

COGNITA



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Inspiring Young Minds

LITTLE DOWNSEND

ASHTED • LEATHERHEAD • EPSOM

Accessibility Plan September 2023 – August 2026

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
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.2 This plan fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

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.
- 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 SEN 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 SEN 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.

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- 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 and to ensure that it is available on the school's website.
- 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
As pupils arrive with additional needs funds should be available to buy appropriate resources.	Ongoing	HT/SENDCO	Pupils with additional needs will be able to access the curriculum.
To identify specific difficulties to provide staff training on, i.e. dyslexia, global developmental delay, sensory processing issues, autism etc	As needed	HT/SENDCo	Children with specific difficulties have their needs met to enable them to fully access the curriculum
Provide specific resources to support full access to the curriculum for children with identified needs	As needed	HT/SENDCo	Children with specific difficulties have their needs met to enable them to fully access the curriculum

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
Stair lift and ramp for pupils with specific difficulties to access upstairs classrooms.	To review if any major building work	HT/Support Centre / Facilities manager/Maintenance team.	Children can access curriculum beyond year groups on the lower floors.

Actions to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
To review accessibility of information to disabled staff, pupils, parents and visitors as specific needs arise.	As needed.	HT/HoS/school secretary	HT / Senco / School Secretary.
Large print resources and use of coloured paper	As child with sight impairment or dyslexia joins us. Ongoing	SENDCo	Pupils will be able to access reading materials.

Accessibility Plan

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Document Reviewer	Director of Education Europe and Head of H&S Europe
Consultation & Specialist Advice	
Document application and publication	
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Related documentation	Health and safety policy and related documentation Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Equality Act 2010