



School Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2024

Amended: July 2023

Next Review date: July 2024

Agreed by the Local Governing Body: Oct 2023

1. Introduction:

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 requires schools and academies to plan to increase accessibility for disabled students. The Governing Body has three key duties towards disabled students;

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

2. The School Accessibility Plan:

The school in striving for excellence aims to ensure that students and prospective students are not treated any less favourably due to their disability.

The School Accessibility Plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body to increase access to education for disabled students in the following three areas, as required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

Fort Pitt's Accessibility Plan covers the period 2020 – 2022 and is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised yearly. The plan sets out the details and actions of the school in addressing the key priorities.

This plan needs to be read in conjunction with the Trust Equality Policy.

Accessibility Audit 2022/23:

Fort Pitt Grammar School for Girls is a selective school.

- The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average as is the number whose first language is not English.
- The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average.
- The number of students entitled to receive free school meals is below the national average.
- The school covers a wide catchment area taking pupils from over 50 primary schools and the aim is to develop and foster stronger links with the partner primaries and strengthening the information on prospective students to improve the planning process.
- With the new Year 7 intake of over 150 students in September information on their ability has been gathered and analysed to assist learning and pastoral support.
- Open mornings provide an opportunity for students to view the school and to discuss the learning and extra-curricular opportunities available to them.
- In normal circumstances all students who accept a place at school attend an Induction Day in July to facilitate a smooth transfer – in 2020 this will occur in September due to lockdown observation.

Curriculum:

Support is offered to students by a well-staffed Student Services Department which includes pastoral, wellbeing, additional and learning support needs. The school offers a wide range of subjects at all levels and the school is sensitive to the students' needs in accessing the full curriculum by:

- Adapting the environment wherever possible to ensure physical access to all specialist rooms.
- Making classroom changes to accommodate, as far as reasonably practicable, students and staff with temporary mobility problems.
- Making adaptations to resources to enable individuals to access the full curriculum.
- Setting individual arrangements, in public and internal examinations, to satisfy individual needs.
- Undertaking individual risk assessments (PEEPS) for students with permanent and temporary mobility restrictions.

Physical Environment:

The school is made up of eleven separate buildings dispersed over a wide site and the playing field is located to the east side of the school. The buildings vary in age and type from modern purpose-built accommodation such as the Science building to quite old buildings adapted to the learning environment e.g. Crimea built in the 1850s to serve as a Hospital. These are undergoing refurbishment. The range, type, age and layout of the school building provides significant challenges in maintaining and developing the school to ensure it is conducive to student learning and safe for students, staff and visitors. The School Accessibility Plan is a key driver to improving the physical environment.

Previous improvements have been implemented in the following areas:

- Provision of a disabled WC in the main reception
- Provision of a wheelchair ramp and widening doorways in various buildings to allow access to students and staff with mobility problems.
- Drop off point outside main entrance door to help students & visitors with mobility problems.
- Supply of evacuation chairs on the top floor of the Sackett and West Wing buildings.
- Provision of a ramp to the Art block.
- Provision of ramp to the Music House.
- Lighting upgraded in various areas, internal & external.
- Installation of external fire escape for the Crimea Building.
- Ensuring the means of escape in emergencies for both ambulant and those less ambulant lend themselves to a safe and speedy evacuation of the school.

The current audit has identified a number of areas for further improvement, which have been included both in this Plan (Section 5) and the School's Building Development Plan.

2.1 Information to Students:

Various modes of communication are provided to students including written, visual (plasma screens / interactive), delivered by tutors and staff in assemblies. Daily notices are read out. The school also use email, Teams and Groupcall to provide students and parents with information. Lockdown was a key driver in going online with setting and marking work and this is something that can be used to enhance the learning experience going forward.

Accessibility Action Plan 2023-24

Area for Improvement	Action to be Taken	Cost £	Timescale	Outcome
Maintenance of entrance, steps & thresholds to all buildings	Highlight step edges (on-going)	150	Completed	Entrances and Exits are all safe for students and staff
Entrance Doors	Consider the installation of automatic doors	£10000 expected	Automated Access control to be phased in with major building development projects	Students with disability find it easier to enter the buildings
Internal & External Fire Doors	Install automatic door closers & ensure vision panels are effective	As above	Fire doors upgrade project starts 2023	Access & ease improved in using doors
Ramp leading to Library	Feasibility study of installing ramp to access the library	TBC	2023/24	Access & reduced risks from accidents
New Science Building review	Ensure accessibility issues are addressed in the building specification plans incorporating access to the main school	N/A	2023	New building has been designed and built to ensure all mobility and physical needs of students and staff are met – review of any issues and snagging.

Area for Improvement	Action to be Taken	Cost £	Timescale	Outcome
Areas without Lifts	Assessing areas where lifts may be used across the school for access to upper floors	TBC	2022/23	Access for certain inaccessible areas when students have a disability
Development project West Wing	Creation of bespoke Drama and Music suits to incorporate current regulation on physical accessibility	£1M total project cost	Academic year 23/24	New resource
Curriculum accessibility	Increase access to the curriculum for students with a disability, modifying the curriculum as necessary to ensure that students with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are the able-bodied students. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits.	N/A	2023	All clubs that are undertaken have clear access arrangements to ensure no one is disadvantaged. All students can access the full curriculum offer
Special needs considerations , i.e from SEND code of practice	Views of SENCO , Educational Psychologist, Counsellor sought to ensure the specific provisions in EHCPs and other reports are considered	N/A	2023/24	All SEN students have equal access through EHCP and LTP measures
Improve communication with all stakeholders with disabilities	Ensure that all students, parents and visitors have equal access to information	N/A	2023/24	Updating communication protocols to encompass all users