

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Non Sibi Sed Aliis

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119, vs 105

"You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block
before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."
Leviticus 19:14

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. No amendments can be made without their express instructions and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

Review Date: Summer Term 2024

Next Review Date: Summer Term 2025

Reviewed By: Mrs A Wilson

APPROVED BY THE HEADTEACHER – Summer Term 2024

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

This Accessibility Plan is compliant with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting on progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period.

Rationale

This plan outlines the proposals of the governing body of Balshaw's CE High School to increase access to education for students with disabilities in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010.

1. Increasing the extent to which students with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum;
2. Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which students with disabilities can take advantage of education and associated services;
3. Improving information delivery to students with disabilities.

The Governing Body also recognises its responsibilities towards employees with disabilities and will:

- Monitor recruitment procedures to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities
- Ensure that employees with disabilities are supported with special provision to ensure that they can carry out their work effectively without barriers.
- Undertake reasonable adjustments to enable staff to access the workplace.

The plan will be resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised in consultation with the:

- Parents of students
- Employees
- Governors
- External partners

Aims

This accessibility plan will ensure that we continue to work towards improving all aspects of the physical environment of the school building, grounds, drives and site, the curriculum and written information so that all students with a disability can take full advantage of the education and opportunities provided at Balshaw's Church of England High School.

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors, regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to taking positive action in line with the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to reinforcing our culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school. We will challenge negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and are committed to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion, reflecting the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 (and in particular Schedule 10 regarding Accessibility)

Definition (Equality Act 2010)

- “A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities” Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. In the DDA ‘substantial’ means ‘more than minor or trivial’. ‘Long-term’ means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.
- The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the student’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term.

A significant number of students at Balshaw’s are therefore included in the definition.

Objectives

- to continue to improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, facilities and services provided, and to improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person;
- to challenge negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to develop a culture of awareness, respect, tolerance and inclusion;
- improve the availability of accessible written information;
- to ensure that all students have equal access to a balanced and differentiated curriculum;
- to provide access to the curriculum for disabled pupils without disadvantaging the education of other students in the school;
- to ensure that all disabled students have access to outstanding pastoral care
- to ensure disabled students can participate fully in extra-curricular activities, clubs, school trips and all other opportunities afforded to them.

Normal day-to-day activity

The measure of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of risk of physical danger.

Accessibility for disabled students and the school curriculum:

- monitoring those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for disabled pupils to access; where necessary, re-rooming to more easily accessible classrooms
- investigating what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of disabled pupils;
- exploring alternative provision and collaboration that will assist disabled students to learn, including liaison with the Local Authority

Accessibility - The current physical environment of the school

Balshaw’s has adapted the school building and site to improve the environment for disabled pupils and visitors in the following ways:

- A ramp exists on the boys' entrance to provide easy access for disabled students and visitors.
- A lift was installed in order to gain access to the upper floor and all classrooms.
- A disabled access toilet was created in the technology block on the ground floor of the building.
- There is also a designated parking space in close proximity to the main school entrance.
- Parents have the opportunity to request access arrangements for Parents' Evening and other events held in school
- Small group lessons take place in Room 39
- My Space and Time Out space for vulnerable students, those with additional needs, ASD at break and lunchtime
- Safe areas all around school
- Physical environment that is safe and welcoming;
- Improved acoustic equipment in all assembly areas and the main hall;
- Handrails on all stairs;
- Clear visual signage
- Individualized support for pupils with mobility needs and specialist equipment/seating

Balshaw's CE High School will continue to 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 and fittings.

Curriculum – The curriculum at Balshaw's will be adapted as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as equally prepared for life as those who able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning in all lessons, the wider curriculum such as participation in after-school clubs, sports, activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist pupils in accessing the curriculum. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of Local Authority services, such as specialist advisers and health professionals.

At Balshaw's we have:

Ensured close liaison with our primary partners to garner relevant information for students during the transition process

Liaised with external agencies regarding individual students (physical, oral, sensory and auditory, behaviour);

Used Teaching Assistants effectively both in and outside of the classroom;

Developed and implemented Pupil Passports through the sharing of information and strategies with staff;

Adapted teaching methods and styles to facilitate access for all students – e.g. appropriate use of language; to suit all learning styles;

Throughout KS4, and selectively for KS3 students, used whole school data and SEND specialist testing, students to identify students for Access Arrangements (exam concessions).

