CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES

Venue: **Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.**

Date: **Tuesday, 22 June 2004**

Time: **9.00 a.m.**

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

3. Organisation of School Terms 2005 / 06 (Pages 1 - 8)

4. Container Library Lease Renewal (Pages 9 - 10)

5. Redesignation of the Existing Resourced Unit at St. Ann's School to a Pupil Referral Unit (Pages 11 - 14)

   - to consider a proposal to redesignate the existing resourced unit to a Pupil Referral Unit

6. Approval of Draft Accessibility Strategy for Consultation (Pages 15 - 52)

   - to consider further guidance documents regarding Accessibility issues

   (The Chairman authorised consideration of the following item in order to expedite the matter referred to without delay).

The following items are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public as being exempt under Paragraphs 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:-

7. Permission to Invoke Standing Order No. 35 (Pages 53 - 54)

8. Opening of Tenders - Legal Consultancy for Leisure/Joint Service Centre PFI Project (Pages 55 - 56)

Agenda Item 3

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

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1. **Meeting:** Cabinet Member and Advisers
Education, Culture and Leisure Services

2. **Date:** 22 June 2004

3. **Title:** **Organisation of School Terms 2005/06**

4. **Originating Officer:** **David Hill**
Manger School Organisation, Planning and Development, Resources and Information
Extension 2536

5. **Issue:** The purpose of this report is to :

- Provide information on the outcome of discussions with the Teaching, Non-teaching Unions and the Rotherham Association of School Governing Bodies (RASGB) in relation to the neighbouring South Yorkshire Authority's term dates and the Local Government Association's recommendations for the school year 2005/2006

- Make recommendations for the school term dates for the academic year 2005/06

6. **Summary:** The Independent Commission for the School Year was set up in January 2000 by the Local Government Association (LGA). The Commission produced a report, '*The rhythms of schooling'*. The proposals in the report were for a 'six term' year with terms of a more even length throughout the year. The Commission has now been replaced by a LGA Standing Committee, which will meet annually to agree recommended standard school year term dates for two years ahead.

The LGA recommendations for 2005/06 are:

- The LGA proposed return date for 2005 is Monday 5th September. *(The Commission recommended in 2004, and for school years in the future, that they should customarily begin on the Wednesday after August Bank Holiday.)*

- The LGA have proposed a calendar based on 190 pupil days for 2005/06 and believe that the five INSET/CPD days are best set by the Head Teacher. *(The Commission recommended in 2004, 190 teaching days and 2 training days each at the beginning of a term. The remaining 3 days (or aggregated 'twilight hours' in lieu) to be determined by schools, subject to any advice which LEAs think appropriate.)*

- The LGA have proposed an 8-day break at October half term for 2005/06. *(The Commission recommended in 2004 that where an LEA wishes to set a full two weeks at October or where they wish to extend the Christmas Break the additional days should be added at the end of the year to extend term 6.)*

The LGA is urging LEAs to discuss the proposals and to set terms and holidays for 2005/06 in accordance with their proposals and suggested timetable.

To assist with the setting of term dates information has been sought from the Neighbouring Authorities in South Yorkshire. At the time discussions were undertaken with the Teacher Unions term dates had already been set by both Barnsley and Sheffield, both authorities setting the same term dates. The Doncaster Authority was also considering setting the same dates as Barnsley and Sheffield.

7. **Clearance/Consultation:** Members have previously approved a consultation process with the Teaching, Non-Teaching Unions and the Rotherham Association of School Governing Bodies.

8. **Timing:** The Authority approves term dates for implementation in September of the following year. Schools are then notified and term dates forwarded onto parents by the schools. Term dates for 2005/2006 need to be set now in order to meet these deadlines

9. **Background:** Draft term dates are normally considered by a working party of Teacher Union representatives and RASGB representatives. The term dates are formally approved by the Cabinet Member and Advisors. To assist in the setting of Rotherham term dates information is sought from neighbouring authorities on their term dates and term dates are co-ordinated where possible.

10. **Argument:** To assist in the determination of term dates, as well as the above information from the LGA, information has been sought from neighbouring Authorities on their proposals for term dates in 2005/06. The Rotherham Authority has borders with other Authorities and their proposals are as follows:

The Sheffield Authority, Barnsley Authority and Derbyshire Authority have already set term dates for 2005/06.

The Doncaster Authority has not yet set term dates but is consulting on the dates set by Sheffield and Barnsley for 2005/06.

(The Rotherham Authority is a net importer of pupils and the vast majority of these pupils come from the Sheffield Authority.)

(Copies of all these dates are attached in Annex B to this report)

The LGA proposals were considered and concern was expressed at some of their recommendations. The concerns centered around (1) the failure to include the five in-service training days (Rotherham supported this proposal in 2003/04 and this created a number of problems particularly with the setting of training days by schools during term time and the uncertainty of the election day(s). The five in-service days were reinstated in 2004/05; (2) the inclusion of three additional days in the October half-term break which creates a split-week. None of the term dates adopted by our neighbouring authorities supported the LGA on the above proposals. There was, however, general support for the return date on September 5th and the dates of the half terms breaks which are consistent with our neighbouring authorities.

Consideration was given to the term dates already set by Barnsley and Sheffield. These dates include the five in-service days and do not have the problematic split week at October. The co-ordination of term dates as much as possible with neighbouring authorities was seen as a key issue and the Group recommended that the Sheffield and Barnsley dates be adopted.

The recommendations made were:

- to commence the 2005/06 School Year on the 5th September 2005.

- to take a week at October half term. (this is counter to the LGA proposal, which was to add three days and which would create a split week).

- to bring the Easter holiday forward to allow Good Friday and Easter Monday to fall at the end of the Holiday break which gives a more even term structure.

The above proposals are the same as those made by Sheffield and Barnsley.

In Service training days

The school year for pupils is 190 days but teachers are required to make themselves available for 195 days. The five remaining days being used for in-service development and training. The five in-service dates have been incorporated into the proposed 195 days. Schools may still be needed for election purposes, the inclusion of the in-service training days allows for flexibility. In some schools the five teacher in-service days have traditionally been used as five full days of development for teachers but other schools have chosen a combination of full days and a disaggregation of the remaining in-service days into after school or "twilight" in-service sessions. It is recommended that this flexible practice should be allowed to continue if it best suits the professional development needs of staff.

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

The representative of the NASUWT teacher Union initially supported the proposed term dates at the meeting held with the Unions/RASGB. Following

the NASUWT Conference the Authority has been contacted by the representative to advise of the discussions undertaken at the conference. The proposed term dates will conflict with the future NASUWT conferences as these are always taken in the week following Easter Monday and the programme is already set for several years ahead. The NASUWT representative has advised that his support for the term dates is withdrawn and the NASUWT Union no longer supports the proposed Easter Break.

The Authority has in the past usually received full support for the proposed dates, the withdrawing of support from NASUWT means that these dates are not unanimously supported.

11. **Risks and Uncertainties:** The setting of term dates which are inconsistent with neighbouring authorities will cause problems for parents, who have pupils in schools in different authorities, and similarly for school staff who live outside Rotherham and who have children educated in the authority where they live.

The setting of term dates without full support of the NASUWT Union may lead to future problems with NASUWT members particularly with those who traditionally represent the Membership at the National Conference and who may now be unable to attend as the Conference falls within term time.

12. **Finance: N/A**

13. **Sustainability: N/A**

14. **Wards Affected: All Wards**

15. **References:** The 'Standard School Year' Published by the Local Government Association.

