

COGNITA



Duncombe
School

An Independent Preparatory
School and Nursery

Accessibility Plan From September 2023 to August 2026

September 2023

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
27 th June 2017	Jeremy Phelan	Review	Summer 2018
4 th July 2018	Ian Thomas	Review	Summer 2020
9 th September 2020	Ian Thomas	Updated	Autumn 2021
1 st September 2021	Ian Thomas	Review	Autumn 2022
9 th September 2022	Ian Thomas	Review	Autumn 2023
16 th August 2023	Ian Thomas	Review	Autumn 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
 - 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.

Accessibility Plan

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Duncombe School is arranged over two main educational buildings, Main School which accommodated Year 1 to 6 is a Palladian style mansion with latter additions. The building consists of four floors including a basement cellar, ground floor, first floor and second floor, there is also a converted water town which contains office space, a music practice room and server room. Treetops provided accommodation for our younger children from Early Kindergarten through to Reception. This building was built in the 1990's and is of an octogen design over two floors, those being a ground floor and first floor.

The site also contains a single storey purpose built Music and Dance Studio, wooden PE Pavillion broviding dry change rooms for boys and girls and an astro court covered with a tensile roof which was upgraded in 2018.

There are no passenger lifts in any building so access to the upper floors in the Main Building and Treetops is extremely restrictive for physically impaired pupils or adults.

Ground floor entrances to Treetops and the Music & Dance Studio are flat and designed for wheelchair access. Main School entrances are either via a single step or doors with a threshold and due the the age of the building and the location of the entry doors step free access is not possible. The school does have a portable ramp for wheelchairs.

Actions to increase access to the curriculum and learning

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Review of adjustments that might be made to curricular provision to ensure schemes of work in all subjects are accessible.	Spring 2024 for 2024/2025 Budget Spring 2025 for 2025/2026 Budget Spring 2026 for 2026/2027 Budget	Leadership Team in conjunction with SENOc, Heads of Phase and Heads of Deperament	The School provides an excellent provision for all pupils with SEN. The School can provide a curriculum that is accessible for visually impaired and EAL pupils. Increased access to the curriculum with teachers equipped to fully meet the needs of the pupils.
Review programme of trips and excursions to ensure adequate enabling access. Reminder to all trip organisers and Heads of Department to take account of all pupils needs.	Termly during 2023/2024 Termly during 2024/2025 Termly during 2025/2026	Headmaster, SENOc, EVC & Visit Leaders	Each trip and visit is fully evaluated to ensure there is appropriate inclusion for all pupils.
Review resources including classroom teaching aids to ensure an adequate provision via an audit of all resources.	Annually in 2023/2024 Annually in 2024/2025	Leadership Team in conjunction with SENOc, Heads of Phase	Increased access to the curriculum via classroom resources with teachers and classrooms equipped to fully meet the needs of the pupils.

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	Annually in 2025/2026	and Heads of Department	
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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
Review and audit Auxillary Aids and Services such as emergency evacuation chairs to ensure suitable provision where necessary.	Review Annually in 2023/2024 Review Annually in 2024/2025 Review Annually in 2025/2026	Leadership Team & SENCo	A suitable provision is available for those with a disability.
Refurbishment of classrooms to provide an upgrade to existing provision to provide inclusion of those with a disability.	Spring 2024 for 2024/2025 Budget Spring 2025 for 2024/2025 Budget Spring 2026 for 2025/2026 Budget	Leadership Team in conjunction with Heads of Phase and Heads of Department	Physical accessibility of the classrooms is increased.

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

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Ensure teaching staff are fully aware of desirable seating arrangements for visually/hearing impaired pupils.	Ongoing September 2023 to August 2026	SENcO	Class seating plans are fully adapted to meet the needs of visually/hearing impaired pupils.
Clear and enhanced signage around the school site.	Ongoing September 2023 to August 2026	Business Manager	Journey through the school site is seamless for the visually impaired.
Ensure the relevant SEN pupils are provided with readers/assistants for examinations and, as necessary, are provided	Ongoing September 2023 to August 2026	SENcO	Relevant pupils are fully equipped to undertake examinations with due accord of their SEN.

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with additional time to complete examinations			
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Accessibility Plan

Ownership and consultation	
Document Sponsor	Director of Education Europe
Document Reviewer	Director of Education Europe and Head of H&S Europe
Consultation & Specialist Advice	
Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	No
Switzerland	No
Italy	No
Version control	
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Next Review Date	September 2025
Related documentation	
Related documentation	Health and safety policy and related documentation Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Equality Act 2010