



DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

The Dean Close Foundation

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN (W025)

Registered Charity No: 1086829

THE DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

PUPIL ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

- This policy has been authorised by the Trustees of The Dean Close Foundation (the “Charity”) for all of its schools, (the “School”).
- This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Bursar (or the Finance and General Purpose Committee) on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Introduction

1. Dean Close School is committed to providing equality of opportunity by the creation of an environment in which individuals are treated according to their merits and abilities. This commitment is shared by scholars, staff, parents and trustees.

Pupil Admissions

2. When considering whether to admit a child the School must feel confident that a prospective pupil will benefit from the education offered, in line with the general standards achieved by their peers, so that they can enjoy a complete, happy and successful school career. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the individual’s time at Dean Close. The School’s policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any known disability, subject to our obligation to make reasonable adjustments, so as not to put any disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage relative to their non-disabled peers.

3. Parents/guardians of children with potential disabilities, medical conditions or special educational needs must disclose any known or suspected disabilities at the time of registration, or as soon as the condition becomes known, and provide details of the nature and effect of any condition. The School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality and will treat any sensitive personal data in line with our obligations under GDPR and in accordance with our Privacy Notice which can be found on our main website.

4. Parents/guardians of disabled or potentially disabled children are also required to provide full and timely disclosure of any medical, educational psychologist or other reports regarding their child’s disability, medical condition or special educational needs. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the School may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Failures by parents/guardians to make the necessary disclosures of information may prevent the School from providing adequate support.

5. The School will ensure enhancement to school life and education provided by inclusive policies, however equal importance will be attached to ensuring that no pupil's education is impaired by this approach.

Accessibility Plan

6. The Operations Bursar is responsible for producing and promulgating an Accessibility Plan which will be reviewed and updated periodically in consultation with senior academic staff.

7. The historic nature of the School Estate is such that some buildings are not, and cannot be made, fully accessible by those with disabilities. The School is, however, committed to ensuring that newly constructed buildings are accessible by disabled pupils, staff and visitors and where possible to improve access to existing buildings over time. Where a disabled pupil or member of staff is unable to gain access to a particular room or facility the School will consider, in the light of all the relevant circumstances, making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of the individual, or undertaking the same activity in an alternative location.

8. The School is committed to providing equality of education to all those who match the academic entry standards required. Subject to the availability of funding, the School will adapt its physical environment over time to make it more accessible to disabled people and in the interim will make adequate alternative provision, wherever possible, for those whose disabilities prevent access to normal facilities.

Information about the Schools

1. Dean Close Foundation is a group of co-educational Independent Schools and Nurseries.

2. Pupils may board at DCPS, DCS, DCKHS and DCSJ. Dean Close is generally nonselective, offering a broad education; the admissions criteria require the child to be able to cope with the demands of the school day and the academic curriculum so that they thrive and enjoy challenges and new opportunities. The ability of the School to be able to offer appropriate support and intervention will also be a factor.

3. Within Dean Close we seek to provide a welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can make the most of their abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, on the provision that the educational needs of the child can be met from the academic resources that the School is able to provide.

Definition of Disability

4. All Dean Close pupils who are defined as being disabled have an entitlement to be able to access our School. We therefore have a general duty to improve the accessibility of our School for disabled pupils.

5. Disabled pupils are likely to include those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The impairment may affect one or more of the following areas:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

6. In some circumstances it may be helpful to have specialist input, such as an educational psychologist's report, in exploring a potential disability and assessing what additional support might assist a pupil to overcome a substantial disadvantage. In general, the School would expect parents to meet the cost of obtaining such reports, but in cases of financial hardship some bursary support may be available.

Reasonable Adjustment

7. The Equalities Act 2010 imposes a duty on schools to make reasonable adjustments to 'policies, criteria and practices' to address potential issues of discrimination. With effect from 1 September 2012 the Act extends the reasonable adjustments duty where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled. It should be noted however that schools are not required to remove or alter physical features in order to comply with their duty to make reasonable adjustments.

8. The delivery of the provision should be within a reasonable time frame and in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

9. Aids and services are likely to include those things that help, aid or render assistance to disabled pupils, and may involve:

- Portable ramps or handrails for those with a physical impairment.

10. Parents of pupils or prospective pupils who believe that their child may have a disability that may be addressed by the School making reasonable adjustments should raise the matter with the School at the earliest possible moment.

11. The decision as to whether the School can reasonably make adjustments will be a specific judgement in relation to each disabled pupil and will be exercised on a case-by-case basis. Factors that will be considered will include:

- Whether the adjustment will remove the substantial disadvantage;
- The cost of the proposed adjustment;
- The resources available;
- The practicality of making the adjustment;
- The need to maintain academic and other standards;
- Health and safety requirements;
- The interests of other current and future pupils;
- The School's charging structure generally.

12. The School will not charge parents for making reasonable adjustments that address proven disabilities. If it is decided that an adjustment cannot reasonably be made parents have the right to appeal such decisions under the School's Complaints Procedure.

12. The physical layout of the School can present difficulties for some disabled pupils. Access to some residential, recreational and teaching facilities is not possible for wheelchairs due to the age and nature of access in each building. Annex A provides details of timescales for implementation of changes to comply with accessibility requirements.

Annexes:

A. Improving Access to the Physical Environment.

Dean Close Foundation Accessibility Plan

1. Introduction

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It sets out how The Dean Close Foundation will improve equality of opportunity for disabled pupils, staff, parents, and visitors.

This plan focuses on the following area:

1. Improving access to the physical environment of the school

B. Improving the Physical Environment

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Success Criteria</u>
Ensure all entrances are accessible to wheelchair users	Audit entry points; install ramps or automatic doors where needed	12 months	Estates Dept	All users can enter/exit buildings safely
Improve accessibility of signage	Install visual, tactile, and/or Braille signage in key areas	12 months	Estates Dept	Signage is usable by VI pupils/visitors
Provide an accessible outdoor learning/play area	Identify barriers; install inclusive play equipment and pathways	2 years	Estates Dept/Schools	Pupils with disabilities access outdoor space fully

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Learning Support Dept will monitor implementation of curriculum and communication actions.
- The Estates Dept will oversee physical environment improvements.
- The plan will be reviewed every 3 years and updated as required.
- Progress will be reported to the F&GP Trustees.