Thames Valley School

Accessibility Policy

Date	November 2026
Written By	Senior Leadership Team
Approval Date	
Review Date	November 2029

Introduction

Schools have a duty to plan increased accessibility to the curriculum, the physical environment of the school and improve the delivery of written information to disabled pupil/students. This policy outlines Thames Valley Schools' approach to this duty.

Improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled pupil/students is essential to ensuring equality of opportunity, and full participation in society. This needs to be in a planned and strategic way.

All autistic pupils are considered to have a disability as a consequence of their autism. The Equality Act 2010 emphasises the requirements for all schools to promote accessibility for those pupil/students with physical and sensory disabilities. Liberty Academy Trust accepts and endorses these intentions and therefore for the purpose of this policy document pupil/students with a disability will mean those who have physical and/or sensory impairments in addition to their core autistic disorder.

The SPELL Framework emphasises structure, positive approaches, empathy, low arousal/levels of regulation and links for understanding and responding to the needs of people with an autistic spectrum disorder. Using SPELL small alterations to the physical environment and teaching approaches can vastly increase the capacity and accessibility for children with autism or related disorders to learn more effectively.

For autistic pupils seemingly, incidental environmental factors will greatly increase stress levels, potentially leading to challenging behaviour dysregulation and reducing their opportunity for learning. Consequently, buildings will be audited in line with SPELL to ensure acoustics, lighting, smells, signage and classroom organisation are calm and ordered in such a way to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.

In accessing the curriculum autistic pupils including those with additional sensory and/or physical disabilities will have full access to all areas, provided at a suitable level and differentiated according to need. All staff will be trained in autism and positive behaviour support.

All schools within the Liberty Academy Trust have written three-year accessibility plans in place that form part of the annual School Improvement Plan.
Thames Valley School is committed to removing the barriers to learning and achievements to all young people we support. We support and value the learning journey and aspirations of every individual.

This plan focuses on improving accessibility for all stakeholders including students, staff, parents and other visitors. This plan should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities Policy, SEN Report, and Safeguarding Policy.

Aims

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which 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 challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

In seeking to enhance opportunities for all pupils to develop their academic and social skills whilst addressing their emotional, physical, moral and spiritual needs the school will:

- Provide a curriculum that is accessible to all pupils
- Provide an environment which is accessible to everyone
- Provide access to information for pupils and parents

Admissions & Recruitment

Our Admissions Policy states that all pupils must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder/ Autism diagnosis (or are awaiting diagnosis with a referral having been submitted and are recognised by professionals as being likely to receive a diagnosis of autism).

All staff receive Safeguarding training during induction. Our staff team includes access to specialist staff such as Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT), and Assistant Psychologists where specific and targeted needs are identified. We have small class groups of students supported by a teacher and at least one Learning Mentor (LM).

Information Access

We have regular School Council Meetings and School Executive Team meetings that involve students in key decisions regarding the school where any barriers to learning have been identified. We adopt a positive behaviour management approach**.** Our aim is to ensure that every pupil and parent has access to curriculum maps and outcome grades for every pupil.

In order to achieve this target, the following steps have been taken:

- EHC Plans, combined records and other hard data will be available to all pupils and parents.
- The School Based Guarantee Families and pupils can have access to 'hard' copies.
- The school website will contain all relevant school information, in an accessible format.

Curriculum Access

Pupils access the National Curriculum, which is suitably adapted and paced, acknowledging that some pupils require the adaptations made at Thames Valley School to access and engage

with learning opportunities. Our pupils work at broadly age-related levels of attainment, and they work towards a range of accredited qualifications, including GCSEs and Level 2 Qualifications. At Thames Valley School, we recognise that successful learning is built upon strong foundations. Early learning principles continue to be important throughout the primary years, particularly for pupils with SEND and those working at earlier developmental stages. Our Primary Curriculum reflects this, providing pupils with the communication, independence, self-regulation, and learning-to-learn skills that underpin future success within the adapted National Curriculum and beyond.

We make reasonable adjustments to our curriculum to ensure pupils are able to access their learning opportunities, for example, by grouping, content of the lesson, adapting resources, giving processing time, pre-teaching of key vocabulary and consideration of ways information is presented (verbal and visual).

