

Disability Access Plan

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Academic Support Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Any Individual's Risk Assessment
- Behaviour Policies (Senior and Junior School)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Exams Policy
- Harpur Trust Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Bedford Modern School (BMS) is an independent, selective, fee-paying School. The School community includes all those associated with any aspects of school life to include students, 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 their 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 compromised.

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 disability, may benefit as fully as possible from it

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

- Ensuring wherever feasible that all the School buildings and grounds are fully accessible to students with mobility, sensory and other disabilities
- Providing wherever feasible that 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/guardian, 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 their 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 disability.

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. Consideration and reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate students, parents and visitors with disabilities.

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

- Whether the adjustment would overcome the 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 interests of other students

Early notification is of great value, as it will enable the School to liaise with parents/guardians, existing schools, or other relevant parties to establish what reasonable adjustments could be made at the School. Parents or guardians of children with disabilities or additional needs are expected to notify the School 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 their Individual Pupil 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 discuss with parents to discuss whether or not a prospective student will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments could 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 the admissions policy, 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 -to consider what reasonable adjustments could be 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 most appropriate 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, at times upstairs in buildings without lifts. During the life of this current Disability Access Plan, the School will endeavour to improve access to its buildings where feasible. In the shorter term, depending on the age of the student, the School will endeavour 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 SENDCo and the Deputy Director of Operations. A record log of their meetings will be maintained. The Co-ordinators consult with the Head of Senior and Junior Schools, Director of Sixth Form, the Estates and Facilities' Manager and others as appropriate and required. The Co-ordinators liaise with the Pastoral Committee via the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Student Progress) 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 other 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. The School acknowledges that it may not be able, with reasonable adjustments, to provide the level of support required by some students.

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."

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 to ensure they are able to participate in the activity.

Access to the Curriculum

The School will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments to lessons, rooms and 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 prepared. With differentiation and adaptation in mind, any particular needs will be discussed, and consideration given to ensuring the student and the rest of the class are able to participate effectively.

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. Appropriate training for non-specialist teachers and support staff will be put in place.

Physical Access to Activities, Both On and Off Site

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 individual need 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 where feasible the needs of disabled people.

There are disabled car parking spaces all marked clearly at the front of school, and outside 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, Both On and Off Site

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

Trips and Camps, Both On and Off Site

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, which is carried out in full consultation with parents/guardians.

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, they can visit the Nurses

Department and seek assistance. Information on any medical condition should be provided to the Nurses Department via the electronic medical form 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.

If parents believe that their child has been treated unfairly by the school due to a disability by the School, they may follow 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. Members of the school community can access this policy via the School's website and the School supplies copies of this policy to all who request it.

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 to School Committee at least annually on the activities of the Co-ordinators and implementation of the plan.

Those with Special Educational Needs and Disability have been part of the community at the School for many years. Most of the adaptations and adjustments for disabled students and those with additional needs are already in place and physical alterations to the premises will continue wherever feasible. The School is not complacent and is actively working to improve its accessibility to the School Community.

Bedford Modern School is always prepared to consider any new issues relating to existing or potential members of the School Community.

Bedford Modern School endeavours to support the School Community by:

- Improving communication with disabled members / users.
- Liaising with Head of Academic Support and Additional Needs about the best way to make information available to users.
- Increase levels of awareness amongst staff responsible for information relating to members of the school community.
- Ensuring the Evacuation Procedure reflects and accommodates the requirements of all.

Mrs Z Woodhouse
SENDCo

Mr. T Morley
Deputy Director of Operations

Interim Review February 2024
Review Date October 2024

Appendix A

Policy Statement on Facilities for Disabled Students

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Academic Support Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Disability Access Plan
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Exams Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The School has a legal duty to be non-discriminatory towards disabled students and to provide equal access to the curriculum. It acknowledges its duty under the Equality Act 2010 and 2012 additions, and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

The School is also required by the Act to inform parents and students of our arrangements for admitting disabled students, the ways by which we ensure that disabled students receive the same treatment as other students and the facilities we provide for them.

This policy statement explains the School's policy under the three areas described above.

Admission

The School admits students backed up by reports from the current school. Wherever possible, disability will not prevent a student from selection who is otherwise up to the academic standard required and who is in a position to benefit from the education offered at the School. The School will assess and consider any special arrangements necessary for a disabled student on a case by case basis.

Equality of Treatment

Apart from any special arrangements that are necessary or exemptions from certain activities which are not within the capability of the disabled student, the School will treat disabled students in the same manner as the other students at the School as far as possible. The School is accommodated in several multi-level buildings as well as a variety of other areas on the site. Consideration is given to altering arrangements to facilitate access for students with severely restricted mobility - this includes access lifts between floors, in certain buildings, and transport about the site.

