

# Access Statement Policy

## Access Statement



## Introduction

This statement summarises BAM 's proposals to assist the school in meeting their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)) and Special Educational and Disability Needs Act 2001 (SENDA).

The Equality Act protects pupils from discrimination and harassment for the following 'protected characteristics':

disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As Lees Brook accommodates a range of activities including community use, this protection extends to visitors, and staff (teaching and non-teaching), at the school.

To assist the school to meet the Equality Act, the design complies with Building Regulations Approved Document M 2010, British Standard BS 8300 and other access guidance such as Sport England's document 'Accessible Sports Facilities' where feasible.

## Design Strategy

The new building and landscaping rationalises and simplifies the overall school layout by creating an external single, central pedestrian spine, through the heart of the school campus, linking

visually and physically the new and retained buildings. It has a maximum gradient of 1 in 22, is legible, easily supervised and creates level access to all the new and retained buildings.

All pathways are at least 1.5m wide, and most are 3m wide, allowing generous provision for groups of people or wheelchairs to pass. The new main entrance to the school is clearly visible on arrival at the site and new signage around the site reinforces the circulation routes.

The existing topography of the site creates accessibility challenges for some desired routes, such as from the sports changing rooms to the new central MUGA and new grass pitch. The design provides both direct stepped access and level access via an alternative route. Tactile paving is installed where required to Approved Document M guidance.

## **Approach, Parking and Drop off**

Most pupils arriving on foot will arrive via the main entrance off Morley Road. A gently curving pedestrian path follows the slope of the site directly to the main entrance plaza and the main entrance to the school. This route also leads to the new sports building, the entrance to which is at a lower level and is reached by either a gently sloping ramp or a set of steps at the north-west of the site.

The main entrance plaza at the front of the building allows pupils to congregate away from traffic, before entering the school. The main entrance and reception/general office fronts on to this plaza. The behaviour support centre (SEN) has a separate entrance located on the north-east perimeter of the building (for privacy and security) and is accessed from a path accessed from the main entrance concourse.

Pedestrians can also use the second entrance off Morley Road which has a new footpath that links to the start of the pedestrian spine (boulevard) at the front of the retained post-16 Skills Academy building. The boulevard links the new school and the three retained buildings along the southern edge of a new hard surfaced netball and basketball courts. The level difference between the two is utilised as south-facing terraced seating steps providing a variety of sedentary and active social spaces at the heart of the campus.

Access to the sports block facilities is from the south of the boulevard. Community use is served by the existing car park to the western edge of the site. The main vehicular and pedestrian access off Morley Road has been widened to allow coaches and refuse lorries to enter and exit the site in a forward direction by means of a new on-site turning circle. Beyond the turning circle is a one-way system for vehicles to exit out of the western gate.

A new service road runs around the southern edge of the existing MUGA and serves a delivery area between the new school and the existing Construction Centre in the south-east corner of the site. Vehicle access to this road is controlled by an automated barrier from the main administration office in the new school. The service area serves deliveries and refuse collections to the new school, the existing Post-16 Skills Academy and the Construction Centre as well as DDA parking for the site.

A total of 121 car parking spaces are provided by remodelling the existing parking areas on the northern part of the site, with a further six disabled spaces provided immediately adjacent to the main building and sports building.

