

COGNITA



Colchester High School Accessibility Plan

September 2021 – September 2024

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The document outlines our Accessibility Plan as required by the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for Cognita, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil or staff in relation to:
- admissions;
 - the way we provide education for pupils;
 - the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.1 The Act outlines some protected characteristics (see below) and we pay due regard to these:
- Sex
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.2 This plan fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This Accessibility Plan outlines how we ensure that we are working to remove barriers to learning and access in our school. The plan is reviewed every three years.
- 2.2 The school aims to treat all its pupils, staff and visitors fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind
- 2.3 The school ensure all staff are trained in understanding equality and disability issues in line with the Equality Act 2010

3 Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- 3.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.
- 3.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEND system (i.e. via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 3.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We can include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.

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- 3.5 Our SEND Policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 3.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; e.g. hearing aids.
- 3.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 3.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils

4 Aspects of the Plan

- 4.1 Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas:
- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
 - Improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
 - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that the school has an Accessibility Plan which matches the needs of the school and to ensure that it is available on the school's website.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Proprietor (via the Director of Operations) to ensure that the plan is reviewed annually and is fit for purpose.

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All planned actions will be resourced in terms of the time available, staffing and budget required. As part of our annual budgeting procedure, the estimated cost of any actions is included within the relevant budget.

Actions to increase access to the curriculum and learning

We meet the needs of all pupils currently attending our school. Any needs of prospective pupils are discussed before entry to the school in order to ensure these can be met, or if reasonable adjustments can be made. This includes the availability of written materials in alternative formats, staff training into specific disabilities, alternatives for reduced motor skills such as providing a laptop, and hearing loops being fitted for the hearing impaired. The SENDCO regularly informs staff of any changes to pupils conditions and additional support plans.

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Resourcing to support access to curriculum and learning	Academic Year 2021-22: Laptops available coloured overlays, pencil grips, desk slope, ear defenders, VI resources, large print resources, desk screens to support pupils with ADHD. Visual aids for ASC, EAL and younger years.	SENDCo and class teachers	All children to have access to laptops, coloured overlays, pencil grips and dyslexia friendly fonts, Microsoft accessibility tools. RNIB access for VI. Font 36 for EHCP pupil to ensure access required for printed resources in lessons. Higher level of focus and attention as a result of using the screens. To ensure children with additional needs are confident that they aware of the structure of the day.
Seating plans and adapting equipment	Academic Year 2021-22: Seating arrangements are altered regularly to accommodate children with particular needs	Class teachers and SENDCo	To ensure all needs of each child are considered.
Training for teachers in differentiating the curriculum.	Ongoing training: Academic year 2021-22: Autism awareness training via TEAMS 2021-22: Microsoft Dyslexia training – Made by Dyslexia course	Assistant Head – Teaching and Learning & SENDCo	Delivery of information for pupils with additional needs improved and cohort of pupils able to access the curriculum at an appropriate level with stretch and challenge.

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Classrooms are organised to promote the participation and independence of all pupils.	Academic Year 2021-22: SENDCo to carry out an audit of classroom layouts, organisation and resources to ensure we meet the needs of all pupils.	SENDCo	All pupils able to access the curriculum at an appropriate level with stretch and challenge.
Exam access arrangements	Academic Year 2021-22: Extra time to complete an exam paper, modified papers, reader, reading pen, prompt, rest breaks, use of a word processor, coloured overlay.	SENDCo, Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning and Examination Officer	To ensure all pupils have the reasonable adjustments that can be made for a pupil with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to take our exams and assessments.

Actions to improve the physical environment to enable those with disability to take better advantage of the education and facilities

We plan to improve access to designated areas over successive financial years to take account of the needs of pupils with physical difficulties and sensory impairments. This will include lighting, colour schemes, signage and increased accessibility. We will decide which of our entrances and exits have priority. We will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with a disability, medical condition or other access needs, through a personalised risk assessment and access plans for individual pupils. This also includes emergency planning, such as evac chairs and ensuring that staff are able to carry this out.

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
To audit the school site and ensure entrances and exits are fully accessible.	Academic Year 2021-22	Business manager	Improved access for pupils and parents.
Signage around the school to be improved to support pupils. Repaint highlighted areas to support easier access around school	Academic Year 2021-22	Business Manager	Clearer signage around school to support all pupils and visitors. Painted areas of highlighted zones for easier access for VI.
Disabled parking space available at school	Academic Year 2021-22	Business Manager	Parking space available for disabled visitors.
Maintain Clear Corridors and Fire Escape routes	Academic Year 2021-22	Business Manager and Site Manager	Provide clear visibility for unaided negotiation of corridors for staff, pupils, visitors and parents with VI.
Staircase – Upgrades to provide contrasting colour	Academic Year 2021-22	Business Manager and Site Manager	Enables staircases to be clearly visible for unaided use by staff, pupils, visitors and parents with VI.

NB: We have a chair lift in the Performing Arts wing, which has been temporarily de-commissioned.

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Actions to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

We will ensure the availability of written material in alternative formats when specifically requested, including the use of large print resources and the use of coloured paper. When required, readers and scribes are provided for examinations and additional time is allowed for those who require additional support.

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Large print versions of resources available.	Academic year 2021-2022.	Assistant Head – Teaching and Learning	Visually impaired able to access resources.
Availability of written materials in alternative formats when requested.	Academic Year 2021-2022: SENDCO to review services available for converting information into alternative formats	SENDCo	Alternative formats available when requested. Staff access to RNIB
Review documentation on website to check accessibility for parents with English as an Additional Language	Academic Year 2021-22	SENDCo	Accessibility for parents with English as an Additional Language

Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Operations
Document author (name)	Melissa Jones – Health and Safety Manager, Europe
CHS Author Review	Reena Patel – Business Manager, David Marsh – Facilities & Estate Manager and Cora Allen – SENDCo
CHS Headteacher Review	Karen Gracie-Langrick

Audience	
Audience	Heads and staff in Cognita schools

Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	No

Version control	
Implementation date	September 2021
Review date	The school or proprietor will keep this policy under review and will update from time to time, as deemed necessary

Related documentation	
Related documentation	Health and safety policy and related documentation Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Equality Act 2010