

Watford Grammar School for Girls

School Accessibility Plan

3-year period covered by the plan: September 2019 to August 2022

Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

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

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

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

1.

Introductory Statement

1. This Accessibility Plan has been drawn up in consultation with the leadership, staff and governors of the school and covers the period from September 2019 – August 2022. It continues work from the previous plan. The plan will be kept under review during this period and will be revised as necessary.

This Accessibility Plan was last reviewed in June 2019

2. Budget permitting we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

This Plan and other relevant policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format, if required.

Background

The School's layout and Facilities

The School is committed to making reasonable adjustments to allow disabled pupils to access education provision at the School. The School is on a 12 Acre site, its buildings dating from 1900s. The 1900s building - the main teaching area of the School are on two levels, with the west end of the building - Science on three levels (built in the 1960s) with no lift or ramp to access the upper floors. The School has made substantial changes to improve access by moving the main entrance, by installing a new access ramp and automatic doors. The School has a new Maths and I.T building (Hyde House 2011) which has 10 classrooms, and a new Sixth Form block (The Tennet Centre) which includes a lecture theatre, classroom, café, study areas and changing room. Both buildings are fully accessible.

3. Watford Grammar School for Girls plans, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school. The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant actions to:

- Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
- Budget permitting we will increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of the DDA). This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

- Improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.
4. Attached are Action Plans, relating to these key aspects of accessibility. These plans will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. New Plans will be drawn up every three years.
 5. We acknowledge that there is a need for ongoing awareness raising and training for staff and governors in the matter of disability discrimination and the need to inform attitudes on this matter.
 6. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following other policies, strategies and documents:
 - Curriculum
 - Equalities
 - Health & Safety (including off-site safety)
 - SEND
 - School Prospectus and Aims, Objectives and Vision
 7. The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audits of the School. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The audit will need to be revisited prior to the end of each three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.
 8. The terms of reference for relevant governors' committees will contain an item on "having regard to matters relating to Access".
 9. The School Prospectus will make reference to this Accessibility Plan.
 10. Complaints relating to the Accessibility Plan will be dealt with through the Complaints policy.
 11. The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website and updated annually.
 12. The Plan will be monitored through the Curriculum Committee of the Governors.
 13. The school will work in partnership with the education authority in developing and implementing this plan.
 14. The Plan will be monitored by Ofsted as part of their inspection cycle.

1.2 Information gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting Watford Grammar School for Girls in making decisions about what actions would best improve opportunities and outcomes for disabled pupils, staff and parents. The information will also subsequently help us to review our performance. Information will be detailed enough to enable us to measure the delivery on disability equality, to assess the impact of the changes we have made and to help us identify which of our priorities have been achieved.

Identifying disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school is key to the development of the plan.

1.3 Involvement of disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school.

The school will consider and plan to involve disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school. The school will continue to take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom they are consulting. We will ensure we will involve a range of people and hear a range of views. The views of the disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school will be used to set priorities.

1.4 Welcoming and preparing for disabled pupils

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

In order to meet the needs of disabled pupils, 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 pupil or prospective pupil, the School may need to take advice and require assessments as appropriate. The School will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.

2. Action Plans

Improving access to the physical environment

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
Short Term	Improve signage and external access for visually impaired people	Update Yellow stripes on edge of all external steps and identified internal steps every year.	August each year	Site Manager	Visually impaired people feel safe in the grounds.
Medium term	1. Improve signage and external access for visually impaired people	a) Quotes needed to cost plan b) Bids may be needed to pay for the works	When funding secured; intended to be by June 2022	Site Manager	Access around the site easier for all.
	2. Improve accessibility to the basement dining room.	a) Quotes needed to cost plan b) Bids may be needed to pay for the works.	Within 1 year of any wheelchair bound pupil/ staff member joining school.	Site Manager	Improved access via access ramp/wider doorway.
	3. Annual planning for timetabling of disabled staff to ensure needs are met	Discussion between Deputy Headteacher and Timetabler annually	June, or when a disabled staff member joins the school or is registered disabled	Deputy Headteacher and Timetabler	Timetable needs of disabled staff met
Long term	1. Secure funding for a new lift to upper floors 1 st and 2 nd Science, 1 st floor Main School, School Stage, Old Gym	Seek funding from: a) Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) b) W.o.V c) School Capital	Within 1 year of any wheelchair bound pupil/ relevant staff member joining school.	Site Manager Headteacher	Access to upper floors for all.
	2. Install an new accessible toilet for pupils with an inbuilt hygiene area	Seek funding from: a) Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) b)W.o.v c)School Capital	By 2019 -22	Site Manager	Able to admit a wider range of pupils with impairments.
	3. Ensure all fire escape routes are suitable for all	a) Request advice of Safety Adviser on accessibility of exit routes and fire doors b) See 1a) above c) Install ramps to make level egress on entrances and fire exits	By 2019-22	Site Manager Headteacher	All disabled staff, pupils and visitors able to have safe independent egress in emergency situations

