



Accessibility Plan

School	The Commonweal School – An Academy and Sixth Form The Mall, Old Town, Swindon, SN1 4JE
3-year period covered by the plan	2020 – 2023
Plan written	October 2014
Plan agreed	Agreed
Review date	February 2020
Lead member of staff	Mrs Crystal Clifford-Budden, Assistant SENDCo & PI SRP Manager

Introduction

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils", issued by DfES (Department for Education and Skills) in July 2002.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010. "A person has a Disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

Aim

To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum, and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability. The aim is in accordance with the ambitions of the School Improvement Plan and the mission of the school – "providing quality education for all our students".

Principles

1. Compliance with DDA (Disability Discrimination Act, 1995) is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school's SEND policy;
2. The school recognises its duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA – SEN and Disability Act):
 - a. not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - b. not to treat disabled pupil less favourably for a reason related to their disability
 - c. to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
 - d. to publish an Accessibility Plan that will increase access to education for disabled pupils.

3. In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the DRC (Disability Rights Commission) Code of Practice (2002);
4. The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his or her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and the child's right to confidentiality;
5. The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - a. setting suitable learning challenges
 - b. responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
 - c. overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The School's Context

The Commonweal School is a Performing Arts Academy and 6th Form College for boys and girls aged 11 – 18. The school comprises of several buildings covering a medium sized site, mostly of one or two storey construction. There are two lifts in the main building that provide access to the second floor. In the new sixth form building (C6) there is a lift that provides access to all floors.

Our Vision and Values

We believe in providing quality education for all our students. In practice this is achieved by:

1. Providing a broad, balanced, appropriate and challenging curriculum with opportunities for all students to succeed
2. We insist upon high standards and expectations in all that we do and communicate them openly and regularly with students, staff and parents
3. We support students in all aspects of their learning, in an environment which is caring, secure, well-resourced and stimulating
4. We regularly review our practice and seek ways to improve it
5. We promote worthwhile and effective links with the wider community

Starting points

1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values

- We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.
- The school's desire is to enrich the lives of all our students by pursuing an inclusive policy towards all students which reflects the diversity of our community and our school values. In addition to this, the school places equal importance on ensuring that no student's education and progress is impaired by the disability of another student.
- All staff are aware they have a duty to: promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people, eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005, eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their impairments, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, encourage participation by disabled people in public life, and take steps to take account of disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person more favourably than other people.

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit

- With regards to EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) students there are 17 on roll in the PI (Physical Impairment) unit, 15 in the SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties) unit and 20 under MSEND (Mainstream).
- Across the school, and including the FCS (Faculty of Curriculum Support) department, there are 283 students identified as having medical needs, 50 of which have a care plan. Students are listed on relevant registers which include heart conditions, bowel/urinary conditions, asthma and personal care requirements.
- The school has well trained teachers and support staff; supporting autism, developmental delays, speech and language and the range of moderate learning difficulties are a strength of the school.
- The physical structure of the building is well suited to meet the majority of needs
- Disabled toilets are available in three areas of the building.

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

- This plan has been drawn up in consultation with the SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) and the members of the FCS team. The Swindon Advisory Teacher for PD (Physical Disability) has also been consulted.
- The views and aspirations of disabled pupils and parents are sought through annual reviews, parents' meetings and regular less formal meetings.

The main priorities in the school's plan

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

- The school follows the LA (Local Authority) guidelines for admittance for all pupils. This may include admitting over and above recommended class sizes in relation to admittance of children with an EHCP.
- The school will endeavour to educate and develop the prospective student to the best of his/her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the student's peers.
- The school policy is to apply these criteria to all students and potential students, regardless of any disability of which it is made aware by parents or outside agencies. The school has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled students are not disadvantaged because of their disability.

