COTHAM SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Version control

The table below shows the history of the document and the changes made at each version:

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	April 2017	First published version
1.1	January 2021	Updated version

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Contents

Document Purpose

Schools are required under the Equality Act (2010) to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Our school aims to treat all its students fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students without discrimination of any kind.

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Cotham School in relation to inclusion and accessibility. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. This policy is drawn up in accordance with the Equality Act, the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled students".

The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act (2010), including understanding disability issues.

The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan including Bristol City Council, the Bristol Education Partnership and the Confederation of Schools Trust.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, the complaints procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including students, parents/ carers, staff and governors of the school.

Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act (2010).

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities under the Equality Act (2010), to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary

aid or adjustments to premises. This duty is **anticipatory**; it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage'.

Audience
This policy, having been presented to and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governing Body is distributed for the information of:
• All teaching staff
• All higher level teaching assistants and learning support assistants
• All support staff

Key Objective
To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for students, and prospective students, with a disability.

Achieving the Objectives
This section outlines the main activities, which the school undertakes, and is planning to undertake, to achieve the key objective outlined above.

a) Education and related activities
The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, and other external professionals, that can support the school to ensure equality of access and developmental achievement commensurate with their potential ability.

b) Physical environment
The school will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities, services and fittings.

c) Provision of information
The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Vision and Values
Cotham School has high ambitions for all its students, including those with a disability and aims to ensure that they have the opportunity to engage in every aspect of school life and in doing so 'develop, learn, participate and achieve the best possible outcomes' (Code of Practice, 2015 1:34). The school strives to ensure equal opportunities amongst all staff and students and is driven by our shared commitment to inclusion.

In terms of access, Cotham School aims to:

1. Set suitable learning challenges
2. Respond to students' diverse needs
3. Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students

Accessibility Strategy

Cotham School's Accessibility Strategy has been produced in response to, and in accordance with the Equality Act (2010), the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) which set out the legal obligations in regard to direct and indirect discrimination and the provision of 'reasonable adjustments'.

Accessibility is addressed under the six headings below.

- **Admissions**
- **Access to Buildings and Classrooms including evacuation**
- **Curriculum Access**
- **Enriched Curriculum**
- **Information for students and parents/ carers/carers**
- **Access Plan**

Admissions

The Governors of Cotham School support the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015) which outlines the entitlement of children with special educational needs and disabilities to an appropriate education that promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

The Governors are therefore committed to the principle of all local children having equal rights of access to mainstream education if this can reasonably be provided. This is in line with the Education Act 1996 Section 316 (3) which states:

If an EHCP is maintained under section 324 for the child, they must be educated in a mainstream school unless that is incompatible with -

(a) the wishes of their parent, or

(b) the provision of efficient education for other children.

The Governors and school's SENDCo will work with the Local Authority Special Educational Needs Team and the parents/ carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to ensure that school admissions are compliant with this legislation.

Access to the Physical Environment (Buildings and Classrooms)

Evacuation Procedure

The school's evacuation procedures will be adapted to meet the specific needs of an individual. Such procedures will be discussed with the student and parents/ carers/carers will be in the student's SEND file, recorded on their Learning Plan and on the school's information management system (SIMS). Students who may find emergency evacuation difficult will usually have a Learning Support Assistant with them or in their class. Evacuation procedures will be reviewed and updated as appropriate as part of the Annual Review process.

A PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) will be drawn up for students with additional needs/

disabilities where the need arises.

The school will continue to review access to the physical environment for students with disabilities and to make any accommodations that are reasonable and possible.

The following areas have full access with exceptions noted.

Buildings compliance with Equality Act 2010 (previously DDA)

There is a variety of building stock within the site, this ranges from Victorian (Charnwood) through 1930s (A Block) into modern (between 1998 and 2018). Charnwood House was modernised in 2007 at that time the majority of the building became DDA compliant (see exceptions below). A Block was modernised and refurbished in 2010, at which time work was carried out to ensure it met DDA requirements, at that time to meet Fire Regulations the building required nominated fire refuge points (within the Fire Risk Assessment), PEEPs also need to reflect this. As such all buildings on the school site currently meet with the Equality Act (2010) (previously Disability Discrimination Act). All buildings have level/or ramp access to main entrances. All upper floors of buildings have access via mechanical means (lifts). All outside spaces are accessible without traversing any steps.

Exceptions to the above are:

- Rooms G301, G401,G402. *These are upper floor offices in Charnwood House and are not general access to students*
- A small area of footpath between the Performing Arts area, where 1 step would need to be traversed to access the entire site. *This area IS accessible via non stepped means. However it is not generally accessible to students as it would require entry through a normally locked gate.*

Curriculum Access: Teaching, Learning and Assessment (see also SEND policy)

Our aim is that students with disabilities should, as far as possible, have access to a full and broad curriculum similar to that followed by their peers. This is achieved by high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised taking into account individual access and learning needs. The over-arching commitment is that all students achieve their best possible outcomes in terms of academic but also personal and social development leading to greater independence and successful transitions to adulthood.