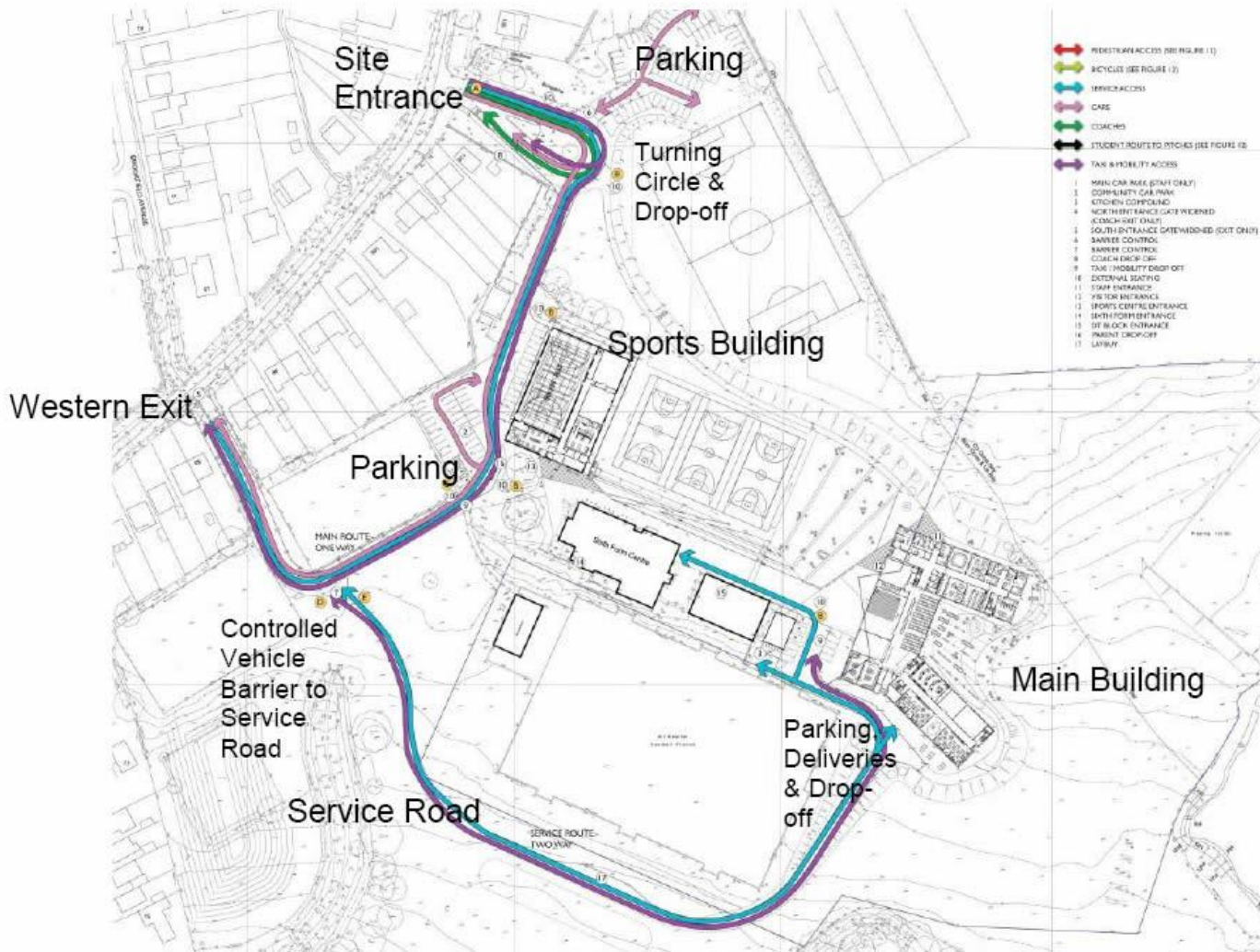
Three allocated disabled bays are located less than 50m (44m) to the new main building entrance and three allocated disabled bays are located less than 50m (28m) to the new sports building entrance. Should these disabled bays be fully allocated to specific staff or students in the future, there is adequate space to increase the number of disabled parking bays in both locations to maintain a certain number for visitor use.

65 secure sheltered cycle storage spaces are provided by utilizing the existing shelters.