Care of individual children

The procedures are as follows:

- regular monitoring by the class teachers & tutors
- all adults working as pastoral/academic teams in monitoring and supporting students throughout the School day
- placing information on the front page of the database system to inform staff about individual students with disabilities
- e mailing specific staff of individual needs
- verbal and written updating by the Nursing Team
- many staff holding HSE First Aid certificates which are renewed as required
- training provided for staff to become Mental Health First Aiders
- working with parents and external specialists to support the needs of students
- provision of information relating to Student Profiles
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

Sporting & Recreational Activities

- The School will continue as far as it is able to provide equal access to all school activities for disabled students.
- Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled students engaged in school trips or visits.

Further statements

- We promote a positive attitude to disability to include all students in all our activities
- We request parents to declare if their child has a disability
- We maintain a list of students with disabilities and any support as advised
- We monitor the progress of these students and the provision that we make for them
- We constantly look for further ways to improve provision and access for people with disabilities. We attempt to overcome problems by being creative and flexible about use of our present provision, as well investigating further development within the constraints of available resources.
- We implement reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations in such a way that these do not prejudice the progress of other students, nor their Health and Safety (e.g. labs, workshops, sports equipment).

Appendix B

Disability Access Plan – Biddenham Site

Considerations	Strategies and Resources	Outcomes	How achieved
Regularly checking to ensure the environment supports those with short and long term physical disabilities.	To consider how the environment is accessible and comfortable for all members of the community, including those needing a wheelchair or crutches, including location of disabled facilities.	Accessibility improved to provide a safe and comfortable environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support barriers for each individual where appropriate and shared periodically (to serve as a reminder) to all staff. • Ensure all areas of the site allow wheelchair users/individuals on crutches independent and safe access to school buildings. • Have clear procedures in place for any individual needing to use the lift to support with mobility issues. • Use agreed evacuation plan (PEEP) to ensure named individuals are able to safely and efficiently leave the building • Publication of maps and guidance detailing location of disabled facilities available on request in School Reception. • Training available as appropriate on use of stairlift. Wheelchair training scheduled January 2024
Regularly checking to ensure the environment supports those with short- and long-term mental health needs.	To consider how the environment is accessible and comfortable for all members of the community.	Accessibility improved to provide a safe and comfortable environment, including those with mental health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support mental health barriers for each individual where appropriate and shared periodically (to serve as a reminder) to all staff. • Joint approach to support teaching staff with approaches to support mental health needs with the Mental Health Lead/Student Support Assistant. • Use of SWEEP system as a timely indication of individuals need. • Inclusion of mental wellbeing skills in all lessons e.g. learning to cope with failure, skills of resilience, listening skills etc as well as targeted session through PSHE and wellbeing lessons.

All current and prospective members of the school community are able to access the site and all necessary information: Hearing Impairment	All staff awareness of the requirement to provide information accessible to individuals, all as reasonable	All members of the school community aware of how to access appropriate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support for each individual where appropriate and shared periodically (to serve as a reminder) to all staff. • Staff to use seating plans/positioning in the learning space to support including considerations around lighting – the speaker should be well lit, without direct light behind them which would cause a shadow on their face. • Particular care to be taken in practical subjects reflecting on the additional impact of noise or increased space. • Training available surrounding use of microphones and assistive technology linked to hearing aids as appropriate.
As above: Visual Impairment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support for each individual where appropriate and shared periodically (to serve as a reminder) to all staff • Teaching materials adjusted in size/colour etc to support Visually Impaired (VI) student (and students with other barriers, including Dyslexia). Including in Games/PE setting. • Staff to use seating plans/positioning in the learning space to support including considerations around lighting • Ensure displays, especially including safety information e.g. fire point posters are of an appropriate size. • Fire exits, changes to levels in flooring, stairs etc clearly signalled. • Annual internal environmental audit undertaken for VI student and recommendations implemented (external).
As above: Sensory Impairments (including ASD)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support for each individual where appropriate and shared periodically (to serve as a reminder) to all staff including need to signal change.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory audits to completed in all teaching areas to address potential challenges of light, sounds, smells etc. • Awareness of all staff about how to create a low arousal environment include a 'safe space' for students to access during break and lesson time (lesson time spaces likely to be in class).
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Mr T Morley
Deputy Director of Operations

Mrs Z Woodhouse
SENDCo

November 2023