatically, although the bell is within reach for wheelchair users.

Once in the school, it is easily accessible for wheelchair users and those with mobility issues, with access available to all rooms in the school, as it is all on one level. The outdoor play areas are large, and mostly flat and all accessible.

There is currently no designated disabled parking bay. Parking is limited, and exempting a space for disabled parking would have implications for other parents/ staff members. However, this should be considered.

The pupils and staff, when discussing what it meant to be disabled, had some good ideas and suggestions, and the children were able to identify with adults they knew who were disabled. Some of the children with additional needs were able to explain what it meant for them, and some of the difficulties it created.

When considering their school, the children were able to identify some of the access issues, including the fact that some of the internal doors are made up of swing doors, which are difficult to negotiate with a wheelchair.

Physical Access – Newcastle CE Primary School

Access Report Ref.	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Expand disabled toilet to include wet room.	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to Shropshire Council.	Spring/Summer 2025 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the funding in 2024/2025.	£7000 - £12,000 approx
2.	Change the external doors to automatic doors	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to Shropshire Council.	Summer 2026 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the funding in 2025/2026.	£12,000 - £15,000 approx

Information gained from the assessment

St Mary's Bucknell CE Primary School

The school is a single storey building on a flat site, and there is a ramped access up to the front door. The front doors are automatic which offers easy access for wheelchair users. The internal door does not open automatically, although the bell is within easy reach for wheelchair users.

Once in the school, it is easily accessible for wheelchair users and those with mobility issues, with access available to all rooms in the school, as it is a small building over one floor. There is also a toilet suitable for disabled access and the outdoor play area is large and flat.

The fire exit from the main hall is not suitable to be independently accessible for wheelchair users, as there is a high step, and then no room to manoeuvre or turn for a wheelchair - in an emergency wheelchair users would be reliant on other people to lift them down the step. The school has successfully bid for disabled access to the rear playground, and a new door should be installed in the Summer Term 2022, along with funding for new internal doors which would remove the 2 swing doors in the building.

There is currently no designated disabled parking bay. Parking is limited, and exempting a space for disabled parking would have implications for other parents/ staff members. However, this should be considered.

The pupils and staff, when discussing what it meant to be disabled, had some good ideas and suggestions, and the children were able to identify with adults they knew who were disabled, and some of the children within the school.

When considering their school, the children were able to identify some of the access issues, including the fact that some of the internal doors are made up of swing doors, which are difficult to negotiate with a wheelchair.

The children and young people were also able to consider some of the alternative and augmentative methods used for children and adults to communicate if they had a hearing impairment, or a learning disability, and discussion was held about the use of makaton, British Sign language, and using signs and symbols in the school.

There was also discussion in both classes about the bullying that disabled children and young people could face, and the importance of supporting and welcoming all children in the school.

The sessions with the classes were very positive, and the children clearly have some awareness, and regular lessons considering issue of disability awareness would be easily incorporated into PSHE lessons.

Physical Access – St Mary’s Bucknell CE Primary School

Access Report Ref.	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Improve parking facilities to create a disabled parking space near the gate.	Implementation of plans and feasibility study to the Diocese in order to gain LCVAP funding.	Spring/Summer 2025 Or to reapply the following year if unsuccessful in securing the grant in 2024/2025.	£1500 - £2,000 approx
2.	To improve wheelchair access and egress.	Look at installing automatic doors in some areas and improved access and egress out of two rear doors to the playground. Discuss egress for wheelchair users from the school hall with the Diocese.	To be incorporated in any plans drawn up. 2024-25	Approx £10,000

Curriculum Access All Schools

Access Report Ref.	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Learning environment	SENCO to lead review learning environment from inclusive perspective	Autumn 2024 – reviewed annually	Staff meeting time and SENCO release time compile findings and recommendations.
2.	Provision Maps	SENCO to lead updating of provision maps in 4 areas based around code of practice.	Autumn 2024 – reviewed annually	
3.	To work with professionals to successfully accommodate children with hearing impairments	Class teachers and staff to work with professionals to ensure pupils with hearing impairments have access to resources in individual classrooms and ensure labels and signs are inclusive and promote independence.	Autumn 2024 – reviewed annually	
4.	Resources	Staff to meet regularly to review resources used and ensure these are helpful and appropriate. Staff review resources used in Maths, Reading and Writing - trial materials to make more inclusive.	Autumn 2024 – reviewed annually	
4.	Training & links	Provide appropriate and relevant ongoing training all staff on matters of inclusion. Working with hearing impairment staff to learn techniques to support children with a range of difficulties, and to learn sign language.	Autumn 2024 – reviewed annually	

