



Accessibility Plan 2023 - 2026

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Applies to	Whole School
Endorsed by	CMT
Responsibility	Director of Finance & Operations
Date reviewed	July 2023
Next review	July 2026

Bedford School Accessibility Plan - 2023 -2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Bedford School (the School) is an independent, fee paying school for boys comprising both day and boarding pupils. The School community includes all pupils, all members of staff, parents and friends of the School. The School is committed to equality of access and opportunity for all current and prospective members of its community. The School welcomes applications from prospective pupils with and without additional needs, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 1.2 The School's Disability Access Plan (the Accessibility Plan), effective from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2026, was prepared by the School and approved by the School Committee of Governors. As with the previous plan, it has then been communicated to all staff and is available on the staff intranet. The plan is also available for inspection on the policy section of the school website and its whereabouts has been communicated to all parents and pupils.
- 1.3 The plan is designed as the follow on for the next three year period, 2023 -2026, and is very much based on the current plan with necessary and appropriate changes to suit the work already completed, adjustments to the Schools strategic priorities including its increased commitment to SEND and the embracing of diversity and disadvantaged groups and changes to school, parents and societal expectations. It also incorporates any legislative changes required.
- 1.4 This plan should be read in conjunction with the School's Accessibility Policy and the SEND Policies for both the Upper and Prep Schools'.

2.0 Definition of Disability & Legal Context

The School recognizes and adopts the definition of 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This includes any amendments, substitute Acts or regulatory papers connected to these Acts as, and when, they are enacted.

Paraphrased, this can be determined as a person who has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Appendix 1 of this document provides a full definition together with Frequently Asked Questions as an aid to communication and understanding.

Because the definition is broad, the number of people covered by the Equality Act is quite large and translates as 7% or more of the total child population in the UK. Many of the children who have Statements of Learning Support Need fall within the terms of the Equality Act, and the definition also includes other children who do not have statements.

2.1 The School recognises its duties under the Acts to:

- Not treat disabled pupils less favorably for a reason related to their disability, including increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage including improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is

provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

- Implement an accessibility strategy through the improvement of the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

2.2 Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the School to prepare and operate under an accessibility strategy of which this plan is part. The School has prepared this plan and works towards implementation as part of that strategy. Overarching the Accessibility Plan is the Schools **Policy Statement on Facilities for Disabled Pupils:**

The school has a legal duty to be non-discriminatory towards disabled students and to provide equal access and opportunity to the curriculum.

2.3 The Bedford School Disability Access Plan ("the Plan") has three inter-linked elements:

- (i) Improvements in access to the curriculum by:
 - Providing for all pupils a curriculum which is appropriate to their needs;
 - Ensuring that the curriculum is delivered in such a way that all pupils, regardless of any impairment, may benefit fully from it.
- (ii) Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services by:
 - Ensuring that all the School buildings and grounds are fully accessible to pupils with mobility, sensory and other impairments;
 - Providing appropriate educational equipment and physical aids to ensure that educational programs in the School can be fully accessed by all pupils.
- (iii) Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled pupils by providing for pupils and their parents or guardians, information about the School and its curriculum in a format that takes account of any disabilities.

3.0 Admissions

- 3.1 The School admits pupils at various entry ages on an academic selective basis based on performance in examinations backed up by reports from the current school. Wherever possible, disability will not prevent a pupil from selection who is otherwise up to the academic standard required and who is in a position to benefit from the education offered at the School.
- 3.2 The School operates an inclusive Admissions Policy (available on the School website) which it believes enriches School life, but the prospective pupil must be able to access the mainstream curriculum at an age-appropriate level. The school also expects all pupils to take a full part in other activities, participating in sports, drama, music, camps and trips. The School will make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of applicants while giving equal importance to ensuring that no other pupil's education is impaired.
- 3.3 Before accepting a pupil onto the School Roll, we want to be confident that we can support the prospective pupil and their peers in achieving their potential. Parents are expected to support the School and to trust us. We are honest with parents about the School; we ask parents to be honest with us and to be open about any issue relating to their children.
- 3.4 We are committed to supporting learning where appropriate. Setting is restricted and additional in-class support is provided in some subjects. Withdrawal for learning support is limited. We

are used to teaching pupils with a range of abilities, but the School acknowledges that it may not be able to provide the level of intensive support required by some children.

