

COGNITA

Accessibility Plan



Hydesville Tower
School, Walsall

September 2024

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The document outlines our Accessibility Plan as required by the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for Cognita, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil or staff in relation to:
- admissions;
 - the way we provide education for pupils;
 - the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.1 The Act outlines some protected characteristics (below) and we pay due regard to these:
- Sex
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Religion or belief
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.2 This plan fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards. It succeeds the previous Accessibility Plan, dated September 2018. The previous Plan identified shortcomings in potential issues and improvements were implemented:
- Teachers received training in challenges faced by pupils with dyslexia and/or autism, to enable greater quality of access and provision for them.
 - Staffing for SEND provision has increased with a 0.4FTE LSA being present in mornings to help identified pupils access the curriculum.
 - All pupils from Year 3 and above receive personal laptop devices, enabling enhanced accessibility especially for pupils with any sensory impairments.
 - The Outdoor Classroom was completed with a view to access for any pupils with movement impairment.
 - Audits completed on how any potential pupil with sensory or mobility impairment (temporary or permanent) would be able to access the site and curriculum to the fullest extent.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This Accessibility Plan outlines how we ensure that we are working to remove barriers to learning and access in our school. The plan is reviewed every three years.
- 2.2 The school aims to treat all its pupils, staff and visitors fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind
- 2.3 The school ensure all staff are trained in understanding equality and disability issues in line with the Equality Act 2010

3 Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

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- 3.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.
- 3.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEND system (i.e. via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 3.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.
- 3.5 Our SEND Policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 3.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; e.g. hearing aids.
- 3.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 3.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils

4 Aspects of the Plan

- 4.1 Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas:
 - Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
 - Improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
 - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the school has an Accessibility Plan which matches the needs of the school.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Proprietor (via the Director of Operations) to ensure that the plan is reviewed annually and is fit for purpose.

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Actions to increase access to the curriculum and learning

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Use of Reader Pens for pupils with SEN requirements to establish the benefits for these pupils accessing the curriculum more effectively. In addition, similar usage may arise for visually-impaired pupils. [Costed at £200 per Reader Pen from SEND budget]	Start of each term	NK	Dyslexic pupils able to access the curriculum fully and attain assessment marks that match or exceed their ability relative to baseline.
Staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work [Audit of any needs at start of each term]	Start of each term	KD/MC/LJ	Should such a pupil be present, discussions with child and parents, progress reports and assessments would all evidence success.
Staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education [Audit of any needs at start of each term]	Start of each term	KD/MC/LJ	Should such a pupil be present, discussions with child and parents, progress reports and assessments would all evidence success.
School visits, including overseas visits, are made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment [teachers to inform Head and assessments made to ensure accessibility]	As required	KD/MC/LJ/NM	Such pupils able to attend visits

Actions to improve the physical environment to enable those with disability to take better advantage of the education and facilities

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
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Pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical, contrast painted and well signed for visually impaired	completed	PJ/JI	Completed
Non-visual guides are used to assist people to use buildings with tactile buttons [all required changes budgeted in CAPEX for 21/22]	TBC as required	PJ/JI	Non-visual guides are not required at this time following PEEP review 22
Décor or signage is not considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or			Full audit made of difficulties posed by signage or decor of whole site – no works identified. Review subject future to feedback.
Planned new office for Head of Nursery to provide access options for visitors with limited mobility	On approval of Office	JJ/PJ	Office is fully accessible to people with limited mobility.

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(including pushchairs, given potential family age). [all construction to consider this need in the planning and completion]			
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Actions to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information [Costed as £100 within stationery budget]	As need arises	NK/CP	Have appropriate materials whenever requested Discussions with Aden at regular intervals to identify potential problem areas
Ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams	As need arises	CP/KD/MC/LJ	Enquiry routine enables any needs to be explained in advance of visit Disabled individuals are able to receive all the information provided
Have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different language formats	As need arises		Should people without English skills make enquiries, we are able to provide relevant information for them

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Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Operations
Document author (name)	Melissa Jones – Health and Safety Manager, Europe

Audience	
Audience	Heads and staff in Cognita schools

Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	No

Version control	
Implementation date	September 2021
Review date	The school or proprietor will keep this policy under review and will update from time to time, as deemed necessary

Related documentation	
Related documentation	Health and safety policy and related documentation Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Equality Act 2010