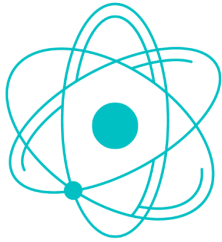


ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



HARDWICK HOUSE SCHOOL

Date of issue: September 2023

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2024

Hardwick House School is part of Newcome Education, which is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Hardwick House School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- LRB (Health and Safety)
- SchoolPro (data protection)
- Marsh Commercial (insurance)

Hardwick House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Hardwick House School.

The policy documents of Hardwick House School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

1 Introduction

Hardwick House School is committed to being inclusive. The School views the diverse population of both pupils and staff as one of the school's greatest strengths. In order to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of all the school's activities.

The School promotes an ethos of care and trust where every member of the school community feels welcomed and valued. The Accessibility Plan takes due account of the letter and the spirit of the government guidance [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

The Senior Leadership Team and Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that "schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils

because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation". According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if: a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The school is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the protected characteristics - [Equality Act 2010](#)). The protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation.

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of the school community, including parents.

This policy takes due account of the letter and the spirit of the government guidance [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This policy is made available on the school website and can be made available on request. It can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2 Responsibility

The school Senior Leadership Team under Cavendish Education have responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the school.

Each member of the school community is responsible for being alert to and challenging discrimination; embracing diversity; respecting different faiths and beliefs; and upholding equality of opportunity for all.

3 Aims and Objectives

Hardwick House School is committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school. The School's Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to;

- Increase access to curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as able-bodied pupils; (if a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. it also covers the provision of specialist

or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;

- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

The Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information. Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and Governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010. The Accessibility Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the School, which remains the responsibility of the Governors. It may not be feasible to undertake all of the works during the life of this accessibility plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans.

An accessibility audit will be completed by the school prior to the end of each period covering this plan in order to inform the development of a new Accessibility Plan for the ongoing period. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when school policies are reviewed. Equality and Diversity issues will be considered when policies and procedures are reviewed and as required by the Equality Act 2010.

4 What Hardwick House School does well

Hardwick House School is a specialist setting where all children have an Education, Health and Care Plan for autism or related conditions. As such, all children have protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Information Gathering:

In addition to the information in the EHCP, the School asks about any disability or health condition in early communications with new parents, carers and Local Authorities.

Physical Environment:

All pupils participate in enrichment and extracurricular activities. Some aspects of enrichment and extracurricular activities present particular challenges, for example: lunch and break times for pupils because of social communication and interaction impairments; some enrichment activities such as climbing, for pupils with physical impairments; school trips for pupils with medical needs.

Special consideration is made before placing children or staff with physical

disability or temporary injury upstairs and individual risk assessments and emergency evacuation procedures are implemented.

Curriculum:

There are areas of the curriculum to which disabled pupils may have limited or access. Some areas of the curriculum present particular challenges, for example: PE for pupils with a physical impairment, science and design technology for pupils with a visual impairment. Other issues affect the participation of disabled pupils, for example: bullying, peer relationships, policies on the administration of medicines, the provision of personal care, the presence or lack of role models or images of disabled people, in effect, all the school's policies and procedures, written and unwritten information. Different forms of communication are made available to enable all disabled pupils to express their views and to hear the views of others. Access to information is planned, with a range of different formats available for disabled pupils, parents and staff.

5 Access Audit

The main school building is an early Victorian former rectory. It is a three-storey building with two staircases and several access points from outside. In addition, there are four temporary modular classrooms, a wooden Garden Room and an outdoor learning space with an outdoor workshop area. On-site car parking for staff and visitors includes a dedicated disabled parking bay and spaces for visitors. There is also a clear pathway for pedestrians going to the front door of the school.

The main school building has stepped access to the front. However there is a level route via the side gate into the dining room. The rooms on the ground floor are fully accessible to wheelchairs and includes a disabled toilet. The rooms on the second and third storeys are not accessible to wheelchairs.

KS2, two KS3 classes and the science laboratory are all in temporary modular classrooms or pods. The newest two pods have ramp access and are fully accessible for wheel chairs. The older two pods have stepped access, although a level route is available via the Outdoor learning area. There are also toilets for both pupils and staff in two of the pods.

The school has internal emergency signage and escape routes are clearly marked. All rooms within the school are audited annually in accordance with the Autism Education Trust's Autism Friendly Classroom guidance. Classrooms are decorated in a "house style" with walls painted in an off-white colour and all display boards are backed in the same colour to reduce visual noise.

6 Monitoring and Review

This Plan is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

This Plan is usually reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the aims of the Plan are carried out in accordance with the school's equality obligations.

7 Review of implementation

The implementation of this Plan is reviewed annually by the school's Senior Leadership Team in consultation with staff and a report is made to the Governance Body.

The school may submit to Cavendish Education proposals for amendments to this Plan.

