

# Hitchin Girls' School



## Accessibility Plan

This is a Statutory document required of all Schools under the Equality Act 2010.

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## **Introduction and Aims**

This document outlines the school's approach to Accessibility and steps to ensure any future works at the school increase access to school activities for disabled people.

The aims of the accessibility plan are to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum. This covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, sporting and cultural activities or school visits.
- Improve the physical environment of the school.
- Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of written information, which is provided to pupils who are not disabled.

At Hitchin Girls' School we have a general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and able-bodied people;
- eliminate discrimination;
- eliminate harassment related to a disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take account of disabled peoples' disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than able-bodied people.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is adequately resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Definition of Disability is a broad one, as follows: 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 (Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

## **Key Objectives**

Overall the intention is to improve access to education and educational achievement by disabled pupils to ensure equality of opportunity and so lead to a full participation in the school community. This shall equally apply to prospective pupils, staff and visitors with a disability.

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

The Equality Policy 2010 places a duty on all schools and LEAs to plan to increase over time the accessibility of schools for disabled students and to implement their plans.

Schools are required to produce accessibility plans for their individual school. Accessibility plans and strategies must be in writing. The nature and content of plans will depend on the size of school and the resources available to the school.

## **Disability Discrimination Act**

Although not part of the accessibility plan, Hitchin Girls' School will also consider the access arrangements for adults using their building as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), including all subsequent amendments that come into force.

The DDA gives rights to disabled people in three main areas relating to schools:

- Employing staff: the school must not unjustifiably discriminate against present and future

employees, or job applicants, on the grounds of disability. To enable a disabled person to do their job, the school may have to make reasonable adjustments to their employment arrangements or premises if these substantially disadvantage a disabled person compared to an able-bodied person. It is expected that such adjustments will be made wherever it is reasonable to do so. Access to Work (AtW) provides advice and practical support to disabled people and their employers to help overcome work related obstacles resulting from a disability.

- Providing non-educational services to the public: when providing non-educational services, for example, when letting rooms in the school for community use, the school must not unjustifiably discriminate against disabled people. They must also take reasonable steps to change policies, practises or procedures which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use a service. The school must provide auxiliary aids or services to enable disabled people to use a service and overcome physical barriers by providing a service by a reasonable alternative method. In this context non-educational services include services offered to parents such as meetings, access to fundraising, use of sports facilities available to the local community and the hiring of school accommodation to the local community.
- Publishing information about arrangements for disabled pupils: the school, in its annual reports to parents, must explain their admissions arrangements for disabled pupils, how they will help such pupils gain access and what they will do to make sure they are treated fairly. Schools should also ensure that information provided to parents is accessible to parents with a disability. This may require, for example, using a larger print, audio taped copies or documents in Braille. It should be recognised that not all the requirements can necessarily be introduced immediately. Hitchin Girls' School will continue to plan ahead to implement necessary changes as reasonably practicable.

## Action Plan

The action plan is divided into three sections, short, medium and long-term targets that support the aims of the school outlined above. These plans will be reviewed periodically.

What Hitchin Girls' School currently provides to help make the curriculum accessible:

- Individual support for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and Disabilities.
- Pupil passports to outline individual support with updates in the inclusion bulletin.
- Individual and small group support from outside agencies.
- Individual small group support delivered by our own teaching assistants within the SEND budget.
- Mentoring 1:1 basis for identified students.
- Staff training on adaptation, teaching strategies & teaching styles.
- Homework support
- Extra numeracy and literacy support for years 7, 8 and 9.
- Individual pathway for students in years 10 and 11.
- Small group sizes for less able students in core subjects.
- Home and hospital support through Herts County Council ESMA (Education Support for Medical Absences) service for students when they have been absent from school for a considerable amount of time due to injury or illness.

The school is always seeking to improve access around the school for disabled students, our current provision for the disabled in terms of buildings is:

- Toilets for people with a disability in the Sixth Form Centre, Woodside, Sports Hall and main school.
- Portable ramps for use around the school as required
- Resurfacing of worn tarmac and other areas and repainting step edging.

