



DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Westfield School is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled staff and pupils and aims to create an environment which enables them to participate fully in the mainstream of School life. For the purposes of this policy, disability is understood in the broadest sense and, in addition to mobility and sensory impairments, includes mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and medical conditions which may have an impact on day-to-day activities. This policy also extends to members of the public using School premises.

1.2. Aims

The Aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- applications for admission from potential pupils or applications for employment are assessed based on the applicant's aptitudes, abilities, and qualifications;
- disabled staff and pupils have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the school;
- the views of the individual pupil or member of staff are always considered when their requirements are being assessed;
- members of staff working with disabled people, either as colleagues or as pupils, have appropriate information and support;
- the school takes steps to enable staff and pupils who become disabled during their time at the school to continue in their chosen career or course of study;
- disabled members of the public can fully participate in public events held on School premises;
- As far as is reasonably practicable, School premises are made accessible and safe for disabled people.

1.3 Implementation

The school expects all its staff to be aware of this policy and its related Code of Practice and to treat disabled people, whether pupils, staff, or members of the public fairly, with respect and in accordance with this policy.

1.4 Accessibility Plan

The school has produced an Accessibility Plan which is attached at Appendix A to this policy. This Plan is prepared in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and Governors and is endorsed on an annual basis.

Disability Code of Practice

2. Code of Practice Relating to Pupils

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the school will put in place procedures and practices to ensure that all disabled pupils are treated fairly. It will make reasonable adjustments to support pupils in their learning environment and remove or reduce barriers which prevent disabled pupils from successful participation in all aspects of School life.

2.1 Admissions

2.1.1 Admission to the school depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if possible, to improve, the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos to which the school aspires. The school must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and

well-rounded adult with a good prospect of a satisfying life. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the school.

2.1.2 The school's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who is not disadvantaged because of his or her disability.

2.1.3 One of the obvious problems which the school has is its lay-out which covers a wide area and consists of many separate and some historic buildings of several stories and without lifts, which have grown up since the school was founded. Another is the system of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, often up steps, or stairs in buildings without lifts. A pupil with impaired mobility may be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all the educational and other facilities the school offers. These matters cannot be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to physical features of the school at prohibitive cost. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position.

2.1.4 The School will make available clear information about access to buildings and support facilities to enable disabled pupils to make an informed choice. When registering with the school, the registration form allows parents to indicate if their daughter has any special education needs or disabilities which require any special arrangements to be made in respect of the assessment process. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality

2.1.5 No applicant will be refused a place at the school on the grounds of disability alone. Every opportunity will be provided for full consideration of the specific support or facilities required for disabled applicants and all reasonable adjustments will be made.

2.2 Curriculum and Assessment

2.2.1 The School will take all appropriate steps to ensure that learning environments are organised in ways which offer the best possible opportunities for full participation by disabled pupils.

2.2.2 Heads of Departments will identify designated members of staff with whom disabled pupils may discuss the specific requirements of their intended curriculum in advance to ensure that learning support and other needs are identified and made known to relevant staff. This mechanism should also be used to enable disabled pupils to discuss any emerging needs and identify appropriate possible courses of action to address those needs. Designated members of staff will receive appropriate training.

2.2.3 Appropriate modes of examination and assessment will be determined after consultation with the pupil, relevant teaching staff and the Examinations Officer. The purpose of any specific arrangements shall be to compensate for any restriction imposed by the disability without compromising academic standards. Any request for specific arrangements in relation to examination and assessment procedures must be supported by medical or other evidence and it is the pupil's responsibility to make that available to the school.

2.3 Pupils who become disabled

The school will take all appropriate steps to ensure that a pupil who becomes disabled during their time at the school has every opportunity to complete their education through the provision of the same level of adaptations and support as a comparable pupil who was disabled at the start of their course.

2.4 Other Support Services

The school will aim to ensure that disabled pupils have equal access to all pupil support services. Examples of this would be assistance in libraries to obtain books, provision of information in Braille, large print or other alternative formats, provision of open days and other events in accessible venues. The school will aim to provide a range of accessible IT equipment and software throughout the school.

3. Code of Practice on Employment

The school is committed to taking positive steps to provide an environment where disabled staff can maximise their potential, contribute to the best of their abilities and have equality of opportunity in recruitment, training, and promotion within the school. The school recognises that disabled staff and job applicants are a valuable resource and will therefore strive to meet their needs by making appropriate adjustments to the working environment, in consultation with the individual involved.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) makes it unlawful for the school, and therefore any of its employees, to discriminate, in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to the person's disability if that treatment cannot be justified. This Code of Practice aims to ensure that the school is positive about employing disabled people and acts within the law.