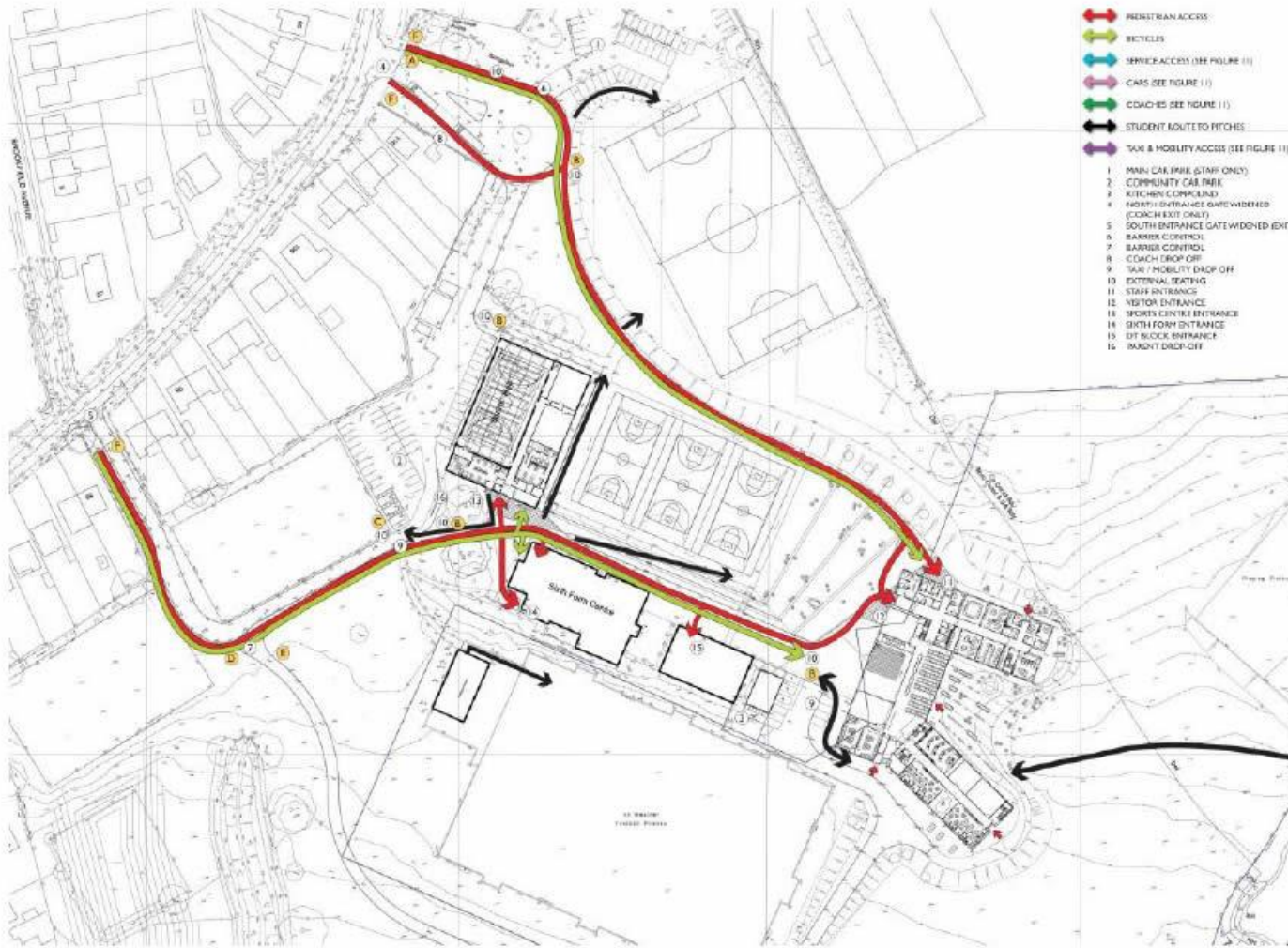
The school has a number of car parking and drop-off areas to meet the needs of school and for community use. An on-site coach drop off and turning area is provided near the entrance from Morley Road and two clearly marked level pedestrian routes lead from the car park and drop-off to the new main building entrance.

In addition a 'delivery and drop off' route, controlled by a remotely operated barrier with intercom connection to reception, allows permitted traffic to approach closer to the main reception. Delivery, service vehicles, cars and taxis which need to drop off, or disabled individuals who need to park as close as possible to the main entrance, contact reception for access via an intercom at the barrier. There is signage explaining this at the barrier and also signage directing such vehicles to this location from the site entrance. This information is also available on the school website.

### Non-pedestrian Routes



## Pedestrian Routes



## Entrances

The main school entrance and reception is clearly visible across the site and reinforced by clear signage identifying pedestrian routes from the site entrance and car parks to the main entrance door.

At the beginning and end of the school day pupils are permitted to enter the school building by way of a number of other entrances in order to minimise congestion but the main entrance remains as visitor access all day. Visitors have a single, visible and safe, entrance to the building.