3.5 At Bedford School we are particularly mindful of the importance of home-School links. The SEND Code of Practice highlights, *“The relationship between parents of children with Special Educational Needs and the School which their child is attending has a crucial bearing on the Child’s educational progress and the effectiveness of any School-based action.”*

3.6 In determining what is reasonable the School will have regard to:

- The extent to which support will be available to the pupil under the existing SEND framework
- The financial resources available to the School including any contribution parents may provide
- The costs of any particular alteration to the premises, staffing arrangements, or special equipment required
- The practicability of the adjustments
- The extent to which any adjustment would be effective in overcoming the pupil’s disability
- The effect of the disability on the pupil
- Health & Safety requirements
- The need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards
- The interests of other pupils and prospective pupils.

3.7 Parents or guardians of children with disabilities or additional needs are expected to notify the School of them at the point of registration. If these are not known at the time, the School should be notified as soon as they are recognised or become known, even if a temporary disability. Prior to any interview or visit, parents may be asked to provide copies of any professional reports e.g. Educational Psychologist’s report or professional reports from other agencies or a Learning Support Needs establishment (if applicable). The School’s Learning Support Policy and EAL policy are published on the School’s website, with copies available on request. Early notification is of great value, as it will enable the School to liaise with parents and/or existing schools to establish what reasonable adjustments can be made at the School to support your child’s future education.

3.8 As part of the Admissions’ process, staff will meet with parents to discuss whether or not a prospective pupil will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate this. In determining this, the School may advise additional assessments for further clarification. If after consultation, the School decides that it cannot discharge its legal and moral responsibilities to educate the prospective pupil and/or its contractual duties to the parent(s), the School will retain the right not to offer a place.

3.9 The School recognises that social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning can be associated with some disabilities, and that mental illness or learning difficulties can cause behavioural issues. The School aims to work with families to overcome or minimize these as far as is possible.

3.10 If the School is satisfied that with reasonable adjustments a prospective pupil can participate in the School, then, subject to availability, a place will be offered. Where the School agrees to provide additional services or equipment, parents may be charged for this service at a level which reasonably reflects the cost to the School of providing the service.

4.0 Physical Accessibility

- 4.1 The School site is spread over a large area and includes three distinct sites (Bedford School in De Parys Ave, Gordon Fields and Ickwell Conservation Area) and incorporates several listed and numerous older buildings, some of which are listed buildings. This means that, by its very nature, the site can be difficult to move around. Ramps and disabled WCs have been included in more recent constructions and conversions and future developments will take account of improving access for the physically impaired.
- 4.2 In order to provide the best facilities for pupils, the School operates a system of broadly fixed classrooms for particular subjects. Pupils need to move between sites, classrooms, laboratories and specialist rooms. Whilst much of the estate is accessible to physically disabled persons, there remain some areas and buildings without lifts.
- 4.3 During the life of this Disability Access Plan, the School will continue to improve access to its buildings subject to planning, physical logistics and reasonable cost restraints of making such adjustments.
- 4.4 There is some scope to consider the needs of an individual pupil when the timetable is being created, but this will, by the nature of a complex timetable, be limited. The School will make best use of time-limited support for pupils with additional needs to enable them to gain maximum benefit. In the shorter term, depending on the age of the pupil, it will seek to make adjustments to the timetable in such a way that, with additional support, physically disabled pupils will be able to access the curriculum.
- 4.5 Most pupils stay at the School for many years. It is possible that during their education a pupil may become disabled or his additional needs may first be identified, or become more serious. Continuing communication between parents and staff is vital for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to facilitate the pupil's participation in School.
- 4.6 If the School decides that it can no longer provide an environment suitable for the pupil to participate and thrive, it will consult with parents and where appropriate the School will request and support the move of the pupil to another, more suitable, educational establishment.
- 4.7 Details of the physical constraints limiting access to sports and other School facilities can be obtained from the School. When booking an off-site facility the School will check the accessibility for all pupils. Risk Assessments for trips and visits are prepared on a regular basis and take account of the particular needs of disabled pupils as required.
- 4.8 As part of ongoing Fire Risk Assessments, the School reviews each building in the light of disabled access and considers other adaptations to accommodate the needs of disabled people. To this end, a roll out of self-closing doors linked to the fire alarm system is currently being rolled out and will continue as buildings are refurbished.
- 4.9 As the School is redecorated, the lighting and colour contrast of finishes will be reviewed to aid orientation within the School, with particular attention given to steps, egress ways and staircases and as new furniture is required, consideration will be given to purchasing items of variable or flexible height.
- 4.10 The School has a number of clearly marked designated disabled car parking spaces, including bays by the Memorial Hall, Music School, Prep School and by the CCF Building.

