

COGNITA



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan

**Sep 2023 –
August 2025**

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
Curricular access	Sep 2023	Leaders of Learning & Innovation	All specialist spaces on Ground Floor or accessible via lift in CAC
Access to Students with Additional Needs	Sep 2023	Laura Kenny (SS SENCo)	New Learning Support spaces in Senior Schools, with ground-floor access
Resourcing to support access to curriculum & learning	Sep 2023	Leaders of Learning & Innovation	All learners to have access to devices to facilitate learning
Transportation of Students to include Home to School, curriculum, sporting fixtures & school trips	Sep 2023	Operations Manager	Increased number of bus routes to 6, to include a pick-up and drop-off at local train station

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
IT rollout for Y3, to include individual devices for students	Sep 2022	Ian Thorpe	New HD large screens in all rooms to allow great visuals for all. Staff and pupils accessing individual devices
Refurbishment of Admin block	Oct 2022	Operation Manager	New spaces accessible to all, LED and naturally lit, appropriate door closures
Refurbishment of Admin (Platinum) Block	Oct 2022	Operations Manager	New spaces accessible to all, LED and naturally lit, appropriate door closures
Staff Car Park & additional disabled spaces	Sep 2022	Kevin Brewer	Single-level staff car park created near Admin Block to ease access, plus additional accessible spaces outside CAC
New toilets in CAC	April 2022	Kevin Brewer	New boys and girls toilets created near Dining Hall for ease of access
Bag storage & lockers	Sep 2022	Kevin Brewer	Bag storage created in Sports Hall, Tregenna Hall & extended near Howard House to make it easier to access Changing Rooms
Wellbeing Garden	Sep 2022	Kevin Brewer	Fully accessible to all pupils, staff & parents
Arts Centre built	April 2022	Mark Hugall	Two-storey building, fully DDA-compliant inc lift, available for use by internal & external stakeholders

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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
Classroom refurb programme in place	2022-2025	Premises Manager	2-4 classrooms fully refurbished each year to improve lighting & acoustics
Appropriate support in examinations	Ongoing	Laura Kenny (SS SENCo)	Scribe, computers & additional timing offered where appropriate
Large print used for any visual impairments	Ongoing	SENcos	All written materials appropriate for specific needs
Refresh of external & internal signage	Sep 2022	Kate Timms (Head of M&A)	Signage clear & easy to follow

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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 2023
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