This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, strategies and documents:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- SEND Information report
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy

This plan is reviewed every three years to take into account the changing needs of the schools and its students, and where the school has undergone a refurbishment.

## Action Plan

### Planning Duty 1: Curriculum

Trust Boards should undertake an audit of the extent to which students with disabilities can access the curriculum on an equal basis with their peers. Action should then be identified to address specific gaps and improve access. All procedures will be carried out in a reasonable time, and after taking into account students' disabilities and the preferences of the students themselves or their parents/carers

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Time Scale</u>
1	To ensure the curriculum is adapted to meet the learning needs of students with SEN and disabilities and that target setting is effective and appropriate for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make available the written material usually provided to all students, in an appropriately presented form where necessary, to SEN &amp; disabled students.</li><li>• To ensure that classroom organisation is planned to maximise learning opportunities.</li><li>• Provide INSET training for staff as required</li></ul> <p>The following are examples of potential support. Further information is available in the SEND policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of enlarged font and assistive technology</li><li>• Use of extra time, rest breaks, readers, scribes and other access arrangements as appropriate</li><li>• Access to Read and Write technology in the classroom and training for all students to use this technology.</li><li>• Adapted resources created through the Learning Support team and shared with HoDs as required.</li><li>• Timetable variations to allow for overlearning and support as required in the learning support hub.</li><li>• Use of BenQ boards to allow staff to take photos of notes for students who need support with note-taking.</li><li>• Dual coding of material to support students with literacy challenges.</li></ul>	Access to the curriculum is adapted to best meet the needs of the student.	On-going

2	To identify and work with students who need support in accessing certain parts of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identification of need</li> <li>● To work with advice from outside agencies, such as the Visual Impairment Advisor or Hearing Impairment Advisor with regard to adaptation of materials or practical assistance</li> <li>● To provide teaching staff with strategies and guidance for SEND students.</li> <li>● Deployment of Learning Support Assistants</li> <li>● Key worker support from the Learning Support team</li> <li>● Support via the Buddy &amp; Mentor schemes</li> <li>● Alternative pathways at Key Stage 4</li> <li>● Use of ear plugs and ear defenders</li> <li>● Behaviour adaptations</li> <li>● Additional interventions to allow for over-learning or skill building to then allow access to the curriculum e.g. dyslexia support, social skills, speech and language etc</li> <li>● Pastoral and mental health provision to ensure well-being needs are met appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students receive support to access the full curriculum as appropriate.</li> </ul>	On-going
3	Access Arrangements for examinations  (please see Examinations Policy for further details)	<p>If criteria is met-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 25% extra time</li> <li>● Reader/computer reader</li> <li>● Scribe</li> <li>● Lap top</li> <li>● Practical assistance</li> <li>● Rest breaks</li> <li>● Small room</li> <li>● Separate room (in exceptional circumstances)</li> </ul>	Students received the additional time/support that is available to them	Monitored through KS3. Applications made to JCQ in Y9 and 12. Provision in KS4 and KS5
4	To provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities e.g. some forms of PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training/Advice sought from County and Sports partnership</li> <li>● Occupational therapy advice to be sought as required</li> <li>● Alternative changing options provided and uniform adaptations to support with students ability to change for PE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If needed students will be given alternative PE activities.</li> <li>● Training will be provided if the school has a student with a physical disability.</li> </ul>	On-going / when necessary

## Planning Duty 2: Physical environment

Trust Boards should undertake an audit of the extent to which students with disabilities can access the physical environment on an equal basis with their peers. Action should then be identified to address specific gaps and improve access. All procedures will be carried out in a reasonable time, and after taking into account students' disabilities and the preferences of the students themselves or their parents/carers.