16. **Presentation:** Adopting the proposed term dates for 2005/06 will provide school term dates which are broadly consistent with neighbouring authorities.

17. **Recommendation: The proposed term dates for Rotherham (Annex A) for 2005/06 be adopted and circulated to all schools.**

ANNEX A

2005 - 2006

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Education, Culture and Leisure Services

PROPOSED TERM DATES - 2005/2006 SCHOOL YEAR

	Schools Close (P M)	Re- open (A M)	No. of Days Holiday (1Sept to 31 Aug)	No. of School Days in Term/Half -Term
Holiday		Monday 5th September 2005	2	35
Half Term	Friday 21st October 2005	Monday 31st October 2005	5	38
Christmas	Wednesday 21st December 2005	Tuesday 3rd January 2006	8	29
Half Term	Friday 10th February 2006	Monday 20th February 2006	5	30
Easter	Friday 31st March 2006	Tuesday 18th April 2006	11	9
May Day	Friday 28th April 2006	Tuesday 2nd May 2006	1	19
Spring Bank	Friday 26th May 2006	Monday 5th June 2006	5	35
Summer	Friday 21st July 2006		29	195

NOTES 1) Public Holidays are 25, 27 December 2005, 2 January 14, 17 April, 1 May, 28 May and 25 August 2006

2) These term dates include the 5 In-Service Training days

Prepared by Education, Culture & Leisure 16/06/04

TERM DATES – 2005/2006

	Rotherham PROPOSED	Barnsley SET	Derbyshire SET	Sheffield SET	Doncaster DRAFT	LGA
Start of term	Monday 5 September 2005	Monday 5 September 2005	Monday 5 September 2005	Monday 5 September 2005	Monday 5 September 2005	Monday 5 September 2005
Schools Close	Friday 21 October	Friday 21 October	Friday 21 October	Friday 21 October	Friday 21 October	Friday 21 October
Schools re-open	Monday 31 October	Monday 31 October	Monday 31 October	Monday 31 October	Monday 31 October	Thursday 3 November
End of term	Wednesday 21 December	Wednesday 21 December	Wednesday 21 December	Wednesday 21 December	Wednesday 21 December	Tuesday 20 December
Start of term	Tuesday 3 January 2006	Tuesday 3 January 2006	Wednesday 4 January 2006	Tuesday 3 January 2006	Tuesday 3 January 2006	Wednesday 4 January 2006
Schools Close	Friday 10 February	Friday 10 February	Friday 17 February	Friday 10 February	Friday 10 February	Friday 10 February
Schools re-open	Monday 20 February	Monday 20 February	Monday 27 February	Monday 20 February	Monday 20 February	Monday 20 February
End of term	Thursday 31 March	Thursday 31 March	Thursday 7 April	Thursday 31 March	Thursday 31 March	Thursday 31 March
Start of term	Tuesday 18 April	Tuesday 18 April	Monday 24 April	Tuesday 18 April	Tuesday 18 April	Tuesday 18 April
	All Schools Close Monday 1 May for May Day					
Schools Close	Friday 26 May	Friday 26 May	Friday 26 May	Friday 26 May	Friday 26 May	Friday 26 May
Schools re-open	Monday 5 June	Monday 5 June	Monday 5 June	Monday 5 June	Monday 5 June	Monday 5 June
End of term	Friday 21 July	Friday 21 July	Friday 21 July	Friday 21 July	Friday 21 July	Friday 21 July

Agenda Item 4

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting:** Cabinet Member and Advisors for Education, Culture and Leisure.

2. **Date: June 2004**

3. **Title: Container Library Lease Renewal**

4. **Originating Officer:** Guy Kilminster, Libraries, Museums and Arts Manager, Ext. 3623.

5. **Issue:** To consider the renewal of the lease for the siting of the Container Library at Aston.

6. **Summary:** The lease on the site used for the Container Library at Aston expires at the end of July. Options for the future use of the Container Library are being considered in the light of investment at Aston Community Library.

7. **Clearance/Consultation:** Strategic Leader, Culture Leisure and Lifelong Learning and the Acting Executive Director of ECALS.

8. **Timing:** The current lease expires at the end of July 2004. If a decision is made to relocate the library customers will need formal notification at the earliest opportunity.

9. **Background:** The Container Library has used the site at Aston since 1984. The current lease was signed in 1994. The Library visits Aston every Saturday.

10. **Argument:** The Container Library currently has three sites, at Bramley, Wickersley and Aston. Consideration is being given to extending the hours at the former two sites and to no longer use the Aston site.

    Over the last three years Aston Community Library, based on the site of Aston Comprehensive School, has received significant investment, with the People's Network being installed, the library refurbished, opening hours extended and stock levels increased. Usage over the last six months has shown an increase with an upwards trend in book issues.

    The Container Library usage and issues are stable. There have been problems accessing the site following the introduction of an enhanced recycling centre. The landlord has not yet approached the Authority with regard to the renewal of the lease, so future costs cannot be quantified. The current rental is £850 per annum.

Officers are considering whether it is a more effective use of the Container Library to extend provision at Bramley and Wickersley and end the provision at Aston (given the availability of the Community Library). There would be small savings made from one less move of the Container that could be invested into the maintenance of the generator (which currently exceeds the budget allowed) and/or further increasing opening hours. Mobile and home library provision at Aston would be reviewed to ensure that nobody was excluded from accessing Library and Information services as a result of the changes.

11. **Risks and Uncertainties:** The removal of the Container Library from Aston could be perceived as a withdrawal of services to that area. To counter this, users would be canvassed to establish whether they can use the Community Library, or whether a mobile or home delivery service is more appropriate to their needs. Customers will have access to services without the interruptions which occur due to vehicle break downs. They will have access to the Library catalogue and the People's Network. These services are not currently available to them. Special welcome sessions will be arranged at the Community Library to introduce Container Library users to its resources. Leaflets explaining the move and outlining the additional services will be distributed to existing customers and through the other Mobiles and Home Library Service as well as through local shops and Public Houses.

12. **Finance:** There will be no significant financial implications if the Container Library is moved from Aston. The staff time and opening hours will be used at Bramley or Wickersley. The rental on the lease will be saved and the cost of transporting the Container to the site.

13. **Sustainability:** The sustainability of library and information services in Aston is better managed through the Community Library than the Container Library. Relocation to Bramley and Wickersley will enhance the service provision in an area without an accessible Community Library.

14. **Wards Affected:** Ward 2 and Ward 4.

15. **References:** Not applicable.

16. **Presentation:** Not applicable.

17. **Recommendation:**

That Members receive the report and consider the proposal to resite the Container Library.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.   **Meeting**   Cabinet Member and Advisors

2.   **Date of Meeting**   22 June 2004

3.   **Title** Redesignation of the existing resourced unit at St. Ann's school to a
              Pupil Referral Unit

4.   **Originating Officer**

Roger Higginbottom, Strategic Leader Inclusion
Extension number 2677

5.   **Issue**

The DFES has over the last eighteen months altered policy in relation to exclusions.
Currently legislation requires all Councils' to provide full time education for all pupils
permanently excluded. Alongside other changes which removed existing Council
powers to overturn exclusion decisions taken by governing bodies this has led to a
rise in exclusions nationally.   Whilst Rotherham schools have always dealt
effectively with pupil behaviour, the last two years have seen a rise in exclusions in
the primary, secondary and special school sectors. The unit has successfully
operated at St. Ann's and the Council gave a commitment to the governing body to
review the progress of the unit. In discussions with the Governing Body whilst they
are happy for the Council to continue to use the base, they would prefer that the unit
is registered as a Pupil Referral Unit rather than continue as a resourced provision.
This is primarily due to some staffing difficulties the school has experienced over the
last few months. Given the rise nationally in exclusions, the registration of Pupil
Referral Units for junior aged children is not unusual.

