



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Accessibility Plan

Watford Grammar School for Girls strategy for improving accessibility for young people with Disabilities

3-year period covered by the plan: Jan 2023 to Dec 2025

This policy adopted by Board of Governors	January 2023
Next review date	December 2025
Committee Responsible	Curriculum
STATUTORY	Yes

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1. Aims

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 pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities

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

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.

Children and Young people with long term health conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

The Accessibility Plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request, including in large print format.

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.

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. This has included seeking the input of parents, staff and the student body, and this input has been led by the 'Equalities and Diversity' sub-committee of the School Council, in conjunction with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2 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](#), '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 pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a pupil with disabilities faces in comparison with a pupil without disabilities. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. The school's site and recent improvements to accessibility

The school is site on a 12 Acre site, with the main building dating from 1900s.

The 1900s building - the largest teaching area of the school is on two levels, with the west end of the building - science on three levels (built in the 1960s) with no lift or staircase to access the upper floors.

The school has made substantial changes to improve access by moving the main entrance, installing a new access ramp and automatic doors. In 2011 the school built a Maths block (Hyde House) this has 10 teaching classrooms, with flat access, disabled toilet and lift to access the first floor. Sixth form center completed in 2018 (Tennet Centre) has flat access to the main ground floor and theatre, plus, access to the ground floor toilets and accessible wet room in basement

Other recent improvements to the accessibility of the school site include:

- Two disabled parking bays in car park A - 2015
- Ramp to access main school hall - 2016
- Installing new LED lighting to all areas of the school site – started 2017 – on going
- Repaint classrooms in colours with suitable contrasting paint work started 2017 – on going
- Reducing the height of library shelving, improvements to lighting - 2018/19
- New toilet block with accessible toilet, automatic door – ground floor art block 2019
- Installation of two lifts to access north and south sites of the school - 2020
- New STEM room to improve ground floor access to IT - 2020
- Level access to the rear of the science block - summer 2021
- Additional access ramp to the rear of the main school building - June 2022

4. Action Plans

Improving access to the physical environment

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
Short term	1.1 School is aware of the access needs of disabled children	Create access plans for individual disabled children as part of EHCP process	Ongoing, plans in place and reviewed regularly	HOY / SENCO	Individual plans in place for all disabled pupils and all staff aware of pupils' access needs
	1.2 School staff are better aware of access issues on school site	Provide information and training on disability equality for all staff.	Ongoing	Headteacher / Governing Body	Raised confidence of staff and governors in commitment to meet access needs
	1.3 All new building work will be considered with Hertfordshire Accessibility guidance	Share Accessibility policy with relevant personnel and contractors.	As each project is undertaken	Headteacher / Governing Body / Site Manager	On-going improvements in access to all areas when undertaking routine and maintenance works
	1.4 Paint disabled parking bays on North Site with access to reception	Allocate spaces	Two new bays will be added to the north site in 2022	Site Manager	Accessible parking bay for disabled staff / visitors
	1.5 Improve external access for visually impaired people	Re-paint yellow stripes on edge of all external steps	2022/2023	Site Manager / Business Director	Visually impaired people are safer on the grounds

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
	1.6 Redesign the library to make all shelves accessible to all children	<p>a) Install lift to first floor</p> <p>b) Alter layout to make area wheelchair accessible</p> <p>c) Improve access to books by redesigning shelving</p> <p>d) Start an online delivery / pick up service for children who cannot access the library / consider possibility to install small library service on the ground floor</p>	<p>Awaiting funding 2023 -25 - £80,000</p> <p>See above – work undertaken in parallel with lift access</p> <p>Summer 2023 room opposite office – service to be organised by Library staff. Room to be re-configured by Site team.</p>	<p>Site Manager / Business Director</p> <p>Site Manager / Business Director</p> <p>Site Manager / Business Director / Librarian</p> <p>Site Manager / Business Director / Librarian</p>	All children able to access library and to have independent access to all books
	1.7 Hearing impairment	<p>a) Install hearing loop induction to Main Hall and Tennet Centre lecture theatre.</p> <p>b) Install hearing loop induction to main reception for visitors, staff, and pupils</p>	Awaiting funding 2023 - £5,000 - £7,000	Site Manager / Business Director	To enable those with a hearing impairment to communicate with reception staff and participate in school events more easily
	1.8 Ensure that all disabled pupils can be safely evacuated	<p>a) Put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all children</p> <p>b) Develop a system to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities</p>	Ongoing, plans in place and reviewed regularly	<p>SENCO</p> <p>Headteacher / governing body</p>	All disabled children and staff working with them are safe and confident in event of fire.