NB Hertfordshire County Council commissioned a survey report in 2007 to clarify the situation regarding the possible adaptation of the school premises in relation to accessibility for people with physical disabilities. The report concluded that the indicative cost of adapting the site for disabled access was very high and the required investment could not be sanctioned. The report also suggested that even if some of the necessary adaptations were made, significant access issues would remain.

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Time Scale</u>
5	To improve accessibility and safety for disabled or students with temporary mobility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location of lessons altered, or alternative area for study provided, should access be a difficulty.</li> <li>ESMA referral will be completed as necessary and access to the curriculum can be provided via an AV1 robot.</li> </ul>	Students will continue to be able to access all aspects of the curriculum	Ongoing as areas redecorated or refurbished.
6	To improve access to all areas of the school for users with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek advice from sight and hearing impaired advisor.</li> <li>Ensure emergency signage is clear and meets current standards and evacuation routes are kept clear of obstruction.</li> <li>To ensure areas are well lit</li> <li>To ensure new furniture and equipment is suitable for all potential users.</li> <li>Footpaths, parking arrangement and travel routes around the school clearly lit, signed and maintained.</li> <li>To consider how access to the buildings or specific rooms/areas can be improved during any major refurbishment and implement any changes that are practical and within the control of the school.</li> <li>To ensure any new builds meet DDA requirements</li> <li>Some areas of the older buildings are less accessible due to constraints of physical layout and design.</li> <li>Where students have restricted mobility, this is risk assessed and alternative arrangements made to ensure students can access the curriculum.</li> <li>Addition of handrails as required for students to access areas of the school.</li> <li>Access to adapted furniture in the classroom as required.</li> </ul>	<p>Classrooms easier to work in and materials accessible.</p> <p>Clear routes easy to follow.</p> <p>Improved visibility for all. Equipment suitable for all students.</p> <p>Disabled access routes and parking available.</p> <p>New buildings have appropriate lifts and toilets.</p>	Ongoing as building projects & refurbishment work completed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of changing chairs as required in disabled bathrooms.</li> <li>• SENCO liaison with timetable team to ensure students are timetabled in suitable classrooms based on need.</li> <li>• Adaptations to access to Highbury House with a member of staff walking students over the road if the bridge cannot be used.</li> </ul>		
7	Ensure edges of steps are marked and maintained to support visually impaired students, staff and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual re-marking of steps by Site Staff as required</li> </ul>	Clear definition of step edges.	Annual check
8	Ensure disabled students/staff and visitors are considered in the safety planning for evacuation or lock-down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessment to be completed for any student, staff member or visitor who may need help evacuating the building due to a physical disability.</li> <li>• Risk assessment and adaptation for students who will struggle with safety procedures due to neurodiversity e.g. standing with learning support team, having 1-1 check-in</li> </ul>	Safety procedures will be followed and everyone will remain safe.	On-going as needs emerge

### Planning Duty 3: Information

Trust Boards should undertake an audit of the extent to which students with disabilities can access information on an equal basis with their peers. Action should then be identified to address specific gaps and improve access. All procedures will be carried out in a reasonable time, and after taking into account students' disabilities and the preferences of themselves or their parents/carers.

	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Time Scale</u>
9	To deliver information more effectively to sight or hearing impaired students and parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise specialist support available.</li> <li>• Ensure alternative means of providing material e.g. audio, large print, are available as required.</li> <li>• Ensure website and learning platform changes follow accessibility design recommendations.</li> <li>• Recorded information available as required if parents/carers are unable to access the school site.</li> </ul>	Parents/carers and students with sight or hearing impairment can easily access key documents.	Ongoing



10	The school will make available written material in alternative formats when specifically requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will make itself aware of the services available for converting written information into alternative formats.</li> <li>• Use of Read and Write technology to adapt and translate material and to change reading age as required to support families to access the material.</li> </ul>	As the need arises all parents will be able to access school information in different formats	As needed
11	To support communications with parents who do not speak English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of translation service for written communication and interpreters for parents meetings etc.as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Parents able to access information from School	As needed