

Disability Access Plan

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Disabled Students Policy
- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exams Policy
- Any Individual's Risk Assessment

Introduction

Bedford Modern School (BMS) is an independent, selective, fee-paying School. The school community includes all students, all members of staff, parents and members of the Friends of BMS. The School is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and prospective members of its community. The School welcomes applications from prospective students with or without additional needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Before offering a place, the School must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and facilitate the development of the prospective student to the best of his / her potential and in line with the standards achieved by the student's peers. The School operates an inclusion policy which it believes enriches School life, but the prospective student should be able to access the mainstream curriculum at an age appropriate level. The School will make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of applicants while giving equal importance to ensuring that no other student's education is impaired.

This is the School's primary Disability Access Plan which has three inter-linked elements:

Improvements in access to the curriculum by:

- Providing for all students a curriculum which is appropriate to their needs
- Ensuring that the curriculum is delivered in such a way that all students, regardless of any impairment, may benefit as fully as possible from it

Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services by:

- Ensuring that all the School buildings and grounds are fully accessible to students with mobility, sensory and other impairments
- Providing appropriate educational equipment and physical aids to ensure that educational programmes in the School can be fully accessed by all students

Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students by:

- Providing for students and their parents / carers, information about the School and its curriculum in a format that takes account of any disabilities

The School seeks to achieve a successful fit between the School and its students through its Admissions Policy.

Before accepting a student onto the School Roll, the School wants to be confident that it can support the prospective student and his or her peers in achieving their potential. We are honest with parents about the School; we ask parents to be honest with us and to be

open about any support needs relating to their children. We look for children who will thrive at the School and who will contribute to the school community, regardless of any perceived or actual difficulty.

The School's policy is to apply the Admissions Policy to all students, regardless of any disability of which the School is aware at time of entry, having considered and made reasonable adjustments to accommodate students, parents and visitors with disabilities.

In determining what adjustments are reasonable, the School will have regard to:

- Whether the step would overcome the substantial disadvantage
- The practicality of the reasonable adjustment which is communicated to parents in a clear and timely manner
- Financial implications
- The extent to which the support would be provided under Children and Families Act 2014.
- The resources of the school and availability of financial or other assistance
- The effect of the disability on the student
- Health and safety requirements
- The need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards
- The interests of other students and those who may be admitted to the school as students

Early notification is of great value, as it will enable the School to liaise with parents, existing schools, or other relevant parties to establish what reasonable adjustments may be made at the School to support any member of the school community. Parents or guardians of children with disabilities or additional needs are expected to notify the School of them at the point of registration and no later than at the time of the Entrance Exam or Assessment. Prior to any interview or visit, parents will be asked to provide further and more specific details of any additional needs of their child, and to provide copies of any professional reports e.g., Educational Psychologist's report or professional reports from other agencies or EHCP (if applicable).

The School values all members of its community; all students, including those with additional needs, play a full part in its activities, participating in sports, plays, music, camps and trips. Adaptations for a student's participation in these activities are provided for through his or her Individual Student Profile (previously known as IEP), Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), general/specific risk assessment or an amalgamation.

As part of the Admissions Process, staff will meet with parents to discuss whether or not a prospective student will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate this. In determining this, the School may advise additional assessments for further clarification. If after consultation, the School decides that it cannot discharge its legal and moral responsibilities to educate the prospective student and / or its legal duties to the parent(s), the School will be unable to offer a place.

If the School, following discussions, is satisfied that with reasonable adjustments (and / or additional support provided from outside the School's resources) the prospective student can participate effectively in the School, then, subject to availability, a place will be offered.

Most students stay at the School for many years. It is possible that during their education a student may become disabled, their additional needs may first be identified or become more serious. Continuing communication between parents and staff is vital for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to facilitate the student's participation in School.

If a condition develops during the career of a member of the school community, discussion will be initiated to consider the best means to offer support.

The Manton Lane and Clarendon Street sites are partly on a slope and the buildings are spread over a 40 acre area, with a public road in between. This means that they can be difficult to move around. Lifts, ramps and disabled WCs have been included in the more recent constructions and conversions, and future developments will take account of access for disabled members of the school community, where applicable and as appropriate.

In order to provide the best facilities for students, the School operates a system of fixed classrooms for particular subjects. Students need to move between sites, classrooms, laboratories and specialist rooms, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. During the life of this current Disability Access Plan, the School will continue to improve access to its buildings. In the shorter term, depending on the age of the student the School will seek to make adjustments to the timetable in such a way that, with additional support, disabled students will be able to access the curriculum.

The School has Disability Access Co-ordinators who are the Senior Deputy Head, the SENDCo and the Deputy Bursar. A record log of their meetings will be maintained. The Co-ordinators consult with the Head of the Junior School, the Director of Sixth Form, the Estates and Facilities' Manager and others as appropriate. The Co-ordinators liaise with the Pastoral Committee via the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and report directly to the Leadership Team and the School Committee. In addition, the Co-ordinators seek advice and input from the School Nurse and those professional advisors deemed appropriate. The Co-ordinators' responsibilities are:

1. To review annually the School's policies, procedures and facilities to maximise accessibility to the School by those with additional needs
2. To make recommendations to improve accessibility through amendments to the Disability Access Plan

The Disability Access Co-ordinators will give consideration to the following issues:

Admissions

The School's Admissions and Entry Procedures are detailed in the Admissions Policy and Entry Procedure and these are kept under regular review.

