

## Disability Access Policy

Policy Type	Statutory
Regulation	Equality Act 2010 Schedule 10 3 and 4(1) & JCQ: GR5.4 and 5.5
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# 1 Related Information

## 1.1 Statutory Guidance

This statutory policy has been reviewed in accordance with the following guidance:

- 3 (1) The responsible body of a school in England and Wales must prepare—
- (a) an accessibility plan;
  - (b) further such plans at such times as may be prescribed.
- (2) An accessibility plan is a plan for, over a prescribed period—
- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school’s curriculum,
  - (b) improving the physical environment of the school 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, and
  - (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.
- (3) The delivery in sub-paragraph (2)(c) must be—
- (a) within a reasonable time;
  - (b) in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils’ disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- (4) An accessibility plan must be in writing.
- (5) The responsible body must keep its accessibility plan under review during the period to which it relates and, if necessary, revise it.
- (6) The responsible body must implement its accessibility plan.
- (7) A relevant inspection may extend to the performance by the responsible body of its functions in relation to the preparation, publication, review, revision and implementation of its accessibility plan.
- (8) A relevant inspection is an inspection under—
- (a) Part 1 of the Education Act 2005, or
  - (b) Chapter 1 of Part 4 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (regulation and inspection of independent education provision in England).
- 4 (1) In preparing an accessibility plan, the responsible body must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan.

## 1.2 Supporting Documents

The following related information is referred to in this policy:

Disability Access Plan
Equality Act 2010
Individual Needs Policy

### 1.3 Terminology

**Head**, where not explicitly defined, means either the Head of the Girls' School or the Head of the Boys' School.

**Parents** includes one or both parents, a legal guardian, or education guardian.

**School** means Haberdashers' Aske's Elstree Schools.

**Student** or **Students** means any student or students in the School at any age.

The member of staff with responsibility for Individual Needs in the Boys' School is the Head of Academic Support.

The member of staff with responsibility for Individual Needs in the Girls' School is the Head of Individual Needs.

## 2 Introduction

Entry to the School is by competitive testing and examination at all levels; Students must be of a sufficiently high academic ability to profit fully from the educational opportunities on offer.

At present our physical facilities for the disabled are limited but improving with each development on site. We will nonetheless do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to children who have disabilities and to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in order to accommodate the needs of applicants, Students and members of staff who have disabilities for which, after reasonable adjustments, we can cater adequately.

In defining what is reasonable the School will take into account a number of factors including the following:

- The cost and feasibility of making specific alterations to the School premises given that the School is nearly 100% dependent on fee income
- Staffing requirements
- Implications on financial resources and the likelihood of any external funding being available to offset this
- Health and safety considerations
- The interests of other Students.

### **3 Admissions**

The School needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a Student's ability to take full advantage of the education the School provides. Parents of a Student who has any disability or special educational need should provide the School with full written details at registration, or subsequently, before they take the entrance examination or at interview. The School needs this information so that it can make an assessment and consult with the Parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the Student's needs both during the admissions process and thereafter, if an offer of a place is made.

Similarly, if special educational needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the School will consult with the Parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow the Student to continue at the School.

### **4 Current Students**

The School also recognises that physical and psychological conditions can develop in existing Students which may require reasonable adjustments to be made to the way in which the curriculum is delivered.

Parents must, as soon as possible, disclose to the School in confidence, any known medical condition, health problem or allergy affecting a Student. Where appropriate the Head will set up a consultation process so that interim measures can be put in place to support the Student and the longer-term requirements be determined. The School will make reasonable adjustments to allow a Student to continue at the School; this may include, where necessary, some form of remote web-based learning through the School's intranet.

### **5 Students with Learning Difficulties**

The School will do all that is reasonably possible to detect and deal appropriately with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff may raise concerns with the member of staff with responsibility for Individual Needs or the relevant Head of Section, but staff are not qualified to make a diagnosis of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or of other learning difficulties.

The screening tests available to schools are indicative only: they are not infallible. Parents will be notified if a screening test indicates that a Student may have a learning difficulty. Whilst some assessment can be conducted by the School, it will be the responsibility of the Parents to arrange any formal assessment.

Parents must notify the Head in writing if they are aware or suspect that their child has a learning difficulty and the Parents must provide the School with copies of all relevant information, so that the School can consider all reasonable adjustments. Please also see the School's Individual Needs Policy and Appendix A.

## **6 Withdrawal of a Student**

If following the process of consultation and after all reasonable adjustments have been made, it is the professional judgement of the Head that the School cannot provide adequately for a Student's special educational needs or disability, Parents will be asked to withdraw the Student. In such cases every effort will be made by the School to assist in finding a suitable placement in another school.

## **7 Accessibility Plan**

The School has a Disability Access Plan which is available, on request, to all Parents and staff, and is reviewed at least annually. The Disability Access Plan includes consideration of how the School proposes to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled Students can participate in the School's curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled Students are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School
- Improve the delivery to disabled Students of information which is readily accessible to Students who are not disabled.

# **Appendix A - Arrangements for Public Examinations**

## **1 Communications**

For the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. More specifically this might include sensory impairments, mobility difficulties, medical conditions, learning difficulties and mental health problems.

