



HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan Policy

Policy Area:	General
Relevant Statutory Regulations:	ISSR Part 3 NMS 16 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 SEN and Disability Act 2001 Equality Act 2010
Key Contact Personnel in School	
Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy:	Bursar
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This policy will be reviewed at least triannually, and/or following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Introduction

This policy and plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) amended part 4 of the DDA so that it became applicable to education and to prevent discrimination against disabled people in their access to education.

This has placed three key duties on schools, which are:

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- plan to increase access for disabled students.

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with Heathfield School's aims, ethos and Equal Opportunities policy. This plan covers the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2020 and will be reviewed annually with a new one drawn up every 3 years.

Heathfield School ("the School") is committed to planning for the provision of a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

The School challenges negative attitudes about accessibility and disability and endeavours to develop cultural awareness, tolerance, respect and inclusion across the School.

Aims

- To ensure disabled students are not treated less favourably.
- To ensure 'reasonable steps' are taken to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in matters of education and admission.
- To reduce and eliminate barriers access to the curriculum and the School's community for students and prospective students with a disability.
- To ensure that every student with special educational needs reaches her full potential.
- To ensure a planned increase in accessibility of provision for all students, staff, parents and visitors.
- To increase awareness in matters of disability discrimination.

Definition

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities."

This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise; 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'.

This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Background

The School is committed to making reasonable adjustments to allow disabled students to access educational provision at the School. The School occupies a large site consisting of several separate buildings of several storeys. The majority of the buildings do not have lifts. Teaching takes place in fixed classrooms for each subject which means students move widely around campus. This requires students to go from classroom to classroom, often under tight time pressures using stairs.

Heathfield School is a girls' boarding and day school with the majority of boarding areas being housed in the historic main house over several floors. There are no lifts in any of the boarding areas, although some bedrooms are situated on the ground floor. Given the age and layout of many of the buildings, students are required to use stairs and steps for routine access and emergency evacuation purposes.

Strategy

The School plans, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the School in the following areas:

1. **Physical Access** - improving the physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the School.
2. **Curriculum** - increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the School curriculum and co-curricular activities.
3. **Written Information** - improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for people who are not disabled:
 - 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.

The School regularly reviews and take steps to improve the physical environment of the School in order to increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of its education and associated

services. This is particularly pertinent when the School undertakes large-scale building works. The previous two constructions, the St Mary's Theatre and the new STEM building, are both Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant.

The Accessibility Plan

The plan has been produced after a review of existing arrangements for improving accessibility within the School and an audit of the School for accessibility. The plan is detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised below:

- In performing their duties, Governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team and staff will have regard to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Code of Practice for Schools (2002).
- The School recognises and values parents' or carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects their and the child's right to confidentiality.
- The School provides all students with a broad, balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, promoting the development of a more inclusive curriculum.

The plan is available in alternative formats upon request.

The plan has been drawn up with reference to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND (gov.uk)
- ISI

Monitoring & Review

The School will review this plan on an annual basis to evaluate:

- The effectiveness of the action taken in the previous school year
- Relevant targets for the next school year
- Responses to any legislative changes
- Changes or expected change to relevant students needs

Monitoring will be a constant process and the Headmistress and Bursar will make the necessary amendments and discuss planning, budget and other concerns.

The Health and Safety Committee may raise action points and these will, in the main, be dealt with by the Bursar. Information relating to H&S meetings is included in the Bursar's report to the Governors with any specific points brought to their attention.

If a student with special medical requirements and a particular disability which restricts mobility around the School site is offered a place, a committee will be convened consisting of the Headmistress, Bursar, Class Teacher, Head of Learning Support and the School Nurse.

Welcoming and Preparing for Disabled Students

The School has an admissions policy which is outlined on its website and available in detail from the Head of Admissions which seeks to remove barriers to entry to the School for students with special needs and/or disabilities. An individual's economic status, ethnicity, race, or disability do not form part of the assessment processes. Heathfield School is an equal opportunities organisation and is committed to a working environment that is free from any form of discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual

orientation or disability. The School will make reasonable adjustments including the provision of auxiliary aids and services to meet the needs of staff or students who are or become disabled.

Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments to enable prospective students to take up a place at the School and to satisfy the current admissions criteria, the School is committed to providing those reasonable adjustments.

The School may have a consultation meeting with the parents/guardians following assessment to define the reasonable adjustments the School is committed to provide, discuss any additional services, and make arrangements for review meetings to monitor progress.

Where the School agrees to provide additional services, such as learning support, charges may be made at a level that reasonably reflects the cost to the School of providing that service. Details of costs can be provided in writing on request.

In order to meet the needs of disabled students, the School requires full information. The School will ask all applicants for admission to the School to disclose whether they have received any learning support, have had an educational psychologist's report or have any disability or other condition of which the School should be aware.

In assessing the student or prospective student, the School may need to take advice and require assessments as appropriate. The School will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.

The School does not discriminate on these or any other grounds and aims to do nothing to place a disabled student at a disadvantage. In some cases it may be necessary to make reasonable adjustments to ensure this is not the case. Whether an adjustment is reasonable will be determined on the basis of the facts of that individual case, including cost implications.

Temporary and Permanent Needs of Students

Existing and emerging health needs of existing students are closely monitored and arrangements for individualised support are developed in consultation with their parents and medical or other appropriate professionals. Short term mobility needs are considered and guidance given.

Staff Recruitment and the Needs of Existing Staff

The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have, or have had, a temporary or permanent disability will be reviewed regularly to ensure that whatever reasonable adjustments are possible are made to allow them to enter into, or remain in, School employment. Where new health needs are identified for existing staff, the School Nurses are informed and every effort is made to support the staff member and promote their safety and well-being. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff can participate fully. Short term mobility needs are considered and guidance given.

Context

As at 1 September 2020 the School had no statemented students in the School. The School has no students with medical disabilities other than a number of students with dyslexia, dyscalculia and/or dyspraxia, epilepsy, asthma or diabetes. One student is on the Autistic Spectrum. All students on the SEN Register have a profile on SIMS and the SEND register, which is accessible on Teams, and is reviewed once a term. All the School's students are fully integrated into School life and participate in the whole curriculum including extra-curricular activities (such as School trips).

The School takes a fully inclusive approach to staff recruitment and aim to appoint the best person based on their skill set and qualifications, regardless of any disability they might have. The School actively implements the School's "Equal Opportunities Policy" for staff in the day-to-day management of Heathfield School. All staff are provided with the necessary support for their roles. The School regularly reviews its staff's needs to ensure these are being met.

Current Provision

Curriculum access

Students are offered support from the SEND department to access the curriculum – see the School's "SEND Policy". The SENCO works closely with the Deputy Head (Academic) and dyslexia and other specialist teachers to ensure that staff know which students will benefit from which specific approaches. This support is evaluated on a student by student basis and is continuously reviewed to ensure the provision meets need. Strategies employed to support students include:

- training for differentiation within lessons;
- in lesson specialist SEN teaching;
- additional SEN tuition in small groups or one-to-one;
- use of technology to enable students to cope with the demands of academic study such as provision of laptops for written subjects.

Students' medical needs are managed with both the Nursing Staff and School Doctor and parent co-ordination (e.g. asthma, diabetes) to ensure lessons are accessible and to minimise the risk of medical complications such as swimming and PE.

The catering team works closely with the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) to ensure appropriate food provision to accommodate known allergies. The Teacher in Charge of Cookery also works closely with the catering team and the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) to ensure an updated record of food allergies and preferences is considered in planning work for the curriculum and after school activity.

The Assistant Head (Co-curricular and Operations) regularly reviews the co-curricular programme to ensure the programme includes a range of activities which appeal to the full range of our students' needs and abilities.

Staff organising trips and visits are required to consult with the Assistant Head (Co-curricular and Operations) ensure any medical needs are considered and catered for.

Provision of written information

The School makes use of electronic technology for the majority of its communications with parents/ guardians. This includes use of a secure parent portal, email for newsletters and notifications, and SchoolComms text message alerts for urgent information.

Students have access to computers/laptops in lessons.

The School provides written information to students with disabilities in ways that are user-friendly and fully support them in their learning (use of different coloured papers for dyslexic students and increasing the font size of printed materials for visually impaired students).