The use of directional coloured hard landscaping signifies the hierarchy of spaces around the main entrance.

The entrance to the Sports Building is annotated by wall mounted signage on the south elevation creating a secondary entrance plaza with the Post-16 building.

All new external doors have level thresholds.

## **Reception**

The reception area is clearly visible on the left on entry to the building within the secure entrance lobby and the design of the reception area conforms to the guidance in Approved Document part M.

### Horizontal and Vertical Circulation

Horizontal circulation on each of the three floors is simple and legible to aid orientation without the need for excessive signage. Main corridors have a width of 2.7m which narrows down to 2.2m on upper floors adjacent to the lightwells. Some short lengths of corridor have a width of 1.5m and a single short length of staff corridor has a width of 1.1m.

A single large 8 person lift is provided to serve all three floors located adjacent to the main entrance. This lift is fitted with access control to ensure it is used only by those who need it and will meet the guidance in Approved Document M for visible and audible information, heights of controls etc. The entrance to the lift is just off the main circulation route so that a clear 1500mm turning unobstructed wheelchair turning space is provided in front of the doors.

Stair treads (risers and goings) comply with Part M for use by mobility impaired students and staff. Handrails are between 900mm and 1100mm from the stairs and 1100mm on landings.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

Refuge spaces (1400mm x 900mm) are provided within each enclosed staircase clearly identified by appropriate fire safety signage. A two-way communication system is provided as recommended by BB100 to enable someone using this refuge to alert someone of their presence and be assured that rescue is on its way. These refuges provide relatively safe waiting areas for short periods of time. A strategy for evacuating disabled persons, such as by use of an 'Evac-chair', should be prepared by the school management and agreed with the fire authority.

## **Toilet Provision**

Wheelchair accessible unisex toilets are available in two locations on every floor, no more than 40m apart, with alternating right and left hand transfer on different floors. All doors are outward opening.

Ambulant WC cubicles, installed with the recommended support rails, are also provided in all the WC cores.

## **Communication Systems**

Induction loops are provided at the main school reception, Student Services reception in the SEN area and the new Sports Building reception. If a lesson bell or PA system is installed by the school,

an occupant with a hearing impairment may require an alternative means of being alerted and this will need to be managed by the school to suit the individual.

## **Internal Wayfinding and Signage**

The simple circulation strategy minimises the need for wayfinding signage, however wayfinding and room name signage that is installed meets the guidance in BS8300. Stairwells have the storey identified in supergraphics on the landing wall.

## **Acoustics**

The new building complies with Building Bulletin 93 (BB93) and supports the inclusion of hearing impaired students within mainstream education. The term SEN now includes a number of additional conditions including hearing impairment, autism, and English as a second language. Under the draft revision to BB93, all SEN spaces should be treated as spaces with more onerous requirements than would typically be applied to mainstream classrooms. The SEN spaces within the new buildings of Lees Brook Community School are designed to this level.

## **Visual Requirements**

Visual Requirements Colour and contrast, the avoidance of glare, and manifestation to glazing complies with the guidance in Approved Document part M for all surface finishes, ironmongery and FF&E.

## **FF&E Layouts and Provision**

The FF&E provides flexibility by maximising loose furniture (legacy) wherever possible to allow users to easily reconfigure their environment to accommodate changing needs.

The FF&E solution meets or better the minimum guidelines defined in Part M of The Building Regulations and British Standards 8300:2009. Circulation areas and teaching spaces allow wheelchair users independent access to all of the facilities in each space. New height-adjustable tables are provided within each department across the school, supplementary to the legacy FF&E where necessary. Height adjustable sinks and dual-height accessible reception desks are provided throughout.

The dining area allows for wheelchair users to sit in a number of different locations. The detailed design of the servery area (by the catering consultant) ensures that a wheelchair user can safely transfer their food from the servery to their table.

The sports building design includes an integrated accessible shower cubicle for each male and female changing area and a unisex shower and changing facility. In addition a number of private shower and changing cubicles are provided to provide privacy for individuals who require or prefer it.

All layouts of fittings, furniture and equipment allow for a 300mm clearance to the leading edge of all new doors to accommodate wheelchair access.