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
	1.9 Improve accessibility of DB2 STEM room	a) Install temporary made to measure access ramp to exit of DB2	c£1000	Site Manager / Business Director	Students with mobility issues able to access ground floor STEM (ICT) room
	1.10 Main gate entry system adapted to meet the needs of those who are hearing impaired/deaf.	Signage provided to enable access to school site for those who may not be able to hear the receptionists questions / instructions.	February 2023	Site Manager	Hearing impaired students and visitors can gain access to the school site unaided
Medium term	1.11 Improve access to the Main Hall including the stage and adjacent disabled toilet	a) Lighting b) Install a new lift to access the stage c) Update disabled toilet, next to hall	Improved lighting installed Aug 2022 Awaiting funding - £12,000 £8,000	Site Manager / Business Director	Disabled students, parents/careers and visitors feel more welcome and better able to participate in all aspects of school life
	1.12 Install new access path from car park A to Rhodes building	a) Quotes needed to cost plan b) Bids may be needed to pay for the works	Awaiting funding £45,000 to £55,000	Site Manager / Business Director	Easy access from car park A to Rhodes building for those with accessibility issues

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
	1.13 Improve accessibility to the basement dining room.	b) Bids may be needed to pay for the works	Awaiting funding 2023 -26 £10,000 to £30,000	Site Manager	Change / improve layout access, install new doors and access ramp.
	1.14 Review and replace inadequate lighting in areas, both internally and externally to improve access for those with visual impairment or mobility issues (including outside The Hive and outside The Tower)	a) Seek advice on the lighting in all teaching areas from the Sensory Needs Service b) Quotes needed to cost plan c) Bids may be needed to pay for the works	Installing new LED lighting across the school site has started in 2018 will continue should be completed by 2026	Site Manager	Lighting improved for visually impaired and hearing-impaired children currently in school.
	1.15 Improvements to handrails to improve accessibility for those with mobility issues	a) Extend handrails between MB24 and MB25 so that those with mobility issues can descend and ascend stairs more safely b) Review and improve as necessary handrails around the school	Summer 2024	Site Manager	Improved accessibility for those with mobility issues
Long term	1.16 Secure funding for a new lifts to: 1 st and 2 nd floor Science 1 st floor Main School Main School Stage Old Gymnasium	Seek funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition Improvement Fund (CIF (Condition Improvement Fund)) • Woman of vision • School Capital 	Awaiting funding 2023 -26	Site Manager / Business Manager / Headteacher	Access to upper floors for all

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
	1.17 Install a new accessible toilet for pupils with an inbuilt hygiene area	Seek funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition Improvement Fund (CIF (Condition Improvement Fund)) • Woman of vision • School Capital 	Awaiting funding 2023 -26	Site Manager / Business Manager / Headteacher	Able to admit pupils with a wider range of disabilities
	1.18 Ensure all fire escape routes are suitable for all	a) Request advice from Safety Adviser on accessibility of exit routes and fire doors c) Install ramps to make level egress on entrances and fire exits d) Alter the fire doors to make them accessible to disabled people	Buildings include Fuller Life, Hyde House, Lady's Close and Rhodes Building as a priority c£40,000 awaiting funding	Site Manager / Business Manager	All disabled staff, pupils, and visitors able to have safe independent egress in emergency situations.
	1.19 Ensure swimming facilities are made more accessible	a) Access to pool level - install lift £60,000 Install lift into pool	Awaiting funding 2023 -26	Site Manager / Business Director	All disabled staff, pupils, and visitors able to have safe independent access to the pool
	1.20 Improve access to Lady's Close for those with mobility issues	Ramp access to Lady's Close – main ground floor classrooms	Awaiting funding £40,000	Site Manager / Business Director	Improved access to English block

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
Aspirational Targets	1.21 Installation of emergency alarm system suitable for those who are hearing impaired/deaf.	Alarm system installed with both audio and visual alerts	As funding becomes available	Site Manager / Business Director	Hearing impaired students, staff and visitors can independently identify when evacuation is required
	1.22 Installation of sensor based lighting to enable visually impaired/wheelchair bound students to access adequate lighting	Sensor based lighting installed in all classrooms and offices	As funding becomes available	Site Manager / Business Director	Those with mobility issues and visual impairment can easily switch on lights
	1.23 Installation of automated doors making them suitable for wheelchair users	All internal and external doors automated	As funding becomes available	Site Manager / Business Director	Improved mobility around school for those in a wheelchair