Enrichment opportunities and links with the community are carefully planned to ensure a broad, relevant and engaging curriculum that supports pupils' personal development, independence and preparation for adulthood. These opportunities are made accessible to all pupils.
We are committed to ensuring all students have regular opportunities to experience success and that these are celebrated. Pupil achievement data is carefully monitored and analysed to check barriers to learning promptly. Teachers and learning mentors attend courses, as appropriate, to support specific needs and individual requirements.

Furniture and equipment have been carefully selected to meet the needs of pupils in these classes, ensuring equitable access to learning, participation and the wider school environment.

We have a clear policy for the administration of medicines, with relevant staff completing appropriate training to ensure medication is administered safely and effectively. A register of pupils with medical needs is maintained, with essential information shared with relevant staff and made readily accessible in designated secure locations. The school has a defibrillator and an anaphylaxis kit on site, with trained staff available to respond to medical emergencies. Staff supporting pupils with feeding and physiotherapy plans have received specialist training in enteral feeding and physiotherapy interventions, allowing pupils' health and physical needs to be met in a manner that promotes inclusion, participation and curriculum access.

Physical Access (buildings)

The School adopts the SPELL approach at the heart of which is a low arousal environment. We make significant adjustments to our physical environment to meet the needs of all the young people we support where appropriate. We use the SPELL approach to ensure a clearly structured environment in order to reduce anxiety for the young people we support. To keep pupils safe the school is split into different zones operated by fob locks.

Thames Valley School, Tilehurst, is fully accessible, with lowered kerbs providing access to the building, a lift to facilitate access to the first floor, and adapted accessible toilet facilities. Hill Brow has step-free access throughout the ground floor. While the classrooms on the first floor are only accessible via stairs and there is no lift, the building is owned by Reading Borough Council and therefore structural adaptations of this nature are beyond the school's control. To ensure accessibility, pupils are placed in learning environments that appropriately meet their physical needs, and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place where required to support safe evacuation.

Pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements are safe. There is parking on site which includes disabled spaces. The main school gate is closed during the school day to prevent vehicles entering the site. All play areas are fenced off from the car park by a gate or are sited to the side and rear of the building away from the car park.

Emergency and evacuation procedures are accessible to all at present. Alarms are auditory and the assembly points are clearly identified throughout both sites.

Thames Valley School Accessibility Plan 2026-2029

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Curriculum across the school is robustly documented into three pathways, meeting the needs of all learners, with staff appropriately equipped to deliver this provision.	Curriculum Development Meetings Staff training Collaboration with Teaching and Learning Trust Lead and Director of Education	All pupils are able to access a curriculum that is tailored to their learning needs, with clearly defined pathways enabling appropriate challenge, support and opportunities for achievement. Staff are equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively, promoting successful participation and progress for all learners.	September 2026-29	All pupils access a curriculum that is appropriately matched to their needs, enabling them to engage, participate and make progress from their individual starting points.
Enrichment opportunities across the school are designed and adapted to ensure all pupils can access, participate in and benefit from a broad range of experiences.	Review of provision Liberty Trust Enrichment passport Risk Assessment and Safeguarding procedures	All enrichment activities will be planned and delivered within an inclusive environment. Where external providers are used, they will be expected to comply with relevant equality, accessibility and safeguarding requirements.	September 2026-29	Thames Valley School pupils are able to access a wide range of enrichment opportunities that are appropriately matched to their needs, interests and abilities, supporting their participation, personal development and engagement with the wider community.
Learning environments across the school are purposefully organised and adapted to maximise accessibility, participation and	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Classrooms provide an inclusive and accessible learning environment in which pupils can engage in learning, move safely around the space, access resources independently and participate fully in school life.	September 2026-29	Classroom environments consistently support pupils' individual needs, resulting in increased independence, engagement, participation and access to learning across the school.

independence for all pupils.				

Whole-school events will be carefully planned to ensure access for all pupils and their families, reducing barriers to participation and maintaining low-arousal environments that support pupils' individual needs.	Parental consultation Provide reasonable adjustments to the environment when planning events.	Pupils and their families are able to access and participate in whole-school events in a way that is comfortable, meaningful and responsive to their needs.	September 2026-29	Whole-school events are attended by families across all cohorts, with adaptations successfully reducing barriers to participation and supporting positive engagement.