If approved by members this will still enable the Council to develop existing
provision to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties at Rawmarsh
Thorogate.   The Council is also on schedule to relocate the provision from
Rawmarsh Sandhill to Wales Primary School by 1st September 2004. It will also
enable the Council to admit and support permanently excluded pupils from Key
Stage 1and Key Stage 2 which is showing signs of rising both locally and nationally.

6.   **Summary**

The proposal to register the resourced unit as a Pupil Referral Unit should maintain
the flexibility of the Council to meet the needs of permanently excluded pupils from
the primary sector. In complementing the work of both Rawmarsh Thorogate and
Rawmarsh Sandhill, the primary sector will continue to have the capacity to support
up to 30 pupils across the three provisions who display very challenging behaviours
at any one time. This should also be seen alongside the broader developments
described in the Behaviour Task Group recommendations approved by Council last
year, which are currently being implemented across the secondary phase, and the
creation of an additional Pupil referral Unit for Key Stage 3 pupils at Greasborough.

7.   Clearance/Consultation

The proposals have been produced after full consultation with the governors, staff and parents at St. Ann's School and officers within Inclusion Services.

8.   Timing

The recommendations seek to register the Pupil Referral Unit from 1st September 2004.

9.   Background

The recommendations produced are part of a series presented to Cabinet Member and Advisers which seek to strengthen and expand provision across the Council that supports pupils with challenging behaviour.

10.   Argument

The recommendations present an opportunity to consolidate more flexible and inclusive provision for the Council in an area that is subject to much national debate. It will also enable the Council to be compliant with the requirement to provide full time education for any permanently excluded primary aged pupil. It is supportive of recent legislation requiring Council's to develop more inclusive provision, with the prime aim being to place these pupils back into mainstream provision after they have received specific individual support to ameliorate their behaviour.

11.   Risks and Uncertainties

The risks inherent within the draft proposals are that without their approval, the Council will not be compliant with current legislation to provide full time education for all permanently excluded primary pupils. In addition if the current pattern of provision remains any subsequent external inspection by OFSTED may raise serious concerns regarding the limited flexibility the Council has within the primary sector for pupils who display challenging behaviours.

12.   Finance

There are no specific financial implications contained within the proposals at present as the funding already designated for the resourced provision will be utilised to fund the Pupil Referral Unit.

12.   Sustainability

The recommendations are part of a series of reviews which intend to redefine and reshape existing specialist provision to be compliant with current Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, and ensure that the Council has sufficient capacity and flexibility to meet the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

14.   Wards Affected   All wards

15.   References

OFSTED report recommendations June 2001
Special Educational Needs Strategic Development Plan 2002-2006

16.   Presentation

The draft proposals seek to enhance Council flexibility in meeting the needs of primary aged pupils who have with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

17.   Recommendations

That members receive, comment upon and approve the proposals contained within the report.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting** Cabinet Member and Advisors

2. **Date of Meeting** 22 June 2004

3. **Title** Approval of Draft Accessibility Strategy for Consultation

4. **Originating Officer**

Roger Higginbottom, Strategic Leader Inclusion
Extension number 2677

5. **Issue**

The Council in supporting schools has prepared two further guidance documents regarding Accessibilty issues. Last year the Council provided information to schools in relation to the Disabilty Discrimination Act, and raised awareness of appropriate practices for schools to adopt in respect of Disabilty Discrimination. Through this process the Council in ensuring all schools benefit from appropriate guidance has produced additional information in relation to the curriculum, organisational and practical implications of the Accessibility Strategy.

6. **Summary**

The guidance documents regarding accessibility focus on a number of areas and aim to provide advice to schools in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum, provides suggestions on how to improve the physical environment of the school and to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school. The guidance also provides information on how to improve the delivery to disabled pupils, within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents. Information also shows where strategic access initiatives with specific schools are already planned.

7. **Clearance/Consultation**

The guidance has been produced through joint working between officers, and some colleagues in schools over the last couple of months.

8. **Timing**

The intention is to distribute the information for to all schools to supplement the guidance document issued last year.

9.   Background

The guidance produced supports previous information issued to all schools last year in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act, and will help them prepare to implement changes which are compliant with current legislation.

10.   Argument

The guidance seeks to describe the areas that schools should consider in improving accessibility strategies that are compliant with Disabilty Discrimination legislation.

11.   Risks and Uncertainties

The risks inherent within the guidance are that without their approval and distribution to schools, the Council will not be supporting schools as effectively as possible in promoting accessibility strategies which are required by the DFES.

12.   Finance

There are no specific financial implications contained within the proposals as such, but individual schools may well have to consider how specific changes and adaptations should be made in the future to support increasing accessibility for pupils. This will be facilitated through regular meetings with their building manager. There are a number of funding streams that can support these developments. Schools can use their own Devolved Formula Capital funding, all future new school PFI buildings in the borough will be fully accessible and Disability Discrimination Act compliant, and the Council also utilises the DFES Access Initiative Funding to support such developments.

12.   Sustainability

The guidance documents seek to support schools in improving their accessibility arrangements in order to be compliant with current legislation.

14.   Wards Affected   All wards

15.   References

Previous guidance distributed to schools April 2003 re Disability Discrimination Act

16.   Presentation

The guidance is intended to support schools in addressing accessibility issues.

17.   Recommendations

That members receive, comment upon and approve the guidance contained within the report.

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Education, Culture
& Leisure Services

The Disability Discrimination Act

Accessibility Plans

Guidance for Schools

April 2004

The Disability Discrimination Act
Accessibility Plans - Guidance to Schools

The Legal Position

All maintained schools have a legal duty to produce an accessibility plan. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) places that duty on the governing body of each school.

An accessibility plan is a plan to:-

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum

- improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school

- improve the delivery to disabled pupils - within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents - of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

The definition of disability under the DDA includes people with physical, mobility, sensory, mental and learning disabilities. A pupil may have special educational needs but not be regarded as disabled under the DDA, or vice versa.

Accessibility plans must be in writing. Schools have a duty to review their plans, revise them if necessary, and implement them. Schools are required to allocate adequate resources to implementing their plans.

Maintained schools have a duty to make their accessibility plans publicly available by publishing information about their plan in their governors' annual report to parents.

The DDA provides for OfSTED inspections of schools to cover their responsibilities to prepare, revise, review and implement their plans and the publication of the plan. OfSTED will be monitoring the planning duty through their inspections of schools. The Secretary of State can intervene where a school is not complying with the planning duty and direct the school to do so.

The planning duty came into force in September 2002. Schools are required to formulate their plans so that they can have written plans in place by April 2003. Plans should run for an initial period of 3 years, from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006, but schools can also plan for longer periods.

Most of the information in this section is extracted from section 2 'Legal Position' of the DfES' guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils' - available on the Disability Rights Commission's website www.drc-gb.org.

How to Develop an Accessibility Plan

Section 5 from the DfES' guidance 'How to Develop an Accessibility Plan' is attached to these notes, together with Annex D 'Identifying Barriers to Access: A Checklist' and Annex E from the guidance showing an example of an access plan.