Outside contractors

- 4.11 When educational sessions are run by outside contractors, they will be made aware of pupils' additional needs. The School will provide detailed information and any assistance possible.

Trips and Visits

- 4.12 The school will continue to provide equal access to all school activities for disabled pupils, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site, the budgetary costs, the Health & Safety implications and difficulties of supervision. Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled pupils engaged in school trips or visits.
- 4.14 The medical needs of all pupils are considered carefully when deciding on residential trip locations, transport arrangements and whether extra support staff are required. This is part of the risk assessment process and it is carried out in full consultation with parents. For example, parents might attend a residential visit to assist a pupil who might have additional medical support requirements.

Examinations

- 4.15 All pupils are able to be accommodated to take examinations at the School. Arrangements for examinations for disabled pupils will be made as appropriate, based on need and subject to the regulations as stipulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). This may include provision of additional time (agreed with Examination Boards), use of electronic equipment and other physical adjustments to the Examination environment in compliance with the JCQ regulations.

Other Adjustments

- 4.16 Depending upon individual needs, pupils may use word processors or similar aids and devices in class, and large print or coloured documents will also be considered where the relevant medical evidence is provided.

Auxiliary Aids and Services

- 4.17 The School will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services for each pupil on an individual as required needs basis.

5.0 Review, Co-ordination & Communication

Disability Access Coordination is the responsibility of the Vice Master and the Director of Finance & Operations. They consult with the other members of the Core Management Team, Head of Academic Support, the Operations Director (site issues) and others as appropriate. In addition, they will seek advice and input from the School Nurse and those professional advisors deemed appropriate.

Responsibilities include:

- to review the School's policies, procedures and facilities to maximise accessibility to the School by those with additional needs
- to make recommendations to improve accessibility by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning future improvements and by reviewing this plan
- to monitor the implementation of this Plan and to review as necessary, and at least every 3 years.
- in addition, the Director of Finance & Operations will table an annual review of the plan for review by the School Committee of Governors (as delegated to the relevant sub-committee).

Staff training

- 5.1 It is stipulated in the Code of Practice; *“All teachers are teachers of children with learning support needs. 7% of children are deemed likely to have a learning support needs”*. All teaching staff are expected to have the skills required to teach pupils with additional educational needs and this is supported by a program of Inset training on learning, medical needs and effective social support strategies. Consideration will be given to suitable training for non-specialist teachers and support staff.

Awareness of the Disability Access Policy

- 5.2 This Plan has been prepared by the School and endorsed by School Committee. Copies are disseminated to all teaching staff and those involved in the Admissions' Process. Parents of existing pupils have been advised of this Policy via the School's website and the School supplies written copies of this Policy to all who request it. Reference to this plan will be made in the School Admissions' literature and copies are supplied on request. Copies are sent to all new members of the teaching staff.

Communication Improvement

- 5.3 The School is committed to seek ways to improve access to information for disabled users by:

	Targets	Strategies	Outcomes	Timeframe
Short term	To improve communication with disabled pupils/users.	To ensure the School website is clear, simple and easy to use.	Increased number of visits to website. Delivery of information to disabled students.	Ongoing
	To liaise with Academic/ Support /specialist staff with reference to different formats of information.	To ensure parents and pupils have widest access to information.	Increased variety of formats for information available, including use of social media etc	Ongoing
Long Term	To consult with Disability Information Service about the best way to make information available to users	To increase levels of awareness amongst staff on available information and internal policies and plans	Increase the access to information and the modes of distribution.	Ongoing

6.0 Welfare

- 6.1 Bedford School is an inclusive School. Our ethos is of accepting and valuing differences and our policies and systems of counselling and pastoral care support this approach.
- 6.2 If any pupil feels excluded or subject to bullying, the School takes this very seriously. All pupils are made aware of the School's Anti-bullying Policy and are reminded regularly of it. Pupils are encouraged to speak to teachers about any concerns, to feel empowered to challenge unfairness

on their own behalf and on behalf of others. The citizenship / general education curriculum addresses themes of self-esteem, peer pressure, individual strengths, rights and differences as well as specific topics of disability. School Nurses and a School Counsellor are available to be used by our staff and pupils to help with the difficult times that almost everyone faces at some point in their lives. They liaise with teachers with pastoral responsibilities, maintaining confidentiality.