Accessibility Action Plan:

Aim 1: To increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability.				
Objective: To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, parents, staff and visitors, with a disability.				
Target	Strategy	Timescale	Personnel	Success Criteria
To liaise with parents and Local Authorities regarding all new incoming pupils.	To identify pupils who may need additional to or different from provision.	Ongoing	SLT	Appropriate support in place to meet the needs of new children to the school.
To establish close liaison with outside agencies for pupils with ongoing health needs. E.g. Children with severe asthma, epilepsy or mobility issues.	To ensure collaboration between all key personnel	As required	SLT	Clear collaborative working approach.
To ensure full access to the curriculum for all children.	CPD for staff and liaison with specialist therapists or outside agencies in order to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effectively differentiated curriculum • Strategies for assessing progress towards personalised objectives • Use of ICT to support recording • Use of dyslexia friendly resources to be embedded by 	Ongoing	SLT Classroom based staff Therapists	Advice taken and strategies evident in classroom practice.

	<p>all staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of sensory or wellbeing activities. 			
Ensure appropriate training for staff in relation to the support of children with ASD, Attachment and trauma. Train staff to use a trauma informed approach, including PACE.	CPD delivered by the clinical psychologist to all staff to ensure consistency in approach.	Ongoing	SLT Clinical Psychologist	<p>All children are successfully included in every aspect of school life.</p> <p>Staff will be confident to adopt a trauma informed approach, including PACE.</p>
On-going programme of staff training in disability awareness to reflect diverse needs of pupils within the school and anticipatory duties e.g. dyslexia friendly or working memory. All staff will be anticipatory to pupils ever changing needs and promote access for all.	<p>Staff will seek support from the SLT and therapy team when required and implement advice and strategies given.</p> <p>Ensuring access to sensory breaks, working memory aids or dyslexia resources such as specific coloured paper as part of first quality teaching.</p>	Ongoing	SLT All staff	All staff will be anticipatory to pupils ever changing needs and promote access for all
Ensure all policies consider the implications of Disability access.	Consider all policies in view of priorities.	Ongoing	Policy writer	Access to all aspects of school life for all pupils
<p>Aim 2: To improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education.</p> <p>Objective: To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the physical environment to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, parents, staff and visitors, with a disability.</p>				
Target	Strategy	Timescale	Personnel	Success Criteria

To improve the physical environment of the school in-line with the differing needs of its community.	The school will take account of the needs of pupils, staff 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, and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.	Ongoing	SLT Regional Maintenance Manager	Enabling needs to be met where possible
All staff to make classrooms accessible, taking into account of pupil autism and any additional impairments.	Ensure all classrooms are organised in accordance with pupil need	As necessary	Class teams	Reasonable adjustments are reviewed and maintained and consistently updated to improve access and safety.
Ensure all fire escape routes are suitable for all and free from obstruction at all times.	Review means of escape for pupils, staff and visitors with physical impairments as part of their individual risk assessment and as part of any fire drill practices. Ensure all staff are aware of the need to keep fire escapes clear at all times.	As necessary	SLT Fire Wardens All Staff	All fire escapes kept clear and pupils have safe exit at all times.
Classroom displays, redecorating or alterations within the school is sympathetic to the Autism Friendly Classroom and those who are visually impaired.	Advice taken when considering colour schemes and lighting before further decorating takes place.	As necessary	SLT Class teams	Classrooms and communal areas will refrain from causing excess stimulation and stress on the eye where possible.
Ensure that anyone with a physical	Ensure there is a risk assessment	Ongoing	SLT	Pupils and staff with a

disability or impairment can be safely evacuated.	including a personal emergency evacuation plan for anyone with a physical disability or impairment. Maintain learning environments and corridors to ensure they remain clutter free. Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in evacuation. Ensure all fire exits are kept clear.		All staff	physical disability or impairment are safe in the event of a fire. There are risk assessments including a personal evacuation plan for pupils and staff with special educational needs (if required) and pupils and staff with physical disabilities or impairments who would need help in the event of an evacuation.
Ensuring disabled parents have every opportunity to be involved in school life.	Utilise disabled parking space for disabled to drop off & collection. Offer a telephone call to explain letters home for some parents who need this. Maintain a proactive approach to identifying the access requirements of disabled parents.	As required	SLT	Disabled parents are not discriminated against and are encouraged to take interest and be involved in their child's education
<p>Aim 3: To improve the delivery of information</p> <p>Objective: To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to information to ensure full participation in the school community for pupils, parents, staff and visitors, with a disability.</p>				
Target	Strategy	Timescale	Personnel	Success Criteria
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of methods for converting written	As required	SLT Admin	Delivery of information to pupils and parents/carers is

	information into alternative formats.			accessible to all
To enable effective interpretation of all aspects of the school environment	Use visual symbols in classrooms to support pupils with reading difficulties. Raise awareness of font size, paper colour and page layouts to support pupils with dyslexia and visual impairments. Audit signage around the school to ensure that it is accessible and clear.	Ongoing	SLT	Everyone is able to interpret all aspects of the school environment
Review information to parents/carers to ensure it is accessible	Provide information and letters in clear print. School Reception will support and help parents access information and complete school forms. Ensure the website and all document accessible via the school website can be accessed by visually impaired.	Ongoing	SLT Admin	All parents receive information in a form that they can access