Points which are particularly worth noting from section 5 include:-

- Schools should draw up short, medium and long term priorities and devise plans to address those priorities with clear implementation arrangements and a timeframe for the work. The example is given of a longer term priority being to plan to make the common areas of the school and selected classrooms physically accessible.

- Opportunities presented by routine refurbishment, other maintenance, and by capital expenditure should be utilised to eliminate barriers (for example, the provision of colour contrast when redecorating and when replacing floor coverings or furniture).

- Schools should recognise the costs of implementing the plan as legitimate expenditure which should be incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Maintained schools should liaise with their LEA about using resources such as the Schools Access Initiative to fund more expensive capital projects.

- Schools are required to evaluate the success of their accessibility plans, keep them under review, and revise them as necessary.

Information to be provided separately includes the Authority's Accessibility Strategy and a pro forma access plan.

Increasing Access to the Curriculum for Disabled Pupils

The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning, but the wider curriculum offered by a school:-

- after school clubs

- leisure, sporting and cultural activities

- school visits

Potential groups of pupils who might experience barriers to learning and whom schools should seek to include are identified in:-

- National Curriculum Inclusion Statement

- OfSTED guidance 'Evaluating Educational Inclusion'

Disabled pupils are one of these groups. The SEN and Disability Act states that disabled pupils have both physical and/or learning needs which have an effect on their abilities to carry out normal day to day activities and are:-

- Substantial

- Long term (at least 12 months)

- Adverse

Schools already use a range of strategies to ensure that they deliver a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils. They:-

- set suitable learning challenges

- identify and address potential barriers to learning

- seek to meet the needs of a diverse range of pupils

They should ensure that they use the full range of strategies to meet the needs of both current and prospective disabled pupils.

Inclusion involves the restructuring of the:-

- cultures

- policies

- practices

in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their community. Inclusion is a whole school responsibility and involves all staff.

Inclusive schools are ones which effectively meet the needs of all pupils. They audit patterns of participation and achievement by students and use this information to inform:-

- The identification of vulnerable group

- Use of available funding

- Planning and delivery of appropriate provision

- Monitoring and review of outcomes of that provision

- Training requirements of all staff

Key national documents which inform and support this process are:-

- National Curriculum Inclusion Statement 2000

- QCA guidelines on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties

- Supporting the Target Setting Process (DfES/QCA)

- Inclusive Schooling (DfES)

- SEN Code of Practice (DfES)

- Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice

- Evaluating Educational Inclusion (OfSTED)

- Index for Inclusion (CSIE)

Key local documents which inform and support this process are:-

Key local documents which inform and support this process are:-

- LEA Policies linked to the EDP and SEN Strategic Plan

- SENCO Box of Tricks (available in schools May 2004)

- CPD File for Rotherham Schools (available May 2004)

- Tariff Criteria

- Guidance on the Identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs

- Supported School Evaluation Review for Inclusion (SSERfI)

Improving the Physical Environment of Schools

This strand of the planning duty includes improvements in the accessibility of the physical environment and the provision of physical aids to access education in order to provide access to education and associated services for disabled pupils. That will not necessarily entail making the whole of a school's premises accessible to all disabled pupils.

The physical environment is described in the DfES' guidance on the planning duty as including steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, signs, interior surfaces, floor coverings, room decor and furniture. That is not an exhaustive list, but it indicates the wide range of physical features of premises where access difficulties may need to be resolved.

Improvements to physical access referred to in the DfES' guidance are ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, well designed room acoustics and way-finding systems. Again, that is not an exhaustive list but it indicates the wide range of access improvements that may need to be provided.

Physical aids to education are described in the DfES' guidance as including ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor co-ordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils. Once again, that list is not intended to be exhaustive but it indicates the wide range of equipment that may need to be provided.

Education and associated services is a broad term intended to cover all the aspects of school life in which pupils are, or may choose to be, involved. The following list is intended to exemplify the range of activities that may be covered by the term and is not exhaustive, or intended to be -

- Preparation for entry to the school
- The curriculum
- Teaching and learning
- Classroom organisation
- Timetabling
- Grouping of pupils
- Homework
- Access to school facilities
- Activities to supplement the curriculum, for example, a drama group visiting the school
- School sports

- School policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes
- The serving of school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Assessment and exam arrangements
- School discipline and sanctions
- Exclusion procedures
- School clubs and activities
- School trips
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- Preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.

The aim of each school should be to ensure - over an extended period of time beyond the first 3 year accessibility plan if necessary - that all elements of school life are, or can readily be made, accessible to all disabled pupils. Schools should consider what they can do to improve the physical environment of the school within the resources already available to them, and should consider accessibility in all purchasing decisions.

Support is available on a regular basis from each school's building manager, together with specialist advice from the Authority's access officer when required, and advice from paediatric occupational therapists and physiotherapists on the selection of equipment.

Improvements to Physical Access

Schools should ensure that all building work they commission - new buildings, alterations, and maintenance and repair work - is designed and constructed to be accessible to all disabled pupils, staff and visitors. In particular, when a new building is constructed on a school site accessible routes should be provided to link it to the remainder of the school.

Much of the work in this strand of the duty will involve working specifically to improve access to and within existing buildings. However, improved access to the physical environment can frequently be achieved without significant structural alterations to a building.

Rearranging room space, removing furniture or fittings creating obstructions in circulation areas, changing the layout of classrooms, reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms - for example, locating class-specific classrooms such as those for sciences, ICT and art on the ground floor (or on another accessible level) - and the relocation of year groups to accommodate classes with disabled pupils in accessible rooms should be considered before major structural alterations, such as the installation of a lift, are implemented.

However, it is recognised that the efficient management of the school will almost always mean that it is not practicable to achieve all of the required access improvements without some structural alterations.

On the other hand, some access improvements - such as colour contrast - can be provided throughout all schools in due course, in that case within the periodic redecoration of each school and at no extra cost.

Improving access to education and associated services located in buildings of historical or architectural significance should not be treated in a different way to improving access to those in other buildings. However, listed building consent will be required for building work to listed buildings or to buildings in conservation areas. It is usually possible to improve access in a way which respects the integrity of a listed building if a pragmatic approach is adopted. It is advisable to discuss proposals with the Authority's conservation officer at an early stage.

Schools are encouraged to use a proportion of their own resources to fund access improvements, in accordance with the DfES' guidance The Authority will allocate part of its accessibility strategy budget to contributing partnership funding to the cost of such work.

The Authority will wish to enter into partnership arrangements with schools to support the following type of project (this is not an exhaustive list):-

- Constructing a substantial ramp (for example, greater than a 200mm rise)

- Reconstructing/improving steps/stairs

- Increasing the width of a structural opening to widen a door

- Installing a lift

- Constructing an accessible toilet

- Removing a structural obstruction to access

- Work to building structure or services entailed in relocating an existing facility to an accessible place within the school

Priority will usually be given to schools where disabled pupils or prospective pupils have been, or will shortly be, admitted, and to schools included in the programme of strategic access improvements in the Authority's accessibility strategy where those improvements will not be achieved through other major projects.

Applications for partnership funding should be submitted in advance through each school's building manager.

Information to be provided separately includes the access audit report for each school and the Authority's inclusive design standards once available.