- 6.3 Tutors seek and receive feedback from staff on the pupils' performance, and where concerns are expressed they address these problems directly with the pupil and/or their parents and develop strategies to support them. Similarly in the Prep School, the SENCo liaises regularly with Class teachers, subject specialists, support staff, parents and pupils. All Bedford School pupils have access to counselling on request.
- 6.4 If staff consider it appropriate, after any necessary consultation with Senior Management, they make recommendations to parents for the appropriate level of Curriculum Support, and may also advise a referral to an educational psychologist and/or other specialist. If pupils find it difficult to fulfil the full timetable of activities, staff in consultation with parents may consider a reduction in the number of subjects studied to allow time for greater personal study and/or learning support.
- 6.5 The procedures for ensuring the care of children are as follows:
- regular monitoring by tutors
 - all adults working and aware to monitor and support pupils throughout the school day
 - updating staff through staff briefings, department meetings or email
 - updating by School Nurses of any relevant changes in pupil conditions
 - training of staff in the use of Epipens (and allergy responses)
 - many staff holding HSE First Aid certificates which are renewed every 3 years
 - working with parents to facilitate the needs of pupils e.g. asthma inhalers
- 6.6 If parents believe that their child has been unfairly treated by the School they may utilise the published complaints procedure.

Diet and Medication

- 6.7 The School provides hot lunches for all pupils. Within the limits of our catering facilities, a number of options are available and it is possible to accommodate the needs of nearly all pupils and staff on special diets.
- 6.8 The School provides a fully staffed Medical Centre, with regular visits from the School Doctor. Boarding Houses are staffed with Matrons who will give medication to pupils in accordance with written guidance from parents, guardians or medical professionals. Medication can be refrigerated and is always stored securely. If a pupil feels unwell, he can visit the Medical Centre and seek assistance. Information on any medical condition should be provided to the Senior School Nurse (preferably in writing) as soon as it is diagnosed so she can brief staff on any emergency procedures to be followed.

7.0 Access to Estate Facilities and Improvements made

The Estates management under this Accessibility Plan has been approached in a way not only to ensure compliance but also to make sure practical elements of user-friendliness is embedded into the schools estate and school estate procedures. Given the dynamic nature of the school estate, new items do arise and are addressed on a case-by-case basis and priorities are reviewed when this happens.

The key aspects to the Estates management plan is to ensure:

- Ease of access to and from all appropriate pupil, staff and public areas appropriate to the purpose of the visit
- Access to accessible washroom facilities within acceptable distance of those areas
- Monitoring of doorways and egresses regularly to ensure adequate signage and clearways are available and to reduce or eliminate hazards as appropriate
- Safety and security of all pupils, staff and visitors
- Upgrading of way finder signage
- Car parks are easily accessible
- Continued monitoring of and attention to any areas that are found to not meet the standards expected of this Accessibility plan

In particular, the following work has been completed during the last period:

- Completion of ground floor ceramics studio
- New, easy to follow and compliant way-finder signs
- Installation of a washroom on the upper floor of the main administration building
- Refurbishment of ground floor accessibility washroom in the main building
- Identification badges for all site visitors and contractors

Work which is planned during this time period of this plan includes:

- New academic building along Burnaby Road with lift access
- Provision of improved welfare facilities (Medical Centre, counselling) along De Parys Avenue
- Upgrade to the Year 3 & 4 classrooms
- Continued improvements to site lighting in communal areas and walkways where required
- An ongoing maintenance programme to Improve the surfaces of paths if they become uneven

8.0 Parental Contract

Whilst the School will do whatever is reasonable to provide access to disabled pupils, there are Contractual Matters relating to Disability Access as an Independent Fee Paying School. The following clauses are necessarily contained in the parent contract to protect the school from an uncapped liability to support students.

Learning difficulties:

The School takes a proactive approach to identifying any additional needs that may affect a child's learning and providing appropriate support. The School staff are not qualified to make a definitive diagnosis of common learning difficulties (e.g. conditions commonly referred to as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD or ADHD, autism). But School staff are trained to be sensitive to the typical learning behaviours associated with these conditions and a range of teaching and learning strategies to support pupils who exhibit them. It is therefore frequently the case that a pupil who School adults believe has behaviours consistent with a diagnosis of a specific learning need (e.g. dyslexia) will begin to receive appropriate support from the School before any formal diagnosis.

Screening for learning difficulties:

The screening tests available to schools are indicative only: they are not infallible. The Parents will be notified if a screening test indicates that the Pupil may have a learning difficulty. A formal assessment

can be arranged by the School at the Parents' expense or by the Parents themselves. The Parents agree to cooperate fully with any investigation of the Pupil's educational needs.