All printed material (such as school reports) are generally also available electronically and so can be adjusted by the recipient to take account of any visual impairment (e.g. use of larger font size).

Physical environment

The School does not currently have any students with mobility restrictions, however the School has worked with

parents and relatives to ensure events are accessible to individuals with additional physical need.

Wheelchair access is possible through the library to the main building via a ramp. Parents evenings and the main school performances are held in the St Mary's Theatre where step free access is possible for wheelchair users. Doors are wider or entrances are double doors at these points.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is available on the ground floor of the STEM building, swimming pool, St Mary's Theatre and Sports Hall. Ramps provide access to the main building via the library and the cookery building.

Lifts are available in both the STEM building and St Mary's Theatre providing access to the second floor of these buildings.

Faulty lighting will be replaced within 24 hours wherever possible.

The age of parts of the building mean certain adaptations to increase physical accessibility are limited.

When the School goes off site, it may not be possible to transport a student in the School minibus, or in the hired coaches when bigger groups are travelling. Alternative ways of transporting children with physical disabilities would be sought when the need arises. When the present minibuses are replaced, consideration will be given to providing facilities for the disabled.

Related Policies

- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Disability Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Spectrum Laptop Computer and Word Processor Policy

APPENDIX 1: Accessibility Plan

Physical Access

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
Ease of physical access to the school buildings varies across the site reflecting the different age and condition of buildings.	<p>To take every opportunity to upgrade and improve physical access to all areas of the School buildings and site.</p> <p>Ensure all new lighting installed at the school is appropriate.</p>	<p>Bursar and Facilities and Estates Manager to ensure that all works take into account disabled access and needs.</p> <p>LED is now installed in every new build and the School is changing all lights to LED as they come up.</p>	Ongoing
<p>St Mary's theatre including Music classrooms Modern building constructed in accordance with Building Regulations. Lift in place. Disabled toilet.</p>	Continue to monitor in case situation changes.	Monitor. Consider installing hearing loop if need required.	Ongoing
<p>STEM building Modern building constructed in accordance with Building Regulations. Lift in place. Disabled toilet.</p>	Continue to monitor in case situation changes.	Monitor	Ongoing
<p>Wyatt House First floor rooms are not easily accessible but ground floor rooms in house have level access but doors are probably not wide enough for a wheelchair. Movement about the Courtyard by a wheelchair would be restricted due to steps although some houses have level access.</p>	Should a student or member of staff in a wheelchair or with hearing disability come to Upper Sixth then some minor works will be required. The School would look at making these adjustments when the precise requirement emerges to ensure it is appropriately tailored.	Monitor Upper Sixth student and staff requirements and be prepared to adjust/improve access as required in the future.	Works to be completed before student with disability joins Sixth Form.

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
<p>New Sixth Form Centre This is a proposed new Sixth Form Centre unit with associated staff accommodation. It has been designed with accessibility in mind and in accordance with current legislation and building regulations.</p>	<p>To provide suitable study and relaxation space for current and future Sixth form students and staff compliant with legislation. Wheelchair access will be considered at all stages of the project. The building will include a lift.</p>	<p>Bursar to continue to work with the design team to ensure that accessibility is addressed during the planning and construction phases.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Classroom block Level access to lower floor and good access into classrooms. Nearest disabled toilet in adjoining STEM building. Access to first floor difficult due to stairs and no lift.</p>	<p>Ensure students and staff with mobility issues have access to appropriate teaching facilities.</p>	<p>Ground floor OK, school would look at resolving the first floor issue by timetabling those with mobility restrictions into the ground floor only.</p>	<p>Timetable adjustments will be implemented once student with disability is identified and academic requirements known.</p>
<p>Art & Textiles rooms Access to first floor by stairs – no lift. This restricts access to these specialist classrooms.</p>	<p>A mobility restricted student or member of staff would need access to the first floor art rooms due to need to be in specialist classroom. Objective would be to provide this access.</p>	<p>When required, the school would take appropriate action. This might be a timetabling solution, stair lift, an actual lift or a combination of these.</p>	<p>Works to be completed before student with disability joins school.</p>
<p>Main School Access to floors above ground floor is restricted due to lack of lift access. No lift access to infirmary or boarding areas. Good access to dining room, chapel (with small wooden ramp), Head's study, common rooms and assembly hall. No disabled toilet or shower facilities in the main school. Narrow staircases and corridors above ground floor level prevent wheelchair access in many areas, due to the age of the building. Bursary office only accessible via a set of three steps.</p>	<p>To provide full access to the main school common-user areas for mobility impaired student or member of staff.</p>	<p>Should the school employ a member of staff or have a mobility impaired student join the school then an individual access plan would be developed. Access problems would need to be addressed through major works.</p>	<p>Works to be completed before student with disability joins school. Works to be completed within 3 months of disabled member of staff joining bursary team.</p>
<p>Swimming Pool Access to pool area is level and ramped. Access to changing area is step free. Disabled toilet in</p>	<p>Provide access to swimming pool facility for disabled users.</p>	<p>A hoist facility to assist disabled swimmers into the pool would be procured if/when required.</p>	<p>Adjustments to access arrangements at the pool will be completed when</p>