School premises should be managed to promote accessibility. That will include, for example:-

- Preventing misuse of drop off points and parking spaces reserved for disabled people

- Minimising any conflict between security arrangements and accessibility

- Keeping door furniture well maintained

- Not placing furniture or other items where they obstruct access routes

- Checking any lifts regularly - particularly levelling with floors

- Avoiding using accessible toilets as storage facilities

- Selecting furniture and fittings with sufficient colour and luminance contrast with the backgrounds they are viewed against

- Checking any induction loops/infrared systems regularly

- Ensuring that access provisions, such as colour contrast decoration schemes, are retained

Support is available on a regular basis from each school's building manager, together with specialist advice from the Authority's access officer when required.

Physical Aids to Education

The Authority will allocate part of its accessibility strategy budget to the development of a pool of equipment and physical aids to education which can be used by schools on a short to medium term basis. The equipment pool will be developed in response to the requirements of individual pupils and in liaison with paediatric occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

Information about the equipment available will be provided to schools regularly. Applications for the loan of equipment should be submitted through each school's building manager.

Advice on the selection of equipment from the pool or to be purchased by schools is available from paediatric occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

Schools are encouraged to make equipment and physical aids to education purchased from their own resources available to the pool if they become redundant.

<u>Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired and Communication Difficulties</u>

The existing arrangements for the purchase of physical aids to education and the introduction of environmental improvements to support the inclusion of Deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted pupils and those with other communication difficulties in mainstream schools through the support services will continue.

<u>Parents and Carers</u>

The Authority recognises the importance of home school liaison in boosting pupils' achievements. Although it is not within the scope of the planning duty, the Authority encourages schools to work with it towards the provision of access for disabled parents and carers to at least the main entrance, hall, headteacher's office and/or other confidential room and accessible toilet facilities in each school.

Increasing Access to Written Information for Disabled Pupils

In order to access all aspects of the curriculum pupils need to be able to access a range of written information relating to their studies and all aspects of school life:-

- National Curriculum and course materials

- Timetables

- Information about events

Disabled pupils may require this information to be available in a range of formats which take account of their disabilities and preferred means of communication. These may include formats such as:-

- Braille

- Large print

- Signs and symbols

- Audio tape

- Use of ICT programs

- Oral information, if necessary with signed communication

Schools need to identify the needs of disabled pupils and ensure that written information is available within a reasonable time frame.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Authority is required to evaluate its accessibility strategy, as schools are required to evaluate their accessibility plans (see section 5 from the DfES' guidance attached).

In addition to whether goals and targets have been met, the DfES' guidance recommends that the effectiveness of the accessibility strategy may be illustrated by a number of changes such as:-

- Improvements in the physical accessibility of school buildings

- Clear protocols and procedures for multi-agency working with health and social services in order to support pupils with medical needs

- Schools in the area establishing links and sharing good practice

- Evidence of the greater involvement of disabled pupils in the full life of the school (for example participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips)

- Observable changes in the confidence of staff in teaching and supporting disabled children with a range of needs

- Greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for disabled pupils

The LEA and schools have a responsibility to ensure the LEA Accessibility Strategy both informs and reflects individual school action plans to improve accessibility. To achieve this:-
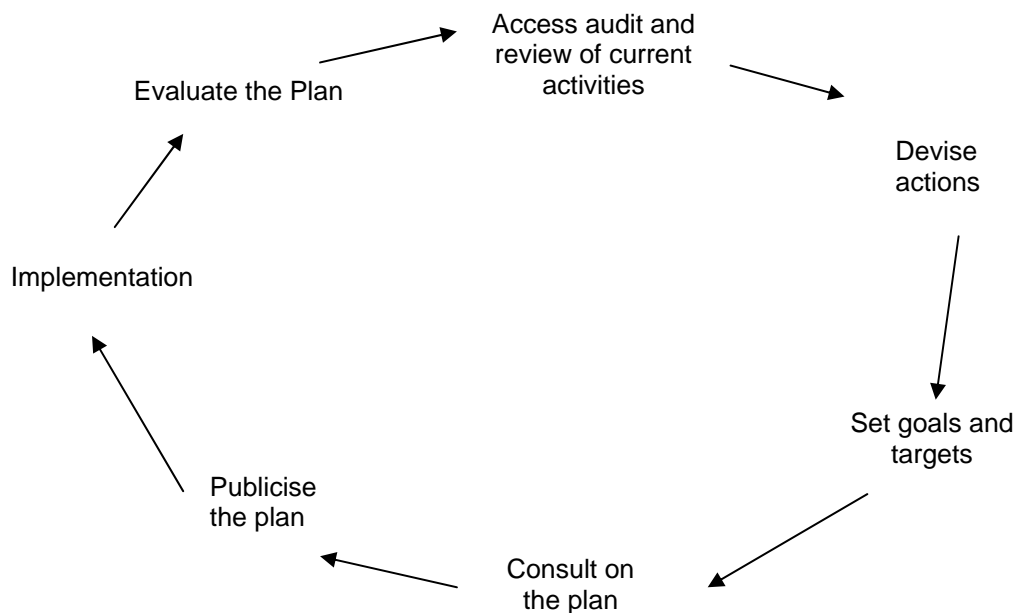- schools are encouraged to advise their building manager of developments that can be drawn on to indicate greater inclusion of disabled pupils in the school.
- The LEA will:-
- Audit School Accessibility Plans on a regular basis.
- Following an audit, if necessary, offer additional support and guidance to schools

SECTION 5

HOW TO DEVELOP AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Schools

5.1   Whilst the Act imposes a distinct planning duty, schools are not required to undertake a separate planning process. Schools might dovetail their accessibility plans with other plans, for example the School Development Plan. In providing information about the accessibility plan in their Annual Report, governors might include a new section on access planning within the SEN report. The guidance below describes the elements of an effective planning process. Annex E provides an example of what an accessibility plan might look like.

Access audit and review of current activities

Evaluate the Plan

Devise actions

Implementation

Set goals and targets

Publicise the plan

Consult on the plan

5.2   The school might set up or use an existing planning group to lead the process. This might not be a large group, but should be able to reflect all aspects of school life. For example the working group of a larger school could include the governor with designated responsibility for SEN, the headteacher and a parent of a disabled pupil.

5.3   The school should make best use of the available expertise. Disabled pupils, their parents, specialist teachers, local voluntary and disability organisations might be able to bring a useful perspective to help identify practices and arrangements that act as a barrier to admitting, accommodating and including disabled children. LEAs are also likely to be able to provide helpful advice and information. Annex C includes a list of organisations that are able to provide advice on access issues.

Access audit and review of current activities

5.4   Schools should assess current accessibility and identify barriers to access or inclusion. A review of access should cover the physical environment; the provision of auxiliary aids and services; teaching and learning practices; the curriculum; staff training; the culture and ethos of the school; and the provision of written information.

5.5   Schools should consider all relevant existing information and data on the accessibility of the school and future need. LEAs should have some information on the accessibility of its maintained schools and might have information forecasting future needs. Data on the current pupil population might enable the school to plan for the needs of disabled pupils lower down the school. For example, a school knowing of a disabled pupil in a reception class might plan to train particular staff to meet that child's needs later on in the school. Data on the likely future pupil population might enable the school to plan for the needs of future disabled pupils such as those transferring from primary to secondary school.

5.6   Annex D provides checklists for identifying physical barriers and barriers to the curriculum. *The Index for Inclusion* provides helpful guidance on identifying barriers to access. The *Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings* and *Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design* provide guidance on carrying out accessibility audits of schools and making schools accessible. Many local authorities have access officers who are able to offer advice on access issues. If a school wishes to employ an access consultant, it can obtain information from the National Register of Access Consultants.