Learning Plans identify student support and the provision needed to help each student achieve their goals. This information is available to all staff from the Inclusion area on the school intranet and via Class Charts. Support is provided in a variety of formats through the school's graduated response intervention strategy in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

The school is continuously developing its use of IT to make learning more accessible. Current software is routinely evaluated in response to the rapid development of IT to support learners with disabilities including visual impairment and difficulties with reading, memory and organisation. There is a need to balance value for money and consider the longevity of some IT products given rapid advances in this field..

Also, furniture, seating arrangements and the classroom used can be altered to facilitate access and learning. However, the location of specialist equipment may preclude some possibilities.

Led by the SEND team the school will assess a student's need for support and exam access arrangements in line with JCQ regulations. This will involve liaison with teaching staff to ensure that assessments are accessible and appropriate measures put in place to reduce barriers to learning by provision of a prompt, human/computer reader, scribe, word-processor access, oral language modification, rest breaks and additional time.

Access to the Extended Curriculum

Students at Cotham School have always been encouraged to participate fully in a wide range of extracurricular activities offered consistent with a duty of care for their health, safety and wellbeing.

This has included:

- Outdoor Education
- Sports
- Drama productions
- Dance
- Music
- Clubs and activities
- Excursions and trips

A student survey annually captures the views of the current cohort of students so that provision can be developed appropriately.

The suitability of any event and the need for additional support will be discussed fully with the parents/ carers in advance and will be incorporated into the general risk assessment as appropriate.

Information for Students and Parents/ Carers

Children and families are routinely involved in reviewing provision for their child which includes the school programme of parental consultation and Annual Reviews. The views of the child are sought and valued in line with SEND Policy. The school holds regular SEND Parent Information Evenings for the parents/ carers/carers of children with SEND and acknowledges the importance of working in partnership to develop effective practice and provision.

Large print format materials are available on request. The services of a language interpreter and a sign language interpreter can also be accessed to facilitate parental interviews.

If either student or parents/ carers/carers have difficulty accessing information normally provided in writing by the school such as worksheets, homework or newsletters then the school will be happy to consider alternative forms of provision.

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information Report
- Equality Duty (public sector equality duty) statement
- First Aid policy (incorporating 'Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and safety policy (incorporating risk assessment procedure)

Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary.

It will be approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

Access to this plan

This plan is published on our school website. It is also available on request to any current or prospective parent who requests it. This plan will also be made available to any member of staff or applicant for a post at the school who requests it. This plan will be shared with the SLT and relevant student voice groups and will inform relevant aspects of the school's development plan. It will be made available to Ofsted and the LA on request.

Accessibility Action Plan 2020 - 2021

This plan sets out the school actions required to address any identified barriers to access in our accessibility plan, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. All other aspects are compliant.

G	Completed	
A	In progress	
R	Not yet addressed	

Accessibility Targets

		Objective	Strategies	Outcome	RAG
Short Term	1	Ensure compliance with the school's aims, the Equality Duty, and the operation of the school's SEND Policy	Staff and Governing Body informed of requirements and obligations regarding the Accessibility Plan	Staff and Governing Body aware of and understand requirements	(green)
	2	Ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach disabled students	Sharing best practice Training programme, supported by external services and experts, responsive to needs of current SEND cohort e.g. BAT, Sensory Support	Increased staff confidence and competence in adapting and delivering the curriculum to students with disabilities	(amber)
Medium Term	3	Staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example using lip reading	Individual developmental progression planned for lessons e.g. teaching strategies and personalised/adapted resources Ongoing training programme in response to staff and student need	Teachers and staff are able to fully meet the requirements of students' needs	(amber)
	4	Ensure classrooms are optimally organised for disabled students	Sharing best practice Guidance/training supported by external services and experts on effective organisation and use of resources,	Staff include optimising the organisation of resources, equipment, seating plans and room layout for disabled as an integral aspect of their planning and evaluation of	(amber)

			seating plans, room layout and equipment	all lessons
	5	Improve access to curriculum by use of assistive technology	To consult with Sensory Support and Docs Plus on use of appropriate assistive technology Observe examples of assistive technology supporting students effectively in other schools	Increased student communication skills Increased student independence in accessing the curriculum
Long Term	6	Ensure all areas to which students have access are well lit	Continue ongoing review of lighting around the site; currently sufficient but improvements could be made in some areas e.g. C00 walkway and stairs	Enhanced lighting/illumination which increases contrast and clarity, improving visibility and safety of movement for disabled students