

# The AIn Community Schools Federation

Applicable to The Duchess's Community High School

## Policy - Accessibility Plan 2016 - 2017

### **Purpose of Plan**

This plan shows how The Duchess's Community High School intends, where possible, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled students, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

**Definition of disability:** A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended **The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)** to cover education. Since September 2002, Governing Bodies have had three key duties towards disabled students, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to plan to increase access to education for disabled students.

This Accessibility Policy has been developed in consultation with staff and governors of the school and covers the period from May 2016 – July 2016 when the school is due to move to a new site. Updates will be made during the transition to the new site and as the school prepares for the new extended intake of year7 and year 8 students in September 2017. It may be appropriate to re-write the accessibility plan before the annual review date in May 2017 when the impact of the new buildings on disabled people is clearer.

See also: school SEND Information report, SEND policy, Admissions Policy and Attendance Policy.

### **Mission Statement**

"We want our school to be a centre of excellence where all young people feel valued and are inspired to develop their talents, skills and ambitions to the full. We want everyone connected with our school to be totally committed to working with every young person in an atmosphere of mutual respect."

### **Information from student data and school audit**

At The Duchess's High School we have a lower than average number of children on the SEND register compared to other secondary schools in the country. Students on our SEND register fall into one or more of the four broad areas of need identified by the national Code of Practice for SEND:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

In practice this means that, in most cases, students on the SEN register could have needs from one or more of the following needs:

- Specific Learning Difficulty

- Moderate Learning Difficulty
- Severe Learning Difficulty
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
- Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties
- Speech, Language & Communication Needs
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Multi Sensory Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Other Difficulty / Disability

We employ a full time teacher who is the special educational needs coordinator at The Duchess Community High School. Currently the SENCO teaches the support option together with some other teaching staff. The school also employs a specialist literacy teacher for 0.5 full time equivalent. The SENCO is a science specialist by training and also teaches science lessons within the school. The school employs 9 classroom assistants in total. These staff have specific timetables linked to support for children meeting the DDA criteria.

Some medical conditions have resulted in treatment of students via a medical plan with parent's written consent. The key staff who administer medication are first aid trained and able/trained to carry out these duties.

### **Feeder Middle School Transition**

We have close ties with our feeder middle schools. We ensure that children who are highlighted as SEND and/or meeting the DDA criteria have a plan linked to a successful transfer. A transfer meeting is held to discuss students, their progress, needs and social awareness. The SENCO meets with middle school staff to discuss individual students. All documents pertinent to each child are sought from the feeder middle schools in plenty of time for staff to gain a better knowledge of the children in question. Transition days are run wherever possible to allow students with additional needs to visit the high school and familiarise themselves with the venue in advance of starting.

### **Views of those consulted during the development of the plan**

Consultation with the school community has taken place e.g. Staff, Governing Body, Parents/carers/children via an annual questionnaire, monthly newsletter and School Council.

### **The main priorities in The Duchess's High School's plan**

- to develop a more coherent approach to special educational needs provision within school.
- to develop a more creative curriculum which excites and enables all to achieve.
- to develop further knowledge and practice of emotional intelligence and apply this to learning and teaching.
- to update strategy plans (SIP) and ensure that planning incorporates all children in The Duchess's High School.
- to further develop teaching assistants to provide the best support possible with existing resources.

### **Areas of planning responsibilities:**

- Increasing access for disabled students to the school curriculum (this includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits)
- Improving access to the physical environment of schools (this includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education)
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled students (this will include planning to make written information that is normally provided by the school to its students available to disabled students. The information should take account of students' disabilities and students' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable timeframe)

### **Current Accessibility Arrangements:**

#### **Admissions**

The Governors of The Duchess's Community High School supports the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001). The Governors are, therefore, committed to the principle of all children having equal rights of access, if this can reasonably be provided.

The admission of a child with Special Educational Needs to the School will be conditional upon:

- (a) The parents'/guardians' full disclosure to the School of the child's disability. Appropriate planning by the School, including requests for additional funding, are dependent upon the school having access to all the relevant information
- (b) Following the procedures which are set out in any school policies relating to Special Educational Needs e.g. Assessing Children's Educational Needs
- (c) The availability of appropriate facilities within the school. These include both physical facilities and reasonable curricular provision
- (d) Specific additional funding through EHCP or Top Up if required
- (e) Agreement about the stages for which entry is being offered. In particular, transition from previous school will be dependent upon a review of the child's needs and the evaluation of any difficulties which the child may have in accessing an appropriate education
- (f) Acceptance by the parents/guardians that some educational opportunities, which take place off-site may not be available. The above conditions will also apply, if a disability develops during the course of a child's education.

#### **Access to Buildings and Classrooms - Contextual Information**

The Duchess's Community High School in its current location is a split site school. There is an original Victorian three storey building housing main classrooms at the Balifgate site along with a more recent building at the main school site which also houses main classrooms and sports facilities. In addition, there are prefab classrooms outside at the main school site. Toilets are downstairs in the main building and in Balifgate but in some cases are only accessible via some stairs. Three disabled toilets are available on the ground floor at the main school site. Most access to the school is via several

steps. There is one ground level entrance where a wheelchair user could gain access to the toilets and a number of ground floor classrooms.