Devise actions to eliminate barriers

5.7   The next step will be for schools to devise actions to eliminate those barriers. Schools should list all of the necessary adaptations (including realistic cost estimates), which might be divided into categories such as staff training; teaching and learning practices; refurbishment and maintenance (e.g. use of colour when redecorating and replacing floor coverings or furniture); minor capital expenditure; and major capital expenditure. Schools should then draw up short, medium and long term priorities and devise strategies to address these priorities with clear implementation arrangements and a timeframe for the work.

Example: a short term strategy might include actively working within a local cluster of mainstream and special schools to share good practice in differentiating the curriculum. A medium term strategy might be to ensure that all staff received disability equality training within two years with an induction programme established for new staff. A longer term priority might be to plan to make the common areas of the school and selected classrooms physically accessible and the school would need to work with the LEA to secure agreement for the project to be funded from its capital resources.

Example of implementation arrangements: Discuss collecting good practice on curriculum differentiation with curriculum advisors in authority and place it on agenda for the next cluster meeting. Carry out an access audit to identify potential barriers to access in all areas of school life. Aim to provide appropriate training for staff and governors. Review and improve the school's arrangements for accessible information. Utilise their routine refurbishment and other maintenance and equipment budgets to improve the physical environment of the school. Think long-term and approach the LEA for assistance with capital costs on the basis of a well thought out and costed plan.

5.8   The Act requires schools to resource their accessibility plans adequately. Schools should recognise the costs of implementing the plan as legitimate expenditure which should be incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Maintained schools should liaise with their LEAs about using resources such as the Schools Access Initiative to fund more expensive capital projects.

Set goals and targets

5.9   Goals and targets should be specific enough to enable them to be measured (e.g. all staff to receive disability awareness training within two years; one science lab, ICT room, art room and drama studio to be wheelchair accessible within three years). They should include time frames and evaluation strategies to enable the school to judge how effective plans have been (see paragraph 5.14).

Consultation on the plan

5.10   If schools consult with their staff, they will be more committed to the plan. Schools should also ensure that all those that have been involved in producing the plan have a final chance to comment before it is signed off. The school might wish to consult more widely with parents, pupils and other bodies.

Publicise the plan

5.11   Publicising the plan will encourage a sense of ownership and stake in the success of the plan among staff, governors, pupils and parents.

5.12   Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' report to parents. We recommend that schools reproduce the full accessibility plan in the governors' report to parents. Independent schools are under a duty to make a copy of their accessibility plan available for inspection to anyone who asks to see it. An amendment to the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 1999 requires non-maintained special schools to include their accessibility plans in their annual prospectus. City Academies are required through their funding agreement to include information on their accessibility plans in their annual report to parents.   It is good practice for all schools to make their plans available on request. Schools may be asked to provide their plans in alternative formats.

Implementation

5.13   Once a school has produced an accessibility plan, the school has a statutory duty to implement the plan and to allocate adequate resources to it.

Evaluate the plan

5.14   Schools are required to keep the accessibility plan under review and revise it as necessary. Evaluation is also needed to determine whether goals are being achieved within the timescale. The success of an effective accessibility plan might be measured by a number of improvements. Schools might adopt some of the following measures:

- Greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for them and their participation in the life of the school;

- Evidence of the greater involvement of disabled pupils in the full life of the school (for example, participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips);

- Observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting disabled pupils with a range of needs;

- Audits carried out on the main curriculum areas;

- Progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school; and

- Information for pupils available in a range of formats.

Schools might wish to share their progress in increasing access with their LEA.

Ensure the future of the accessibility plan

5.15   Incorporation of planning into wider policy will ensure that commitment to the plan extends beyond the planning group and will inspire confidence that the commitment is real.

5.16   In the short term, the accessibility plan may be a separate component of the school's development plan. However, over time, the plan should become a component of the general approach to forward planning. It will be less an independent strategy and more a thread running through all the school's plans and policies, including plans related to capital works and premises management, the curriculum, information technology support services, staff training and other associated services.

Annex D

Identifying Barriers to Access: A Checklist

This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all pupils?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		

Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

Question	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas - including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms - allow access for all pupils?		
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disability; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		

Annex E

Creating an Access Plan

This is an example of a plan that a school might produce after reviewing existing plans (in particular refurbishments and arrangements and SEN policy), looking at options for improving accessibility within existing arrangements and an audit of the school site for accessibility. The school should monitor the implementation of the plan and to keep under review the access needs of the school.

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
Short Term	Availability of written material in alternative formats.	The school makes itself aware of the services available through its LEA for converting written information into alternative formats.	If needed the school can provide written information in alternative formats.	Term 3 2002/03	Delivery of information to disabled pupils improved.
Medium Term	Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing to benefit pupils with visual impairments and install window blinds.	Seek advice from LEA sensory support service on appropriate colour schemes and blinds.	Several classrooms are made more accessible to visually impaired children.	Term 1 2003/04	Physically accessibility of school increased.
	Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum.	After an audit the school decides that some teachers would benefit from training on differentiating the curriculum	Teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of disabled children's needs with regards to accessing the curriculum.	Term 2 2003/04	Increase in access to the National Curriculum.
Long term	School plans to improve access to designated areas over successive financial years. The school decides which of its entrances and exits have priority, and plans to fit ramps and handrails to all of these.	Planned use of minor capital delegated resources and discuss with the LEA using Schools Access Initiative funding.	Having secured capital resources from the LEA, over three year period the school's entry areas, will be fully accessible.	Term 3 2004/05	Physical accessibility of school increased.

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council

Education, Culture
& Leisure Services

The Disability Discrimination Act

Draft Accessibility Strategy for schools and other education establishments 2004-2007

April 2004

Introduction

The aim to improve accessibility for all young people with disabilities is an imperative for Rotherham MBC. In Rotherham there is a commitment to:

- **Creating high expectations for all in terms of quality of life and learning**
- **Involving all stakeholders**
- **Developing and improving access to schools across the borough for all young people and their families**
- **Using resources to ensure effective and sustainable improvements in provision**
- **Enabling schools to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement and the development of an inclusive curriculum that enables all young people to reach their full potential.**

1. Strategic Links

This Accessibility Strategy links to the following:

- **The EDP**
- **The SEN Strategic Plan**
- **The Inclusion Plan**
- **The Inclusion Plan**
- **The outcomes of recent SEN provision reviews**
- **Schools Assessment Management Plans**

Rotherham MBC will work in partnership with schools to seek creative solutions to challenges, taking into account school plans and the respective priorities of schools and the LEA, to ensure:

- Increased access to the curriculum for young people with disabilities
- Improvements to the physical environment of schools to increase access to education and associated services as outlined in the DRC Code of Practice for Schools 2002
- Improvements in the provision of information for young people with disabilities
- The Accessibility Strategy complies with the DfES Guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils
- The three year plan promotes fully accessible schools
- Inclusive learning environments where all young people ere enabled to reach their full potential
- The LEA Accessibility Strategy both informs and reflects individual school action plans to improve accessibility

For the purpose of this document, in line with the DRC Code of Practice for schools definition, a young person is deemed to have a disability if he/she has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial adverse long-term effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

1.1 Strategy review and revision

This Strategy will be reviewed and revised annually following LEA monitoring of School Accessibility Action Plans and in line with the review of other strategic documents.