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	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
		d) Alter fire doors to ensure disabled accessibility			
	4. Ensure all common facilities accessible to disabled children	a) Access to ICT Suite and Library /science classrooms, by installing lift to main school building	1 yr of wheelchair bound pupil joining	Headteacher	All common facilities accessible

Improving access to the curriculum

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
Short Term	Increase confidence of staff in differentiating the curriculum	a) Undertake audit of staff training needs on curriculum access. b) Assign INSET time to training identified e.g. dyslexia, differentiation, alternative recording	Annually	SENCO	Raised confidence of staff in strategies for differentiation and increased pupil participation.
Medium Term	Review all curriculum areas to ensure equal accessibility for disabled pupils	a) Develop PSHE and Citizenship curriculum to address disability equality issues b) Invite disabled sports people in for particular sessions c) Gather information in accessible PE and Disability Sports. Review PE curriculum to include disability sports In the event of the admission of a disabled pupil: d) Include specific reference to disability equality in relevant curriculum reviews	By end of 2022 Before relevant pupils joins the school.	Headteacher/ Subject leaders PSHE and Citizenship Co-ordinator	Equality of accessibility and reviewed and planned for in all curriculum areas
Long Term	Ensure disabled children participate equally in after school and lunch time activities	Survey participation in clubs at lunch and after school by disabled children via Form Tutor discussions in Academic Monitoring	Termly for relevant pupil.	SENCO	Disabled children confident and able to participate equally in out of school activities.

Improving access to information

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities	Success criteria
Short Term	Ensure all staff are aware of guidance on accessible formats	a) Distribute Hertfordshire guidance on good practice in accessible formats and Editorial guidelines. b) Provide guidance to staff on dyslexia and accessible information	Annually	SENCO	Staff start to produce routine information to children in more accessible ways.
Medium Term	Design the website and prospectus to be accessible	Redesign Website and prospectus in Plain English etc. and ensure it expresses our intent to be accessible	By Sept 2020	Headteacher	Parents/carers feel confident in the information they have about the school.
Long Term	Review all signs in school to include Makaton Symbols	a) Gradually replace written signs including symbols b) Put symbols onto displays to enhance text	By Sept 2022	Site Manager	Every one can understand signage and find way around school.
	Develop visual timetabling in all classes	a) Staff meeting to share good practice b) Agree whole school approach	By Sept 2022	SENCO Staff meeting	All children clear about timetable and secure about what is happening.

Note: Building works are very dependent on capital funding which may or may not be forth coming. The dates for this section, therefore, are illustrative for priority.

Outcome of June 2019 Review: The following targets have been achieved or are now common practice.

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities
School is aware of the access needs of disabled children.	Create access plans for individual disabled children as part of IEP and IHP processes	Ongoing	HOY / SENDCO / Medical Team	Individual plans in place for all disabled pupils and all staff aware of all pupils' access needs.
School staff are made aware of access issues for staff and students on school site.	Provide information and training on disability equality for all staff.	Ongoing	HOY/SENDCO/Medical Team	Raised confidence of staff and governors in commitment to meet access needs.
All new building work will be considered with Hertfordshire Accessibility guidance.	Share Accessibility policy accessibility toolkit with relevant personnel and contractors.	From Jan 2014	Headteacher/governing body Site Manager	On-going improvements in access to all areas when undertaking routine and maintenance works.
Ensure that all disabled pupils can be safely evacuated	a) Put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all children	By June 2015	SENCO	All disabled children and staff working with them are safe and confident in event of fire.
	b) Develop a system to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities	By June 2015	Headteacher/governing body	
Review information to parents/carers to ensure it is accessible	Ask new parents/carers from year 7 and year 12 about access needs when child is admitted to school	Annually from Sept 2006	Headteacher	All parents getting information in format that they can access e.g. tape, large print, Braille.