- In order to facilitate the needs of SEND children entering school, the Headteacher and SENDCo, in discussion with the FCS department, liaises with pertinent outside agencies, parents and previous educational providers to ensure that the children's needs can be addressed on admission.
- The school ensures that money allocated through the SENRAP (Special Educational Needs Resource and Allocation Panel) system for SEND children is used for their benefit, to provide resources and support. There are on-going systems within the school to identify pupils who may need extra support. Through liaising with outside agencies the authority is asked for suitable financial support for those pupils.
- Staff will continue to be made aware of students with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs by the SENDCo.
- Staff will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum.
- Staff will need to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns of all the students according to their abilities and needs.
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations, should not prejudice the progress of other students, nor their Health and Safety.
- The school provides auxiliary support such as teaching assistants, or auxiliary aids e.g. laptops. Laptops are provided where appropriate, through liaison with the Advisory Teacher for Assistive Technology and AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication).
- The school ensures that disabled children have their full entitlement to outside visits. This will be reflected in adaptations to travel plans, risk assessments, pupil to adult ratios, and notification to place of visit and pre-visit to site if appropriate.
- The FCS department, in liaison with the class teachers, will ensure that disabled children have access to suitable furniture, classroom adaptations, aids and resources.
- In assessing any student, the school may take such advice and require such assessments e.g., Educational Psychologist's report and recommendations as it regards as appropriate.
- Children/staff have access to outside agencies that will support and advise them on a regular basis.
- The school will continue to provide equal access to all school activities for disabled students, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site and the Health and Safety implications. Where an activity is inappropriate due to a child's disability, alternative activities will be provided.
- Provisions will be made for children unable to participate in activities such as going outside during break times, as a result of weather or illness. Generally, all children are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life.
- Staff and students are to be made aware of disability and understand its effects and accept and support disabled students as part of school life.
- Appropriate staff INSET (In-Service Education and Training) will be provided on a regular basis to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.
- The school's Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, and staff handbooks will be updated to reflect inclusiveness and the difficulties faced by disabled students, thereby improve understanding and integration.
- The school will agree with parents, appropriate regular means of communication with regard to the student's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.

Access Arrangements taken from JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications)

- The school follows DfE (Department for Education) guidelines and procedures to enable all children with disabilities to have equal access to national assessments for example GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education).
- Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and tactile/Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

- The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.
- A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.
- How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.
- There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

Special Considerations

- Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

- Ramps are in place to ensure easy access to the school buildings for all pupils and handrails are fitted where appropriate.
- Lifts are present to provide access (to the second floor in the main building and all floors in the sixth form building) for adults and children alike.
- There are two classrooms (128 – Cookery and 129 - Art) that are inaccessible to wheelchairs. In this instance, room changes are made so that the class is re-roomed to an accessible classroom.
- Disabled parking is available in the C6 car park.
- Ramps to access the stage in the main school hall are being considered.

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled will include:

- Ensuring that homework, timetables, policies, prospectus, newsletters etc. are made available in other forms e.g. large print, simplified language, electronic etc. if required.
- The specific needs of disabled pupils and families will continually be taken into account and common future needs will be anticipated, enabling a range of formats to be produced. Relevant support services will be accessed for specialised formats.

Making it happen

3A: Management, coordination and implementation

This section outlines the main activities which the school undertakes, and is planning to undertake, to

achieve the key objectives and school aims (above).

Education and related activities

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of the SBC (Swindon Borough Council) services, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

Physical environment

The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. There are Braille signs around the site, including classrooms and offices.

Provision of information

The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through SBC, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Linked Policies

This plan will contribute to the review and revision of The School Improvement Plan and to related school policies, including:

- a. SEND policy
- b. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy
- c. Behaviour Policy
- d. Admissions Policy
- e. Academic Mentoring Policy
- f. Anti-Bullying Policy
- g. More Able Policy

3B: The availability of the school's plan

- The Commonweal School will make its plan available on the school website.
- If requested, the plan will be made available in different formats, i.e. large print, paper copy etc.
- The Commonweal School will ensure that this Accessibility Plan is readable. All acronyms have been fully explained in the first instance, and the plan is written in Arial point 12 (a dyslexia friendly typeface). Headings have been highlighted in bold.