It is the duty and responsibility of the Examinations Officer to establish and maintain a good positive working relationship and clear lines of communication with colleagues directly involved with the requirements of candidates who fall under the heading of disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010. These will normally include the person in charge of access arrangements and the Individual Needs Coordinator or Head of Academic Support as well as the relevant section heads. These lines of communication extend to invigilators so that everyone involved with the examinations is clear as to their responsibilities under the Act. Communication with invigilators will normally be done by general oral briefing of invigilating staff, a requirement that they read the ICE document and/or by written communication. Attention will be drawn to the relevant needs of specific candidates on the day of their examination. Invigilators will also be briefed in evacuation procedures and alternative means of communication with candidates.

For public examinations, this policy is subject to the requirements of the JCQ as published from time to time.

## **2 Public Examination Rooms**

The majority of the examinations at the School are taken in the McGowan at the Boys' School and the Gymnasium at the Girls' School. A designated classroom is used as a private examination room and clash candidate room. The specialist examination rooms include the Technology rooms, Drama Studio, Music rooms, Language rooms and Art rooms. Ensuring that examination rooms are accessible falls under the general requirement for these rooms, which have other specific purposes during the School year.

It is the School's intention to:

- Ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the rooms are well lit
- Check lighting for suitability both during the day and for evenings
- Check that lighting is evenly distributed, ensuring as far as possible that it does not cause glare and shadows, especially when there are candidates with a visual impairment or with perceptual difficulties
- Ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those candidates with epilepsy
- Use tactile surfaces wherever possible to highlight any steps, stairways or changes in level

- Make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors to enable a wheelchair to gain easy access in the event of there being a blind candidate, try to ensure that there is adjustable lighting in an accessible toilet
- Use mirrors sparingly in an accessible toilet if there are candidates with perceptual problems
- Check that there is also a facility to open the door in an accessible toilet from the outside in an emergency.

When there is a candidate whose disability requires it, we undertake to make the reasonable adjustments required which may include:

- Arranging examination rooms which are close to an accessible toilet and to be aware that many candidates may need adult changing facilities in the accessible toilet
- Ensuring the suitability of private rooms arranged for candidates; for example, that so far as is possible the decoration is not likely to result in discomfort or hyper-nervous stimulation if the candidate has autism, and that the room is warm/cool enough
- Ensuring that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a candidate (or invigilator) who uses a wheelchair to enter and leave the area without difficulty
- Ensuring that there are chairs available outside examination rooms to enable those with mobility issues or those who may simply be experiencing particular stress to sit and rest before they enter the examination
- Ensuring that seating is appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability that affects seating and posture
- Ensuring that those who need to take medication during the course of an examination can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible, usually by placing them near the entrance to the examination room
- Ensuring that a candidate who may become unwell during the examination because of the nature of their disability, is seated close to the entrance to the examination room to make them feel more comfortable and so that they can exit quickly and to limit disruption for others
- Ensuring that both disabled candidates and staff are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that disabled candidates can be safely evacuated from the building whatever their disability or impairment.

### **3 Signage**

It is the duty and responsibility of the Examinations Officer to establish and maintain good lines of communication with the candidates. In terms of accessibility, this has an impact on examination signage. In particular, we undertake to ensure that:

- In the event of the presence of candidates from outside the School community, arrangements are made for them to be accompanied to the examination room

- Wherever possible signage will be placed at consistent heights
- Signs which identify examination rooms are situated on the wall in case the door is open when a candidate needs to see the sign
- All the signs for the examination and those provided by JCQ are suitably sized and adapted to meet the needs of candidates with a disability
- Sign content will be simple, short and easily understood
- Text and lettering will be in a clear, uncomplicated and reasonably sized font
- The style, wording and design of signs will be consistent throughout the exam centre.

This will help candidates to easily recognise signs as they move around the building. And that furthermore, in the event of a visually impaired candidate using the centre,

- Signage will combine raised text, pictorial symbols, arrows and braille
- Braille signs will have a small tactile arrow on the left side
- The colour of signs will contrast with the colour of the walls.

#### **4 Access Arrangements**

It is the duty of the Examinations Officer to ensure that all practical steps are taken, and all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that the centre is appropriate for candidates with a disability. The Examinations Officer will take steps to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure, so far as is possible, a level playing field with other candidates. These adjustments might include:

- Modified test papers, for example enlarged print or braille
- Up to 25 per cent extra time (or considerably more if a candidate's disability is of a profound and extensive nature)
- A reader or amanuensis. Where necessary steps will be taken to introduce the candidate to the amanuensis before the examination
- Supervised rest breaks. Candidates with hyperactivity or obsessive-compulsive disorders may need opportunities to take a break and rest during an exam. This may also be the case for candidates who suffer from fatigue or long-term conditions such as cancer. The School will do its best to ensure that these rest areas are suitably comfortable while still remaining secure for the purposes of the exam process
- Different coloured scripts
- Use of a bilingual dictionary
- A prompter. In some cases where a candidate may have difficulty with time, for example if a candidate has autism, a prompter will be able to assist the candidate to move on and not become fixated with a particular question at the expense of the whole paper. Prompters will be made aware of disability etiquette, particularly if they will need to touch a desk to prompt

- Use of a computer or other technology
- Use of an individual room.