An outstanding pastoral system, which supports, encourages and caters for all students;

SEND interventions at Key Stage 3 which are informed by reading and spelling tests, KS2 prior attainment and CATs for Year 7s (in September of Year 7): individual and very small group teaching in

Nurture groups for literacy and numeracy; and reading and spelling boost interventions for specifically identified and monitored students.

Assessed the KS4 curriculum and made changes so that it includes a broader range of courses, including BTECs.

Provided high quality CPD for specific SEND issues for TAs and all Teaching Staff;

Developed personalized curriculums (e.g. college courses and reduced timetables) at KS4 where the traditional subject mix would be inappropriate;

Used new software such as IDL to provide specific/targeted support;

Use of laptops

Extended transition programme for those students with additional needs at Key Stage 2-3 and 4-5

Identified children classified as 'Pupil Premium', and their curriculum progress is tracked and supported by Curriculum depts, Heads of House, Pupil Premium Co-ordinator and members of the Senior Leadership Team. Interventions at subject level are recorded and monitored. Similarly students' attendance is monitored by School Attendance Officer, Form Tutors and Heads of House.

Ensured there are guided choices for Year 9 students choosing KS4 courses: discussions with students, parents, SENDCO, Curriculum Leaders, Heads of House and SLT.

At Key Stage 4 ensured the curriculum is increasingly personalised: students choose three / four options at GCSE, in addition to core subjects (English, Maths, Science, RE and one of either History or Geography). Students identified as working significantly above the expected ability range in Science study 3 separate Science GCSEs.

Identified the most able students by prior attainment data, and by subject teachers to the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator, with curriculum development, enrichment and extension activities made available to them in addition to a programme of support, mentoring and intervention

Used data from primary schools, reading and spelling tests and Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) to inform differentiated mainstream classroom teaching and Learning Support interventions, together with information from parents, students and other outside agency professionals.

All students across the Key Stages have access to appropriate pastoral support dependent on their age and specific needs.

Communication

- produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired pupils;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

The school will monitor ways to improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities and make full use of local services for providing information in alternative formats (e.g. Braille or audio) when required or requested.

Reasonable Adjustments

The 'Reasonable Adjustments' duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' does not include a duty to change physical features. It does include a duty 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide auxiliary aids ... where a disabled person would, but for the provision of the auxiliary aids, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled'. The term "auxiliary aids" found in the Act cover both auxiliary aids and services but there is no legal definition for what constitutes auxiliary aids and services. Examples of what may be considered an auxiliary aid could be hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software. There is no generic definition of what constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment'; the key test is reasonableness, which will always be specific to the pupil and context.

Priorities moving forward- School Development and Improvement Plan

To use primary liaison information to ensure the needs of all new students are met in time for a September start

To review the building, outbuildings, drives, grounds and site annually;

To address any concerns arising from the annual site inspection;

Maximize access to all parts of the building and grounds;

Review access to upper and lower classrooms on the West Wing side of school

Increased use of parental Synergy and email to improve home-school communication

Summary

The Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information. Whole school training will recognize the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, Strategies and documents:

Equality Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy/Special Educational Needs Information Report, Behaviour for Learning Policy, School Development and Improvement Plan, Asset Management Plan

The Accessibility Plan is an 'umbrella' document: it encompasses existing policies and development plans, implemented and monitored by a range of teachers, the senior leadership team and governors.

The Plan is reviewed each year by the senior leadership team, with individual responsibilities for specific sections of the Policy as noted; it is also reviewed by the Governing Body.

The Accessibility Plan will be monitored through the Governors Standards and Effectiveness Committee and will be published on the school website.

The Accessibility Plan may be reviewed by Ofsted during inspection processes in relation to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Purpose of this policy:

This policy supports the legislative framework for responding to requests for information under the statutory access regimes established by:

- the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- the Data Protection Act (DPA)
- the Disability Discrimination Act
- the Equality Act (2010)
- and other legislation that provides a right of access

In addition the School has its own policies on Data Protection and Complaints.