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
waiting area.			precise requirement is known.
Cookery Building Access by ramp has been provided to building. Counter levels not DDA compliant. Nearest disabled toilet in theatre.	Continue to monitor in case situation changes.	Monitor	Ongoing
Library The ground floor of the senior library, including the reading room, has level access from the dining hall, ramp access from outside and level access to toilets in the classroom block.	To ensure that disabled staff, visitors and students are not disadvantaged by being unable to access library facilities.	Be prepared to adjust/improve access as required in the future.	Ongoing
Facilities & Laundry Department Level access to basement and ground floor laundry. Single step access to Housekeeping tearoom. Nearest disabled toilet in St Mary's Theatre. Due to nature of employment of staff in Facilities and Housekeeping Departments it is unlikely that we will require to improve access to basement or ground floor. This will be kept under review.	Should the school employ a member of the facilities or housekeeping staff who is unable to access the ground floor then the school would take steps to overcome that access issue.	Be prepared to adjust/improve access as required in the future.	Works to be completed within 3 months of disabled member of staff joining facilities and/or housekeeping team.
Visitors The School has improved its dealing with disabled visitors by seeking advanced warning of any mobility issues. For example, anyone invited for interview is given the opportunity to warn the School of a disability issues.	To further improve our proactive approach to determining any disability issues that a visitor to the School may have prior to their arrival.	All member of staff to be alert to the School's approach and to alert the Bursar or another senior member of staff if there are areas we can improve.	Ongoing
The School currently supports students with visual	Review as situation arises.	Monitor	Ongoing

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
or hearing impairments on a case by case basis, as the need arises.			

Curriculum

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
To consider adjustments which might be made to the curriculum for students with special needs.	To make sure that schemes of work (SOW) in all subject areas are accessible to students with differing special needs and disabilities.	Review of schemes of work in relation to different special needs and disabilities. Look for ways to overcome any difficulties that might arise. Investigate specific health and safety or supervision issues.	SOW reviewed on a yearly basis by HoDs and SENCo
	To make sure that schemes of work in all subject areas are able to be delivered to all students using methods directly suited to any special needs and/or disabilities.	Review of schemes of work in relation to different disabilities. Look for ways to overcome any difficulties that might arise. Investigate specific health and safety or supervision issues.	Methods of delivery reviewed by HoDs on a yearly basis
	To provide ICT that is accessible to students with differing special needs and disabilities.	Review ICT strategy and investigate specialist equipment e.g. enlarged screens and keyboards.	Methods of delivery reviewed by HoDs on a yearly basis
The School provides a number of extra-curricular activities.	To ensure the School provides a large range of extra-curricular activities for students with differing special needs and disabilities.	Review current arrangements, to increase opportunities available to students with special needs and disabled students.	Extracurricular activities reviewed by the Assistant Head (Co-curricular and Operations) on a yearly basis
Weekend Activities are organised by Boarding team	To ensure there is a large provision of activities to be undertaken by all girls.	Reminder to Boarding team on an annual basis that disabled girls and girls with special needs should always be	SENCo and Boarding team to inform Deputy Head (Boarding and Pastoral) of