1.2 Publication

Schools are required to publish their Accessibility Plans by April 2003.
The Rotherham MBC Accessibility Strategy is a public document and is available from:

- RMBC Education, Culture and Leisure Services, Norfolk House, Walker House, Rotherham

- The Council's Website

1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Authority will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its accessibility strategy against a number of criteria including those recommended by the DfES, i.e.: -

- Improvements in the physical accessibility of school buildings

- Clear protocols and procedures for multi-agency working with health and social services in order to support pupils with medical needs

- Schools in the area establishing links and sharing good practice

- Evidence of the greater involvement of disabled pupils in the full life of the school (for example participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips)

- Observable changes in the confidence of staff in teaching and supporting disabled children with a range of needs

- Greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for disabled pupils

- Use of the criteria for the analysis of a School Accessibility Plan developed by the Accessibility Planning Project

Schools will be encouraged to advise their building manager of developments that can be drawn on to indicate greater inclusion of disabled pupils in the school during the building manager's monthly visits.

The Authority will monitor the implementation of strategic access improvements, and will monitor all improvements in the accessibility of schools by updating the access audit report for each school.

A matrix of key physical access criteria against which progress at each school can be plotted annually will be developed.

Note: The allocation of the accessibility strategy budget to each sub-strand of the strategy to improve the physical environment of schools will be reviewed annually to maintain a 'best fit' with need and demand.

The Disability Discrimination Act
Rotherham MBC Accessibility Strategy for Schools and other education establishments

2. Increasing Access to the Curriculum for Disabled Pupils

The Authority aims to support schools in the process of increasing access to the

curriculum for young people through the implementation of the principles embedded

within the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement where an inclusive curriculum: -

- **Sets suitable learning challenges for all pupils**
- **Responds to pupils' diverse learning needs**
- **Overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.**

This will be achieved through strategic developments and actions including: -

- LEA strategic planning as detailed in the SEN Strategic Development Plan 2002-6

- LEA training and staff development opportunities for all school staff and governors

- The work of LEA services within ECALS e.g. Inclusion Services, School Improvement Service.

- The sharing of good practice information through network meetings for Senior Managers, SENCOs, LSU Managers, teachers and support staff

- The work of school improvement advisers and the use, with schools, of the Tariff Criteria

- Self review of Inclusion and SEN provision

- The publication of LEA guidance documents (See Appendix 1)

- The implementation of the National Strategies including the Key Stage 3 Strategy

- The implementation of other national initiatives e.g. Excellence in Cities, Behaviour Improvement Programme

- The development of Children and Young Peoples Services and Collaboratives

- The introduction of the use of P scales and/ or PIVATS as an assessment tool.

- Work in partnership with other services / agencies e.g. Health, Social Services Sure Start, Connexions to meet the needs of individuals and groups of vulnerable pupils

2.1 Improving the Physical Environment of Schools

There are seven sub-strands to the strand of the Authority's accessibility strategy to improve the physical environment of schools.

2.2 All building work to be accessible

The Authority will work to ensure that all the building work it commissions within Rotherham schools - new buildings, alterations, and maintenance and repair work - is designed and constructed to be accessible to all disabled pupils, staff and visitors. In particular, when a new building is constructed on existing school site accessible routes will be provided to link it to the remainder of the school.

'Accessible' will be defined as described under 'Strategic Access Improvements' below.

The Output Specification included in the Invitation to Negotiate for the Rotherham Grouped Schools PFI Project requires that the project schools' buildings and grounds must be designed, constructed and maintained so that, as far as can be foreseen, no additional work will be required to comply with the Authority's wider duties under any part of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regarding the accessibility of its services and premises.

The Authority will make every effort to emphasise to schools the importance of adopting the same approach with the building work they commission, as a part of their accessibility plans in accordance with DfES guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled people'.

That will include the provision of guidance on the development of schools' accessibility plans, issuing the inclusive design standards referred to below to schools, and providing regular support from building managers (based in the Authority's Premises Management Group in Economic and Development Services) together with specialist advice from the Authority's access officer (also based in the Premises Management Group) when required.

2.3 Strategic Access Improvements

"*All students have a right to education in their locality" - 'index for inclusion' (CSIE)*

The Authority will work on a planned basis to ensure that education and associated services are fully accessible in at least one secondary school in each geographical cluster and in at least one nursery, infant and junior school in each locality, although not necessary each disabled pupil's nearest primary school at this stage.

'Accessible' will initially be defined as compliance with DfEE Building Bulletin 91 'Access for Disabled People to School Buildings'.

However, standards for inclusive design are currently being developed within the Authority, to capture the standards set out in Building Bulletin 91 together with those set out in BS 8300:2001 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of practice', the draft revision of Building Regulations Approved Document M 'Access to and use of buildings' and more specialist sources where those standards are more rigorous. The Authority's inclusive design standards will be adopted once they are available.

This is regarded as the first step towards the long term goal of making education and associated services in all Rotherham schools as accessible as is realistically achievable.

As the principal sub-strand of the strand of the Authority's accessibility strategy to improve the physical environment of schools, strategic access improvements are considered in greater detail in annex 1.

2.4 Partnership Funding

To encourage Rotherham schools to undertake improvements to the physical environment of their premises funded from their own resources, in accordance with the DfES' guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled people', part of the Authority's accessibility strategy budget will be allocated to contributions to the cost of such building work.

The Authority will also support schools in formulating this element of their accessibility plans by providing access audits of each school's premises together

with support and advice from building managers and the Authority's access officer as described above.

The Authority will wish to enter into partnership arrangements with schools to support the following type of project (this is not an exhaustive list):-

- Constructing a substantial ramp (for example, greater than a 200mm rise)

- Reconstructing/improving steps/stairs

- Increasing the width of a structural opening to widen a door

- Installing a lift

- Constructing an accessible toilet

- Removing a structural obstruction to access

- Work to building structure or services entailed in relocating an existing facility to an accessible place within the school

Priority will usually be given to schools where disabled pupils or prospective pupils have been, or will shortly be, admitted, and to schools included in the programme of strategic access improvements where those improvements will not be achieved through other major projects.

2.5 'Emergency' Improvements

The strategic access improvements will be planned to accommodate disabled pupils who are known, or become known, to the Authority.

However, part of the Authority's accessibility strategy budget will be set aside to fund improvements required to accommodate pupils who become disabled, disabled pupils moving into the Borough, and any disabled pupils for whom the accessible school nearest to their home is unsuitable.

2.6 Equipment Pool

The Authority will allocate part of its accessibility strategy budget to the development of a pool of equipment and physical aids to education which can be used by schools on a short to medium term basis. Items purchased to date include changing tables and 'stairclimbers' which can be used to assist wheelchair using pupils up and down stairs while permanent access improvements are awaited (for example, after a disabled pupil moving into the Borough or a pupil becoming disabled), in the event of a lift failure, or if they need to use a wheelchair because of short term injury.

The equipment pool will be developed in response to the requirements of individual pupils and in liaison with paediatric occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

Information about the equipment available and how to obtain it will be provided to schools regularly.

2.7 Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired and Communication Difficulties

The Authority will continue to allocate part of the funding it receives through the Schools Access Initiative to fund the purchase of physical aids to education and the introduction of environmental improvements to support the inclusion of Deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted pupils and those with other communication difficulties in mainstream schools through its support services.

2.8 Parents and Carers

Recognising the importance of home school liaison in boosting pupils' achievements, the Authority will seek to secure access for disabled parents and carers to at least the main entrance, hall, headteacher's office and/or other confidential room and accessible toilet facilities in each school.

