

Accessibility 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/guardians and members of the friends of BMS e.g. OBMs. 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 (EHC).

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 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/guardians, 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 Admission 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/guardians about the School; we ask parents/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians in a clear and timely manner
- Financial implications
- The extent to which 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 school, 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/guardians 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 EHC plan (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 and trips. Adaptions 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 meet with parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians, 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/guardians and staff is vital – to consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to facilitate the student's continued 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 between sites. 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 Acting Head of Additional Needs/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 Governing Body. In addition, the co-ordinators seek advice and input from the school nurses 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, Educational Visits

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 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 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.

Educational Visits (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 or guardians believe that their child has been treated unfairly by the School due to a disability, 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 the School Governing Body. 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 Schools' 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 Governing Body 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 Acting Head of Additional Needs/SENDCo 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 E Makower
Acting Head of Additional Needs/SENDCo

Mr T Morley
Deputy Director of Operations

January 2025
Review Date October 2025

Appendix 1 - 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 or guardians 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 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 and tutors
- All adults working as pastoral or 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 or guardians and external specialists to support the needs of students

- Provision of information relating to Student Profiles
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

Sporting and 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/guardians 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 as 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 2 - Accessibility Plan – Strategic Document
2023-2026**

	Targets	Strategies and Resources	Outcomes	Timeframe	Goals achieved
Ongoing	All current and prospective members of the school community able to access relevant information.	All staff awareness of the requirement to provide information accessible to individuals, all as reasonable	All members of the school community aware and able to access appropriate information	2023-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching materials adjusted in size/colour etc to support VI student, and students with other barriers, including Dyslexia. ISAMS SEND report updated to include strategies to support mental health barriers for each individual where appropriate. (Report to be renamed Student Profile Report)
Ongoing	Annually to ensure the environment assists those with disabilities	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.	2023-2026	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual internal environmental audit undertaken for VI student and recommendations implemented. Employment of Learning Support Assistant for our VI students. Joint approach to support senior teaching staff with approaches to support mental health needs with the Wellbeing Lead.
Ongoing	Improving awareness of the needs of disabled members of the community	INSET training and information sharing for staff and PSHE lessons	Staff and students aware of the needs of members of the community, including those with mental health needs.	2023-2026	<p>Ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All senior teaching staff teaching our Year 10 Visually Impaired (VI) student received in house training September 2020. Joint approach to support senior teaching staff with approaches to support mental health needs with the Wellbeing Lead. All Junior School staff receive training for VI which is on-going throughout the year.

Ongoing	Ongoing consideration and awareness of additional ramp construction and lock installation to areas of the Main and other School buildings	Reasonable adjustment to main access routes	Senior School more accessible	2023-2026	
---------	---	---	-------------------------------	-----------	--

Mr. T Morley
Deputy Director of Operations

Mrs E Makower
Acting Head of Additional Needs/SENDCo

Mr. A Whomsley
Senior Deputy Head

January 2025
Review Date October 2025