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
		considered when activities are planned	<p>any needs. Inset budget to provide inset for particular cases.</p> <p>INSET requirements noted and are arranged as required.</p>
Teaching staff are encouraged to attend courses/seminars to help them in their delivery of the curriculum.	To provide training for teachers on delivering the curriculum in different formats, in order to increase access to the curriculum.	Identify any teachers who would benefit from such training and arrange its provision.	<p>Training needs reviewed by SENCo and DoS on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Performance Review successfully established with Inset dimension.</p> <p>Internal Focus sessions run regularly (since September 2014) and Twilight sessions focus on SEN/differentiation.</p>
Pastoral and Teaching staff monitor student needs.	To monitor and anticipate needs likely to be faced by disabled students in general, ensuring the diversity of children's needs is addressed.	Review provision in all areas of the curriculum with School Nurse, Doctor and pastoral staff.	<p>SENCo and HoDs to inform Director of Studies of any needs.</p> <p>Inset budget to provide inset for particular cases, for example focus on Mental Health September 2017.</p> <p>INSET requirements noted and are arranged as</p>

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
			required.
Exam Office manages access arrangements with SENCo and Deputy Head (Academic)	To ensure access arrangements are in line with JCQ regulations, SENCo advice and individual students circumstances.	Ongoing revision of arrangements and student needs.	Arrangements are finalised in Lent of each year.

Written Information

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
Written material is provided on an ad hoc basis in alternative format if required.	To improve the availability of written material in alternative formats, in order to support the delivery of information to disabled students, parents and staff.	Continue to provide written material in the optimum format as required by specific individuals e.g. coloured paper, large font.	School currently supports several students in this way. Should further requirements emerge then appropriate arrangements would be made, including the possibility of using external agencies (e.g. large format printing) as and when required.
Information for both students and parents is available on the School website.	Improve communication with existing and potential disabled students and parents.	Review School website and Teams to ensure clear, simple and easy to use.	Current website complies with DDA.
Staff attend regular termly INSET meetings.	Increase staff awareness of the need for, and availability of, written material in different formats should there be a requirement.	Deputy Head (Academic) uses whole staff INSET to brief academic staff on the need to take into account individual student needs when using written material. Meetings also used to disseminate information relevant to specific students as well as more general information.	Deputy Head (Academic) and SENCo to continue to ensure information provided to staff as required. SENCo been in position since September 2014.

Present Position	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale
<p>Some students taking public examinations require specific support with written material.</p>	<p>To ensure that those students with suitable evidence of a learning need are provided the right support with the written text during public examinations.</p>	<p>To continue to provide public examination papers in the most suitable format for individual students who have evidence of a specific learning need in accordance with the examination board rules.</p>	<p>Deputy Head (Academic) in conjunction with the Exams Officer to continue to ensure students are provided public exam papers in the optimum format in accordance with their learning need. School has procured specialist equipment (reader pens) to support students as necessary. SENCo been in position since September 2014.</p>
<p>Prospective students are able to sit the admissions examinations using different formats when requested by current school or parents.</p> <p>Registration, Acceptance of Offer and Health forms updated in line with current legislation.</p>	<p>To ensure prospective students have equality of access when sitting admission examinations for entry to Heathfield.</p>	<p>Ensure that any requests for special arrangements for written material for prospective students is acted on appropriately.</p>	<p>Head of Admissions is aware of this requirement and will continue to lead in this area.</p>

APPENDIX 2: Suggested questions for an internal audit of accessibility

Section 1 - How does your school deliver the curriculum?

- Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?
- Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled students?
- Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?
- Are lessons responsive to student diversity?
- Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?
- Are all students encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?
- Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example using lip reading?
- Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?
- Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students 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 students irrespective of attainment or impairment?
- Are there high expectation of all students?
- Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?

Section 2 - Is your School designed to meet the needs of all students?

- 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 students?
- Can students 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 students, including students with SEN and disabilities; 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 students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?
- Are areas to which students should have access well lit?
- Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?

- Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?

Section 3 - How does your School deliver materials in other formats?

- Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students 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 eg, 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?