



TONBRIDGE
SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan 2024 to 2027

Update March 2027

Key changes in this update:

- Development of a new plan

1. Introduction

Tonbridge School ('the School') strives to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school and therefore aims to ensure that each and every pupil can participate fully in the life of the School. The School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access, valuing and including all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

The School is committed to meeting legislative requirements, providing access and nurturing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness. This document meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. The School's Special Educational Needs And Disabilities Policy sets out the School's policy on reasonable adjustments.

The School will not treat disabled pupils less favourably and will make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage. The School has regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for the implementation of this Policy.

2. Definition of Disability & Scope of the Plan

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

The School's [Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy] outlines the School's provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and how we ensure equal opportunities for all our pupils, increased access to the curriculum, physical access to the school and access to information particular to students with SEND. This Accessibility Plan provides an outline of how the School will manage this aspect of the SEND provision.

The School's Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum. This includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the School such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also includes entry into the school.
- improve the School's physical environment for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School. This includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education, and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. This will include planning approaches by which the School will make written information (e.g. handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about school events) more accessible to pupils with SEND. The delivery of such information should be within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking into account the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

The School recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities; we also respect the parents and child's right to confidentiality.

The School is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

3. Development and Oversight of the Plan

This document is the School's sixth Accessibility Plan and covers the period 2024-2027. It identifies our short, medium- and long-term plans for improving accessibility. The school's governors are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the accessibility plan during the period to which it relates. A new plan will be drawn up every three years. Progress against this plan will be assessed annually and recorded in the "Ongoing Review" section

The summary accessibility evaluation highlighted improvements that could be made, despite the restrictions imposed by (1) having very small numbers of disabled boys applying to the School or at the School, (2) the physical characteristics of the School buildings, many of which are listed and of historic value, and (3) the expansive and complex nature of the School campus.

The summary accessibility evaluation findings and recommendations were as follows:

The School delivers its curriculum very well to current boys with disabilities (typically ASD & Language Disorders, Dyslexia, DCD, Dyscalculia, ADHD, Emotional Difficulties, Anxiety, EAL or hearing impairments), and provides effective support to boys with medical conditions or physical impairments but would need to make further adjustments in facilities and teaching methods to appropriately support boys with other, more severe disabilities. The School's commitment to, and success in, supporting current boys with minor permanent or temporary disabilities demonstrates its commitment to making any further necessary adjustments for a disabled boy. These adjustments could include:

- a) Training staff to teach and support more severely disabled boys, and to recognise and allow for the mental and physical effort expended by them.
 - b) Developing specific programmes of physical activity (using the facilities we already have in place, e.g. at the TSC).
 - c) Reorganising some classrooms (depending on subjects studied).
2. The School is designed to meet the needs of all current boys, but, once again, adjustments would be required for more severely disabled boys; in particular, some classrooms are not accessible for wheelchairs, and navigation around the site for a visually impaired boy would be problematic. Particular barriers that would need to be removed could therefore include:
- a) Providing access to certain classrooms including the first, second and third floors of the main School building and Modern Languages.
 - b) Improving "navigation" around and between current School buildings and removing or overcoming barriers that exist (e.g. frequent changes of levels necessitating many stairs).
 - c) Revising emergency and evacuation systems and processes.
3. The School can and does now deliver materials in other formats (given the investment in IT infrastructure), but there has been no requirement to produce this material (e.g. on audiotape or in Braille) for boys at the School or prospective boys / parents. There remains some doubt as to whether it is possible or practical to adapt the School fully to make it completely accessible for a visually impaired boy. Adjustments that could be required include:
- a) Investing in additional systems (software and possibly hardware) to produce standardised, bespoke or complex information in a specific format.
 - b) Training staff on the technology and practices necessary to assist boys with disabilities.

4. Other Relevant Policies

The School’s approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability for pupils at the School are summarised in three published policies:

- The Disabled Persons (The Treatment Of) Policy;
- Discrimination And Equal Opportunities (For Boys); and
- Special Educational Needs And Disabilities Policy.

5. Progress from the 2020-23 Plan

Improvements to accessibility have been achieved over recent years through small, medium and large improvements to physical facilities at the School and technological improvements including the changes described below.