Information about learning difficulties:

The Parents shall notify the Head when completing the School's Confidential Information Form and subsequently in writing at any time if they are aware or suspect that the Pupil (or anyone in her immediate family) has a learning difficulty and the Parents must provide the School with copies of all written reports and other relevant information.

The Pupil's place will be cancelled, or, once the Pupil has started, Parents will be asked to withdraw the Pupil, without further charge if, in the professional judgement of the Head and after consultation with the Parents and with the Pupil (where appropriate), the School is unable to provide adequately for the Pupil's special educational needs.

The School reserves the right to charge for the provision of additional teaching or auxiliary aids and service where it is lawful to do so.

THE DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY

This appendix is included to aid understanding about who is covered by the Act. A Government publication 'Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability' is also available from The Stationery Office.

When is a person disabled?

A person has a disability if he or she has 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.

What about people who have recovered from a disability?

People who have had a disability within the definition are protected from discrimination even if they have since recovered.

What does 'impairment' cover?

It covers physical or mental impairments; this includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing.

Are all mental impairments covered?

The term 'mental impairment' is intended to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including what is often known as learning disabilities.

What is a 'substantial' adverse effect?

A substantial adverse effect is something, which is more than a minor or trivial effect. The requirement that an effect must be substantial reflects the general understanding of disability as a limitation going beyond the normal differences in ability, which might exist among people.

What is a 'long-term' effect?

A long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- Which has lasted at least 12 months, or
- Where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months, or
- Which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

Effects, which are not long-term, would therefore include loss of mobility due to a broken limb, which is likely to heal within 12 months and the effects of temporary infections, for which a person would be likely to recover within 12 months.

What if the effects come and go over a period of time?

If an impairment has had a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities but that effect ceases, the substantial effect is treated as continuing if it is likely to recur; that is if it is more probable than not that the effect will recur.

What are 'normal day-to-day activities'?

They are activities, which are carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis. The term is not intended to include activities which are normal only for a particular person or group of people, such as playing a musical instrument, or a sport, to a professional standard or performing a skilled or specialised task at work. However, someone who is affected in such a specialised way but is also affected in normal day-to-day activities would be covered by this part of the definition. The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activities is whether it affects one of the broad categories of capacity listed in Schedule 1 to the DDA1995. They are:

- 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, or
- perception of the risk of physical danger.

What about treatment?

Someone with an impairment may be receiving medical or other treatment that alleviates or removes the effects (though not the impairment). In such cases, the treatment is ignored and the impairment is taken to have the effect it would have had without such treatment. This does not apply if substantial adverse effects are not likely to recur even if the treatment stops (i.e. the impairment has been cured).

Does this include people who wear spectacles?

No. The sole exception to the rule about ignoring the effects of treatment is the wearing of spectacles or contact lenses. In this case, the effect while the person is wearing spectacles or contact lenses should be considered.

Are people who have disfigurements covered?

People with severe disfigurements are covered by the Act. They do not need to demonstrate that the impairment has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Are there any other people who are automatically treated as disabled under the Act?

Anyone who has HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis is automatically treated as disabled under the Act. In addition, people who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist are automatically treated under the Act as being disabled. People who are not registered or certified as blind or partially sighted will be covered by the Act if they can establish that they meet the Act's definition of disability

What about people who know their condition is going to get worse over time?

Progressive conditions are conditions, which are likely to change and develop over time. Where a person has a progressive condition he will be covered by the Act from the moment the condition leads to an impairment which has some effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, even though not a substantial effect, if that impairment is likely eventually to have a substantial adverse effect on such ability.

Are people with genetic conditions covered?

If a genetic condition has no effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, the person is not covered. Diagnosis does not in itself bring someone within the definition. If the condition is progressive, then the rule about progressive conditions applies.

Are any conditions specifically excluded from the coverage of the Act?

Yes. Certain conditions are to be regarded as not amounting to impairments for the purposes of the Act. These are:

- Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine, or any other substance (other than as a result of the substance being medically prescribed). The School's policies on drug and alcohol education and sanctions for abuse are available on the School portal.
- Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever), except where it aggravates the effect of another condition
- Tendency to set fires
- Tendency to steal
- Tendency to physical or sexually abuse of other persons
- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism.

Also, disfigurements which consist of a tattoo (which has not been removed), non-medical body piercing, or something attached through such piercing, are to be treated as not having a substantial adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.