In deciding whether to offer a place, the School will be mindful of its responsibilities in meeting the needs of its existing students. We are committed to supporting all aspects of school life. The School acknowledges that it may not be able, with reasonable adjustments, to provide the level of intensive support required by some children.

At the School, we are particularly mindful of the importance of home-School links. The SEN Code of Practice highlights, "The relationship between parents of children with Special Educational Needs and the School which their child is attending has a crucial bearing on the child's educational progress and the effectiveness of any School-based action."

Adjustments to the School Buildings and Grounds

The School has a plan of alterations and adjustments to premises on Manton Lane and Clarendon Street sites.

Access to Education, Sport, Recreational Activities, Trips and Camps

Individual programmes of support may need to be prepared for disabled students and reviewed on a regular basis.

Access to the Curriculum

The School will make any reasonable adjustments to lesson and room timetables to ensure all students can access a full curriculum.

General Inclusion

The requirements of any student with additional needs admitted to the School will be discussed and plans for the individual will be made. With differentiation in mind, any particular needs will be discussed, and consideration given to ensuring the success of the student and the rest of the class.

Staff Training

It is stipulated in the SEND Code of Practice, "All teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. Fifteen percent of children are deemed likely to have a special educational need at some point in their school career". All teaching staff are expected to have the skills required to teach students with additional educational needs and this is supported by a programme of Inset training on learning, medical needs and effective social support strategies. Consideration will be given to suitable training for non-specialist teachers and support staff.

Physical Access and Access to Activities Requiring Manual Dexterity

When booking an off-site facility, the School will check the accessibility for all members of the school community. General risk assessments for trips and camps are prepared on a regular basis; more specific risk assessments take account of the particular needs of disabled students.

The School will take note of all reasonable requests concerning the needs of participants with disabilities when school facilities are booked by external groups.

The School has reviewed escape procedures, door opening and closing mechanisms and highlighted other adaptations to accommodate the needs of disabled people.

There are disabled car parking spaces all marked clearly close to Reception, the Howard Hall and the Rutherford Building.

All members of the School Community with disabilities are supported to participate as fully as they can in all school activities.

Outside Service Providers

When educational sessions are run by outside parties, they will be made aware of additional needs as and when necessary.

Trips and Camps

The needs of all students are considered carefully when deciding on camp locations, transport arrangements and whether extra support staff are required. This is part of the risk assessment process and it is carried out in full consultation with parents.

Diet and Medication

Within the limits of our catering facilities, a number of options are available, and it is possible to accommodate the needs of many on special diets. Where this is not possible, students may bring in a packed lunch which may be eaten in designated eating areas with other students.

The School employs nursing staff who will give medication to students in accordance with written guidance from parents, guardians or medical personnel. Medication can be refrigerated and stored securely. If anyone feels unwell, he or she can visit the Nurses Department and seek assistance. Information on any medical condition should be provided to the School Nurse in writing as soon as it is diagnosed so staff can be briefed on any emergency procedures to be followed.

Welfare

The School has a long tradition of inclusion. Our ethos is of accepting and valuing differences. Our policies support this approach and are in the parent / School contract and our systems of counselling and pastoral care. Disability is specified within the School anti-bullying policy.

If parents believe that their child has been unfairly treated due to a disability by the School, they may utilise the published complaints procedure.

Awareness of Disabled Access Policy

The Policy has been prepared by the Disability Access Co-ordinators and endorsed by School Committee. Copies are made available to all teaching staff and those involved in the Admissions' Process. Parents of existing students have been advised of this policy via the School's website and the School supplies copies of this policy to all who request it. A copy is available on the School website.

The Disability Access Co-ordinators meet at least once a term to monitor implementation of this plan and to revise it annually. The Senior Deputy Head reports on the activities of the Co-ordinators and implementation of the plan to School Committee at least annually.

Those with Special Educational Needs and Disability have been part of the community at the School for many years; this plan is a mechanism to improve inclusion. Most of the support mechanisms for disabled students and those with additional needs are already in place and physical alterations to the premises will continue. The School is not complacent and is actively working to improve its accessibility to disabled students, parents, staff and the public.

Bedford Modern School is always prepared to consider any new issues related to existing or potential members of the school community.

Bedford Modern School endeavours to:

- Improve communication with disabled members of the school community / users
- Liaise with Academic Support specialist staff about the best way to make information available to users
- Increase levels of awareness amongst staff responsible for information relating to students / staff and their / disabilities
- Ensure the Evacuation Procedure reflects and accommodates the needs of all staff and students

Improve access by measures as outlined in the separate Strategic Plan.

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