3. Increasing Access to Written Information for Pupils with disabilities

The Authority supports schools through:-

- The work of support services

- The LEA training and support programme

- Strategic planning as detailed in the SEN Strategic Development Plan 2002-6

See Annex 3

Annex 1   Strategic Access Improvements

The Authority will work on a planned basis to ensure that education and associated services are fully accessible in at least one secondary school in each geographical cluster and at least one nursery, infant and junior school in each locality, although not necessary each disabled pupil's nearest primary school at this stage.

Schools will be selected:-

- to accommodate disabled pupils known to the Authority

- to make maximum use of the improved accessibility to be provided within the Rotherham Grouped Schools PFI Project and other major projects

- during the first stage, to achieve as many 'early interventions' as possible by undertaking improvements to the nursery, infant and junior schools in each locality which are currently judged to be most accessible

- to provide accessible schools which enable disabled pupils, once admitted to a mainstream school, to progress from nursery school/foundation unit to leaving secondary school with the same friends and peers

- to maintain as even a distribution of accessible schools as possible throughout the Borough while each stage of this strand of the accessibility strategy is being implemented

The Authority recognises that its duty is to improve the physical environment of schools to provide access to education and associated services, rather than to make the whole of the school premises accessible. A feasibility study will therefore be undertaken at each proposed school where the access improvements will not be achieved through other major projects, to investigate the extent to which that can be achieved by rearranging rooms, reallocating rooms to specific subject specialisms, and the year to year relocation of year groups - consistently with the efficient management of the school - and the extent to which it can only be achieved through building work.

'Accessible' will be defined as described in the main part of this strategy. Due consideration will also be given to the further recommendations set out in DfEE Building Bulletin 94 'Inclusive School Design'.

The Authority also recognises that 'education and associated services' is a broad term intended to cover all the aspects of school life in which pupils are, or may choose to be, involved (annex 2). The feasibility study at each school will therefore ensure that all elements of school life are, or can readily be made, accessible to all disabled pupils.

Schools will usually be expected to contribute towards the cost of access improvements undertaken as part of the Authority's accessibility strategy, but this will be considered in liaison with each school taking into account the resources

available to the school and any other demands placed on its resources by its premises.

The proposed schools are listed below. This list may be revised following the feasibility studies described above.

Indicative costs based on the feasibility studies will be added for schools where the improvements will not be achieved through major projects as soon as possible after the statutory consultation on this strategy. The schools where improvements will be introduced during each financial year will be selected in advance on the basis of the criteria set out above.

School	Indicative Cost/PFI	Year
Aston Cluster		
Aston Springwood J&I School		
Treeton CE(A) Primary School		
Aston Comprehensive School		
Brinsworth/Whiston Cluster		
Brinsworth Manor Infant School		
Brinsworth Manor Junior School		
Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School		
Catcliffe Primary School		
Whiston Worrygoose J&I School		
Brinsworth Comprehensive School		
Clifton Cluster		
Coleridge J&I School	PFI	Apr 2004 (1)

School	Indicative Cost/PFI	Year
East Dene J&I School	PFI	Sept 2006 (1)
Herringthorpe Infant School		
Herringthorpe Junior School		
Clifton Comprehensive School	PFI	Sept 2006 (1)

Dinnington Cluster

Anston Greenlands J&I School		
Dinnington J&I School	-	2003/04 (2)
Laughton J&I School		
Woodsetts J&I School		
Dinnington Comprehensive School		

Maltby Cluster

Maltby Crags Infant School	PFI	Sept 2006 (1)
Maltby Crags Junior School	PFI	Sept 2006 (1)
Maltby Manor Infant School		
Maltby Manor Junior School		
Ravenfield Primary School		
Maltby Comprehensive School		

Oakwood Cluster

Broom Valley Infant School		
Broom Valley Junior School		
Canklow Woods Primary School		
Herringthorpe Infant School		
Herringthorpe Junior School		

School	Indicative Cost/PFI	Year
Oakwood Technology College		
Rawmarsh Cluster		
Rawmarsh Ashwood J&I School		
Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School		
Rawmarsh Thorogate J&I School		
Rawmarsh Comprehensive School		
Swinton Cluster		
Kilnhurst Primary School		
Swinton Fitzwilliam Infant School		
Swinton Fitzwilliam Junior School		
Swinton Comprehensive School		
Thrybergh Cluster		
High Greave Infant School		
High Greave Junior School		
Thrybergh Fullerton CE Primary School		
Thrybergh Comprehensive School	PFI	Sept 2006 (1)
Wales Cluster		
Anston Hillcrest Primary School		
Harthill Primary School		
Kiveton Park Infant School		
Kiveton Park Meadows Junior School		
Todwick J&I School		
Thurcroft Infant School		

School	Indicative Cost/PFI	Year
Thurcroft Junior School		
Wales Comprehensive School		
Wath Cluster		
Wath Central J&I School (3)	PFI	Jan 2006 (1)
West Melton J&I School		
Wentworth CE J&I School		
Wath Comprehensive - A Language College	PFI	Sept 2005 (1)
Wickersley Cluster		
Bramley Sunnyside Infant School		
Bramley Sunnyside Junior School		
Wickersley Northfield Primary School		
Wickersley School and Sports College	PFI	Sept 2005 (1)
Wingfield/Old Hall Cluster		
Ferham Primary School	PFI	Sept 2004 (1)
Greasbrough J&I School		
Kimberworth J&I School (3)	PFI	Sept 2005 (1)
Meadowhall J&I School (3)	PFI	Apr 2005 (1)
Roughwood Infant School		
Roughwood Junior School		
Thornhill Primary School	PFI	Sept 2004 (1)
Thorpe Hesley Infant School		
Thorpe Hesley Junior School		
Old Hall Comprehensive School	PFI	Sept 2005 (1)

School	Indicative Cost/PFI	Year
Wingfield Comprehensive School	PFI	Sept 2004 (1)

Notes

(1)   Target service availability date included in the Invitation to Negotiate for the Rotherham Grouped Schools PFI Project.

(2)   Target capital fund bid - new school.

(3)   These schools will become J&I schools within the PFI project.

Annex 2   Education and Associated Services

The list below is taken from the DDA 'Code of Practice for Schools' published by the Disability Rights Commission. It is intended to exemplify the range of activities that may be covered by the term 'education and associated services' and is not exhaustive, or intended to be -

- preparation for entry to the school
- the curriculum
- teaching and learning
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to supplement the curriculum, for example, a drama group visiting the school
- school sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the serving of school meals
- interaction with peers
- assessment and exam arrangements
- school discipline and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs and activities
- school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.

Annex 3 Supporting National and Local Documentation

Key national documents, which inform and support this process, are: -

- National Curriculum Inclusion Statement 2000

- QCA guidelines on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils

- Supporting the Target Setting Process (DfES/QCA)

- Inclusive Schooling (DfES)

- SEN Code of Practice (DfES)

- Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice

- Evaluating Educational Inclusion (OfSTED)

- Index for Inclusion (CSIE)

Key local documents which inform and support this process are:-

- LEA Policies linked to the EDP and SEN Strategic Plan 2002-2006

- SENCO Handbook (available in schools May 2004)

- CPD File for Rotherham Schools (available May 2004)

- Tariff Criteria

- Guidance on the Identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs

- Supported School Evaluation Review for Inclusion (SSERfI)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 8, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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