Written Information Access All Schools

Access Report	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost
1.	Clear, straight forward and simple communication with parents and community	Information presented in variety of easy to access ways e.g. displayed in window for parents dropping off, sent via email, text and on school website. Language used is simple with any education terms/jargon avoided or clearly explained. Parent guides produced & parents sessions run for key areas e.g. phonics, new assessment. Admin & teaching staff aware of individual who may need information explaining directly or personally.	Autumn 2024 and ongoing.	
2.	Improve availability of written material in alternate formats	School materials made available in alternate forms as requested (e.g. audio / large print).	Ongoing	
3.	More flexible / easier communication between home and school.	Phone system to allow parents to leave messages 24 hours a day in text format.	Ongoing	New monthly contract
4.	To improve communication with children with hearing impairments and provide an enhanced listening environment by modifying our learning environments where possible.	To provide a system of total communication; which incorporates the use of pictures or symbols, natural gestures, and sign language.	Autumn 2024 and ongoing	£1000 approx plus additional training costs.

Expectations on Staff and Governors

Staff members and Governors are key partners in ensuring our accessibility plan becomes a reality. They are responsible for ensuring its appropriateness implementation, review and update.

How to get a copy of the schools' plans

Copies of this plan are available in different formats. Please contact the schools, or speak to Miss Cook if you require this plan in an alternate format (e.g. e-mail / large print.)

Contact: Clunbury CE (A) Primary School
Clunbury
Craven Arms
Shropshire
SY7 0HE

School telephone number: 01588 660 207
Email: adminclunbury@bhf.shropshire.sch.uk

Contact: Newcastle CE (A) Primary School
Church Road
Newcastle
Shropshire
SY7 8QL

School telephone number: 01588 640 260
Email: adminnewcastle@bhf.shropshire.sch.uk

Contact: St Mary's Bucknell CE (A) Primary School
Chapel Lawn Road
Bucknell
Shropshire
SY7 0AA

School telephone number: 01547 530 264
Email: adminbucknell@bhf.shropshire.sch.uk

Date of Plan Autumn 2023
Date of Review: To be reviewed annually
Member of Staff responsible Miss Cook

This plan was drawn up by:

The staff at the Blue Hills Federation
The pupils at the Blue Hills Federation

The Blue Hills Federation Abridged Accessibility Plan

Our federation values every child, staff member, and adult visitor. We particularly welcome and value those with disabilities and special educational needs. We want to ensure that every disabled child matters in our schools and that all children, including those with disabilities and that all children, including those with disabilities and or special educational needs are helped to:

- Stay Safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

We will ensure that those with mobility impairments can get into our schools, and can access our main facilities.

We will ensure that this plan, and other documentation is available in alternative formats (such as in large print/audio tape). Other school documents for children will also be available in large print/audio if required.

We will ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have clear plans that ensure any other appropriate measures are taken to ensure that their needs are met within the school, and their progress regularly reviewed.

We will consider all activities that our schools undertake to ensure that they are accessible for all.

We will continue to review the physical nature of the school buildings, and ensure when any alterations or adaptations are made, that these improve the physical accessibility of our schools.

We value the specific input of disabled students, staff, and visitors and welcome feedback at any time about our accessibility plan, or service provision. Any feedback should be given to Miss Cook, who will consider what action can be taken.

We will consider how, within the curriculum, we can ensure that disabled children and young people are represented, and the curriculum supports all pupil and staff's awareness of disability awareness and access issues.

We will ensure that if our schools develop any extended school activities, that the specific needs of disabled pupils and parents are considered.

We will ensure that our schools' anti bullying policy is regularly updated, and in the light of the date that disabled children in mainstream school provision often experience bullying, staff members are particularly aware of this, and any incidents of disability/SEN related bullying taken seriously.

We recognise that accessibility is about more than physical access, and attitudes make a significant contribution to how accessible settings can be.

This plan was adopted Spring 2023 and will be reviewed annually.