At present we have no wheelchair dependent students, parents or members of staff. NCC recognises that we are unable to make provision for full wheelchair access to the building. Stairways are either too wide or steep to install ramps. This will change when we move to our new build in September 2016.

If students need to use crutches or they have restricted use to stairs, we try to accommodate access to classrooms by re-locating other groups. Buddies are used to help carry books.

We meet with and take guidance from physiotherapists.

We move to a new build site in September 2016 which has significantly better access arrangements for students who are wheelchair dependant or who have restricted movement. A lift is available to move between the two floors and doorways and corridors are of an increased width compared to facilities in the present buildings.

**Current Range of known disabilities**

The school has children with a range of disabilities to include moderate and specific learning disabilities. We have a small number of students and parents who have a hearing or medical impairment.

**1. Increasing access for disabled students to the school curriculum.**

Improving teaching and learning lies at the heart of the school’s work. Through self-review and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children. We aim to meet every child’s needs within mixed ability, inclusive classes. It is a core value of the school that all children are enabled to participate fully in the broader life of the school. Consequently, all children have always been permitted to attend age relevant after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and educational visits. The only exception would occur if a child had breached school rules when deprivation of club attendance may be used as a suitable short term sanction and to ensure the safety of others.

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Person Responsible	Success Criteria
Increase confidence of all teaching staff and TAs in differentiating the curriculum and being aware of disability issues.	Be aware of staff training needs on curriculum access Assign CPD for dyslexia, differentiation and recording methods Online learning modules if required	Ongoing	SENDCo	Raised staff confidence in strategies for differentiation and increased student participation. CPD minutes.

Ensure all staff are aware of individual student disability needs	All students to have a Pupil Passport with needs identified. Students and their needs identified on SEND Information sheet and reviewed regularly. Share advice from external agencies.	Ongoing	SENDCo	All staff aware of student needs
Use ICT to support learning	Ensure access to laptops or other specific resources as required.	As required	SENDCo / ICT co-ordinator	All students have appropriate access to ICT resources.
All visits to be accessible to all	Seek advice for staff on accessibility for SEND students. Ensure venues are appropriate for all students.	As required	EVC / SENDCo	Provision Map of visits shows inclusion of all students as appropriate.
Review PE curriculum to ensure PE accessible to all.	Gather information on accessible PE and disability sports. Promote visits from disabled sports people.	As required	PE staff / SENDCo	All students able to access PE. Visitor log.

## **2. Improving access to the physical environment of the school**

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Person Responsible	Success Criteria
Be aware of access needs of students, parents, governors, staff and visitors	To create individual access plans as and when an individual need arises.	As required	SENDCo	Pupil Passports in place for individual students.
	Consider access needs during recruitment process.	On transition	SENDCo/DOL	All staff and governors are confident that their needs are met.
	At transition with parents, find out their individual needs.	As required	SENDCo/DOL	Ensure that access issues do not influence the recruitment and retention of staff.
	Where possible, make adjustments to the timetable, seating plans or accommodation to meet an individual need.		SENDCo	Parents have full access to school activities.  Seating plans altered to accommodate

				individual needs.
Review access to key areas of school for students who require support with access.	Seek advice from professionals on possibility of building amendments where possible	As required and whether amendments are possible.	Headteacher / SENDCo / Governors	Any new buildings will be fully accessible.
Ensure all disabled students can be evacuated safely.	Put in place personal evacuation plan for students with difficulties.	As required	H&S Co-ordinator	Personal Evacuation plans in place. All staff aware.
Ensure full support for HI or VI students.	Liaise with HI service and follow advice in all lessons.	As required	SENDCo	All staff to have up to date copies of HI or VI advice for all students.

Provision, in exceptional cases, will be negotiated when a student's specific needs are known. We have a wide range of equipment and resources available for day to day use. We keep resource provision under constant review. The schools Improvement Planning process is the vehicle for considering such needs on an annual basis.

### **3. Improving the delivery of written information to disabled students**

This will include planning to make written information that is normally provided by the school to its students available to disabled students. Examples might include handouts, textbooks and information about school events. The information should take account of students' disabilities and students' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable timeframe. In planning to make written information available to disabled students we again need to establish the current level of need and be able to respond to changes in the range of need. The school will need to identify agencies and sources of such materials to be able to make the provision when required. The schools ICT infrastructure will enable us to access a range of materials supportive to need.

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Person Responsible	Success Criteria
Review information to parents and carers to ensure it is accessible.	Ensure use of clear print and simple, standard English on leaflets and website.  Admin staff to support parents to access information – provide enlarged print, translations or coloured paper where appropriate.	Ongoing  As required	Office staff / SENDCo  SENDCo / EAL support	All parents receive information in a form they can access.

Ensure all staff aware of dyslexia friendly formats.	Guidance for staff accessible.	Ongoing	SENDCo/Literacy co-ordinator	High quality of information sharing resources.
Languages other than English to be visible in school.	Multi-lingual welcome signs.  Develop a bank of translated letters, information sheets as appropriate.	Ongoing  As required	Office staff  SENDCo /EAL	Poster prominent  Resources available for parents as required.

<b>Revision Record of Issued Versions</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Creation Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Status</b>
Fed Model/NR	June 2016	1	Agreed by Chair's Action 15/6/16 Review Sept 2016
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