Wherever practicable, the school will:

- provide equal access for disabled people to jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities, and qualifications;
- seek to retain people who become disabled within the school's employment;
- seek to ensure that disabled employees are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities, and qualifications;

3.1 Recruitment

3.1.1 Application and selection procedures used in the recruitment and selection of staff should encourage disabled people. All applicants should be asked when being called for interview if they require any assistance to enable them to participate fully in the interview, for example an accessible interview venue

3.1.3 All candidates will be assessed on their abilities, qualifications, and experience according to objective criteria developed for the post. It may be that a "reasonable adjustment" (see below) would be required to allow a disabled candidate to meet the criteria, but it should be assumed, in deciding whether the individual meets the criteria, that the appropriate adjustment had been made. For example, no candidate will be rejected simply on the basis that they cannot gain access to the building.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) states that an employer must make "reasonable adjustments" to allow an individual to be employed. These may include:

- Adaptations to premises;
- Re-allocating some duties;
- Altering hours;
- Finding alternative accommodation;
- Rehabilitation leave;
- Training;
- Modifying equipment;
- Modifying assessment or testing procedures;

Guidance on appropriate reasonable adjustments can be obtained from the Bursar.

3.2 Support in employment

3.2.1 Some disabled people may require additional support when settling into their working environment. Heads of Department and colleagues should ensure that needs are discussed with the individual concerned. Consideration should be given to any adaptation (e.g., provision of equipment, modification to the working environment or to the organisation of the post) which may be necessary to enable the individual to work on equal terms with non-disabled colleagues. Any necessary modifications should ideally be agreed and carried out before the individual commences work. Some of adjustments may have implications for other staff and it is important that they are consulted about proposed changes. Consideration should also be given to parking facilities, toilet facilities and health and safety issues such as fire alarms and procedures.

3.2.2 Training should be made available to disabled people on the same basis as their colleagues, for example, accessible training accommodation. The school is obliged under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act to make such arrangements.

3.2.3 Where general meetings of staff are being held, these should always be held in accessible venues with facilities for people with visual and hearing impairments.

3.3 Members of staff who become disabled

3.3.1 Losing the services of a member of staff who becomes disabled can deprive the school of a considerable asset in terms of the skills and experience of the individual as well as an investment in their training and development. Where practicable, the school will attempt to retain staff who become disabled and to ensure suitable employment for them. The same procedure will apply in relation to a disabled member of staff whose condition changes in ways which affect their ability to continue in their role or where a change to an individual's role makes it difficult for the employee to continue in that role because of their disability.

It should be remembered that the school is required under the law to make any reasonable adjustments (see section 3.1 above) to enable the individual to continue in post.

There are several feasible options to consider:

- a. continuing in the same post, with appropriate adjustments;
- b. redeployment;
- c. early retirement on grounds of incapacity;
- d. termination of employment.

6. Responsibilities

All School staff are expected to be aware of this policy and treat disabled people, whether pupils, staff, or members of the public in accordance with these provisions. Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is communicated effectively and is being implemented in their area.

7. Linked Policies

This Plan will contribute to the review and revision of related policies, including:

- School Improvement Plan
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Westfield School

Appendix A

Three Year Accessibility Plan September 2022 to August 2025

Improving access to the curriculum

Period	Target	Action/Resources	Timeframe	Implemented
2022-2023	Provide specific budget for additional ALS furniture and equipment required for bespoke learning packages.	. Annual Budget allocation	August 2023	August 2023
2023-2024	Develop curriculum audits to ensure no inadvertent discrimination against pupils with disabilities and provide staff training for awareness of different disability needs.	To be developed at the same time as setting of the curriculum 2024-2025. Staff training to be organised for a staff INSET day.	Autumn term 2024	
2024-2025	Program continued staff training for induction training and future inset days.	Add to induction training and future inset days.	Summer term 2025	

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Appendix A

Three Year Accessibility Plan September 2022 to August 2025

Improving access to the physical environment

Period	Target	Action/Resources	Timeframe	Implemented
2022-2023	Re-designate Junior House IT room as a calm, safe space with neurodiversity in mind.	Re-site existing IT equipment and reconfigure furniture layout in order to create the appropriate space.	Autumn term 2023	Cancelled due to room re-configuration (see below)
2023-2024	Review classroom configuration plan to include possible reconfiguration in the event of disability access requirements.	Compile contingency classroom configuration plan	Autumn term 2024	
2024-2025	Re-identify suitable room for calm, safe space (see 2022-2023 above)	Review updated room configuration.	Summer term 2025	

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Appendix A

Three Year Accessibility Plan September 2022 to August 2025

Improving access to information

Period	Target	Action/Resources	Timeframe	Implemented
2022-2023	Identify specific requirements of various disability groups to ascertain possible inventory acquisition.	Review disability groups and requirements, assess volumes and prepare inventory requirement.	Autumn term 2023	Autumn term 2023
2023-2024	To source user friendly presentation training for staff for use with disabled pupils.	Set aside INSET day for staff training in user friendly presentation skills for pupils with disabilities.	Autumn term 2024	
2024-2025	Program continued training of staff.	Include with induction training and future inset days.	Summer term 2025	