- **Small Improvements.** The introduction of permanent and temporary ramps at access points to buildings (enabling wheelchair access), as well as the introduction of handrails (for those with more minor disabilities) at key points. The improvement of lighting around the campus, the introduction of more visible boundary markings (for the partially sighted), and the continuation of a wide-ranging programme to improve pathways across the School campus. Improvements to building evacuation plans and equipment to allow for safe evacuation of staff, pupils and visitors with physical disabilities.
- **Medium Improvements.** The introduction of a programme of professional development for staff, which already covered SEN and EAL, and has been extended to cover other forms of disability. The development of the School’s website to include all relevant academic, admissions, policy and other information so that it is accessible to all via the internet. The development of Firefly: a virtual learning platform that provides access to learning materials electronically (and, therefore, more accessibly). Appropriate adaptations for two visually impaired staff, one a teacher and a member of Support staff.
- **Large Improvements.** The continuing development of the Tonbridge School Centre for sports to include significantly enhanced disabled access, including lifts, toilet and changing facilities, and pool access. The improvement of access to external sporting facilities (primarily artificial playing surfaces) through the use of permanent ramps, and the installation of an accessible viewing area for the School’s New Rackets Court. The refurbishment of the CLT, which is now a common room with improved accessibility for all staff. The completion of the Chadwick Building and the extension to Dry Hill House, both with level access for wheelchairs. The roll-out of site-wide Wi-Fi, along with improved classroom technology, enabling lessons to be streamed live from any inaccessible classroom. The significant redevelopment of the Smythe Library (including the expansion of the Learning Strategies department) and of the Barton Science Centre, both with level access for wheelchairs and a lift to all floors.

6. Current Plan 2024-2027

Part 1: Improving access to the physical environment	Target	Actions	Status
Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments are made for any boys with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs are identified early in admissions process and required changes to physical environment implemented 	
Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to improve accessibility in centre of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for centre of School 	

	School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build accessibility into School master planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop next iteration of school masterplan 	
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement improvements to physical access in key areas of the School 	Implement the next phase of the School masterplan to, if feasible, improve physical access	

Part 2: Improving access to the curriculum	Target	Actions	Status
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments are made for any boys with disabilities • Applicable training is provided to teaching staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs are identified early in admissions process and required changes to curriculum implemented • New boys are screened for unidentified needs • Boys with SEND are allocated to a specific Learning Strategies Teacher who will manage the caseload • All boys given access to the Learning Strategies Department through an online booking link • SEND-focused training session provided to all new staff as part of the drip-feed induction programme • Learning Strategies Department responds to significant need from teaching staff, with focused group professional development/one-to-one training 	

Part 3: Improving access to information	Target	Actions	Status
Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustments are made for any boys with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs are identified early in admissions process and required changes to how information is presented are made 	
Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Training on Microsoft Built-in Accessibility Tools Maintain DfE Digital Accessibility Standards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Making digital products, content, and services accessible and usable for all. Ensuring that everyone can access the same information and use equipment, regardless of their needs and situation. Provide adaptive technologies and tools that can assist neurodiverse students in navigating digital spaces more comfortably and safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing training for staff in supporting neurodiverse students and those with disabilities to enable accessibility tools available to them on their own laptops. Ensure the Tonbridge App meets the needs of neurodiverse students and those with disabilities such as visual impairments. IT & Digital Team to continue working with the Learning Strategies department to review and support adaptive technology, including screen readers, text-to-speech software, and other assistive technologies. 	
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Platforms and all Digital Solutions used in Teaching and Learning are accessible to neurodiverse students and those with disabilities. The development of a digital wellbeing strategy to include providing tailored digital wellbeing resources and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal review of Learning Platform provision, considering accessibility and adaptability to work with accessibility tools like those built into Microsoft Windows. Create digital wellbeing resources designed to meet the needs of neurodiverse students and those with disabilities. Ensure these resources are available in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, video) to accommodate different learning needs. 	

7. Ongoing Review

The plan is formally reviewed annually by Governors. In addition, relevant developments at the School are tracked below not only to provide an auditable trail of actions taken, but also to inform the development of future Accessibility Plans.

Accessibility Plan Update: Part 1, Access to the Physical Environment			
Date	Area	Review/Action	Documentation (Accessibility File)
Accessibility Plan Update: Part 2, Access to the Curriculum			
Date	Area	Review/Action	Documentation (Accessibility File)
Accessibility Plan Update: Part 3, Access to Information			
Date	Area	Review/Action	Documentation (Accessibility File)

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Whilst we are confident that the School has made all necessary adjustments to ensure that no current boys are treated less favourably or disadvantaged by physical or mental impairments (typically by making adjustments to support those with ASD & Language Disorders, Dyslexia, DCD, Dyscalculia, ADHD, Emotional Difficulties, Anxiety, EAL or hearing impairments, and by supporting boys with long term medical conditions or significant physical impairments), we recognise that the School or its operations are not set up to support boys with more severe physical or mental disabilities. Given our experience to date, we are confident that we could adjust teaching methods, facilities and communication materials to ensure that any boy applying or gaining entry to the School is not placed at a significant disadvantage. The School's Accessibility Plan 2024-2027 lays out at a high level the short, medium and longer-term priorities for action to help overcome the potential barriers identified. This plan is reviewed and updated regularly, as summarised in Section 7 above.