

Website Accessibility

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The Web Accessibility Initiative have guidelines (WCAG) to ensure your website is more accessible to meet regulations published in 2018. As we are aware schools and nurseries are exempt from these regulations, except for the content the public need to use their services. With this in mind we have produced some practical tips for schools to consider, based on the guidelines for accessible content. These have four overarching principles, each with more specific instructions for website users on how to ensure that the content you are adding is as accessible as possible.

Principle 1 - "Perceivable"

Text alternatives

"All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose"

Plain text is the optimal format for any piece of content. This is because it can be used in many different formats to suit individuals with different disabilities. Therefore, it is important to provide a plain text alternative format for all content that is informative, i.e. not just decorative.

For schools adding visual content to a website:

- **Use the caption tool to add a concise description of any non-decorative image**
- **Provide an overview of any video that has been added**
- **If necessary provide a synopsis of any recorded dialogue**

Alternatives for time-based media

"Provide alternatives for time-based media."

Time-based media (audio and video) can be especially difficult for individuals with hearing or vision difficulties. In addition to providing a plain text alternative, it may also be helpful to provide an alternative time-based media version.

For schools adding video to a website, consider:

- **Add CC (Closed Captions); this feature is available on YouTube**
 - **Adding sign language as part of a video file**
 - **Adding alternative audio for video files**
 - **Using a video file with sign language as alternative for audio files**
 - **Use actual text instead of images of text. Plain text is the most accessible format to use. Therefore, it is counterintuitive to use images of text where plain text can be used.**
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Principle 2 - "Operable"

Enough time

"Provide users enough time to read and use content."

Provide controls for timed content. For any interactions related to timing - including moving information, auto-updating, or page time-outs .

The only time constraint on an eSchools website is the gallery of more than one image, where images display at a rate of 5 seconds. Schools should consider:

- **Avoiding adding images which contain text which they need the public to read**
- **If they must add the image here, add it multiple times, increasing the time that the image appears on screen**

Seizures

"Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures."

Flashing light should not occur more than three times per second. Or, the flash should be below the general flash and red flash thresholds. You can use photosensitive epilepsy analysis tools or flash tests to test your site if you are unsure.

For schools adding video or embedding content, consider:

- **Avoiding content with flashing images**
- **GIFs cannot be added to eSchools websites to avoid this**

Navigable

"Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are."

Provide a link for users to skip to the page's main content. One of the first links on every page of a website should include a link for users to bypass repeated blocks of content, such as the navigation. This is especially important for pages that have large, multi-layered navigation menus.

Titles should be meaningful. The title of the web page, as well as the page heading, section headings, and labels, should describe the topic or purpose of the page.

Link purpose can be determined from link text. As far as is possible, the purpose of a link should be able to be determined from the text that is within the anchor tag itself.

Provide more than one way to locate a web page. The same page should be accessible by more than just one link on one page.

For schools adding content, consider:

- **Using internal links to specific content**
 - **Make category and page titles short and succinct**
 - **Hyperlinks should be concise and obvious (ie. avoid describing what the visitor needs to do "Click here to...")**
 - **A page of internal links to statutory information**
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Principle 3 - 'Understandable'

Readable

"Make text content readable and understandable."

Provide meanings of unusual words and pronunciations of difficult words. Make content available at a lower secondary education reading level. Teenagers aged between 11-14 should be able to understand the content, even if specific terminology and concepts are new.

For schools adding content, consider:

- **Explaining any acronyms**
- **Providing a glossary of terms**

Predictable

"Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways."

Consistent navigation. Navigation elements should be repeated in a consistent way throughout the website.

Consistent identification. Terminology and repeatable elements should appear consistently throughout the website.

No unprovoked changes of context. Any changes of context should only happen on request by the user. Things like redirects, popups and other similar interactions should be communicated clearly beforehand.

For schools adding content, consider:

- **Keeping language, terminology and references consistent throughout your site**

Principle 4 - "Robust"

Compatible

"Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies."

A number of extensions to assist individual users with access are available through Google Chrome.

For schools adding content, consider:

- **Familiarise yourself with some of these extensions to advise visitors**

We hope that these guidelines help to improve the accessibility of your website. At eSchools, we are always looking at new ways to improve the experience of visiting and editing a website for all users. For further information on the government's accessibility guidelines, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>