Improving access to the curriculum

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities	Outcomes
Short Term	2.1 Increase confidence of staff in making reasonable adjustments and using high quality teaching strategies to meet the needs of SEND students.	a) Regularly update staff, through staff meetings and INSET, to ensure high quality teaching strategies are implemented making the curriculum accessible to all regardless of need.	July 2023	SENCO	Raised confidence of staff in meeting the needs of all SEND students through high quality teaching and reasonable adjustments
		b) Whole school move to recycled buff paper rather than white for increased readability for dyslexic students - subject to funding and costs tbc with Repro Technician	April 2023	Site Team / Reprographics	Dyslexic students able to access printed materials more easily
	2.2 Ensure all staff are aware of individual needs and appropriate adjustments / strategies to support in and out of the classroom.	<p>a) Plans uploaded on EduKey with all teachers and LSAs having logins.</p> <p>b) Training for staff on how to use relevant software and hardware to enable reasonable adjustments</p> <p>c) Staff routinely upload printed resources (powerpoint, word documents etc) onto MS Teams to enable students to use 'read aloud' function to access learning resources in advance of or after lessons, to increase curriculum accessibility e.g. for students with VI and other disabilities such as ASD which might mean that sensory overload interferes with learning while in the classroom.</p>	<p>Annual reminders on EduKey for all staff</p> <p>February 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>SENCO / LSAs. Individual teachers are responsible for locating this information for students they teach</p> <p>SENCO</p> <p>All teachers</p>	<p>All staff aware of individual pupils' access needs</p> <p>All staff understand how to use relevant software/hardware, e.g. reader pens and reader software</p> <p>Students who may struggle to access learning materials during lessons able to access in advance or after lessons to revisit</p>

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities	Outcomes
Medium Term	2.3 Review all curriculum areas for disability/SEND accessibility, including the needs of students unable to access the GCSE programmes of study.	a) Research audit tools available b) Plan for LSAs to conduct audit in lessons for students of differing needs c) Training and support for departments as relevant	July 2023	SENCO SENCO/LSAs SENCO/HoDs	Audit tool identified Disability/SEND curriculum accessibility review conducted Action plan formulated, dependent on findings
Long Term	2.4 Ensure disabled children participate equally in the extended curriculum	a) Survey participation in clubs at lunch and after school by disabled children b) Further planning of extended curriculum to meet needs of disabled students as required	July 2024 July 2025	K Coetzee K Coetzee	Disabled children confident and able to participate equally in out of school activities Provision extended to meet the needs of disabled students as required

Improving access to information

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities	Success criteria
Short Term	3.1 Ensure all staff are aware of guidance on accessible formats	a) Distribute Hertfordshire guidance on good practice in accessible formats and Editorial guidelines.	Annually	SENCO	Staff start to produce routine information to children in more accessible ways, e.g. audio and typed feedback on Teams (which can then be listened to using ‘read aloud’ function.)
		b) Provide guidance to staff on dyslexia and accessible information	Annually	SENCO	
Medium Term	3.2 Establish British Sign Language within the school	a) 50% funding of staff member to train to Level 2 in BSL	Sept 2023	C Holbrook	5% of school community know some basic BSL and Deaf parents can be included in all school activities
		b) Embed BSL club for children and staff	Sept 2023	C Holbrook	BSL Club running regularly
		c) Roll out of introductory level BSL into PACE / FORUM to enable basic level of BSL for all students	Sept 2024	S Cowling / S Andrews / C Holbrook	Introductory level BSL taught through PACE/FORUM programme
		d) Multiple staff volunteers, including support staff, to learn basic BSL to be able to greet and communicate with users of BSL visiting the school	Sept 2024	SLT	Multiple staff are able to greet deaf visitors to the school
		e) Routinely offer BSL Interpreter to Deaf parents for all events	Feb 2023	SLT / Finance Team	Accessibility section on all school bookings, to enable BSL interpreter to be booked for ticketed school events

	Targets	Actions	Timescale	Responsibilities	Success criteria
Long Term	3.3 Develop visual timetabling in all classes	a) Staff meeting to share good practice b) Agree whole school approach	Sept 2025	SENCO Staff meeting	All children clear about timetable and able to access timetabled rooms independently

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

5. Monitoring Arrangements

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

- A group consisting of the SENCO, School Business Manager, Site Manager and Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)
- School Council Equalities and Diversity sub-committee
- Staff and parent volunteers
- SEND Governor
- Senior Leadership Team

It will be approved by:

- Resources Committee.

6. Links with other Policies

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

- Risk assessment policy
- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- SEND policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
- Curriculum policy
- School prospectus and vision statement