



ACORN HOUSE COLLEGE

Accessibility Plan, 2016-19

Acorn House College

Authorised by	The principal and the proprietor
Date	December 2015
Effective date of the policy	February 2016
Circulation	Teaching staff, all other staff, volunteers, parents and students (on request)
Last review date	June 2018
Next review date	June 2019

Contents

Vision Statement.....	3
Aims and Objectives.....	5
Current Good Practice	5
Physical Environment.....	5
Curriculum.....	7
Information	7
Access Audit	7
'Old Building'	8
'Lab8'	8
Management, Coordination and Implementation.....	9

Vision Statement

Under the Equality Act 2010 schools should have an Accessibility Plan. 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 lawfully 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 Accessibility Plan is listed as a statutory document of the Department for Education’s guidance on statutory policies for schools. The plan must be reviewed every three years and approved by the Governing Body. At Acorn House College the current plan will be published on the college website.

At Acorn House College we are committed to working together to provide an inspirational and exciting learning environment where all children can develop an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. We believe that children should feel happy, safe and valued so that they gain a respectful, caring attitude towards each other and the environment both locally and globally.

The Acorn House College Accessibility Plan will be used to advise other school planning documents and policies and will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes. The intention is to provide a projected plan for a three year period ahead of the next review date.

The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school’s Equality Objectives, and is available on request. Acorn House College is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are 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 Acorn House College Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to the school within a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable. The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:

- a) Increase access to the curriculum for all pupils, expanding the **curriculum** as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as the 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 after-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;

b) Improve and maintain access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities if necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;

c) 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, and the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe;

d) Relate to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information;

e) Implement whole school training that will recognize the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, strategies and documents:

- a) Behaviour, Rewards and School Discipline Policy
- b) Curriculum Policy
- c) Fire Emergency Plan
- d) Health and Safety Policy
- e) SEND Policy
- f) Admissions Policy

The Accessibility Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the school, which remains the responsibility of the proprietor/governing body. 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 to 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. The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website.

The college has regard to the need to allocate adequate resources in terms of financial resources, human resources and time to ensuring the aims and objectives of this policy are implemented according to the schedule suggested here. During the summer term governors' meeting, the principal will propose a capital expenditure investment in order to achieve the aims of this policy, several of which will benefit disabled and able-bodied students, staff and visitors.

Aims and Objectives

Our aims are to:

- a) Increase access to the curriculum for all pupils;
- b) Improve and maintain access to the physical environment;
- c) Improve the delivery of written information to pupils.

Current Good Practice

We ask about any disability or health condition at the point of enquiry by parents, students or carers. For parents and carers of children already at the school, we collect information on disability in accord with our SEND policy.

Physical Environment

The college is fortunate to have recently acquired and refurbished a brand-new 6000 sq ft new premises on the ground floor of the building accessed via the main college entrance, across a large spacious and brightly lit lobby and then via double swing

doors. The doors open out into a large open-plan area with accessible seating. Classrooms are large and spacious and designed with accessibility in mind. The classrooms are located to the top and to either side of a large atrium area. There are disabled male and female toilets in this area.

The older building is located on four floors and is also a 6000 sq ft and accessible by a staircase. There is a lift to all four floors. The classrooms are smaller and in some it would be difficult to provide suitable disabled access. A key to the lift is provided for any members of the college body who need or require it need and would be made available to any disabled member of the college or visitor.

Curriculum

Acorn House at present offers a wide curriculum. Some areas of the curriculum present challenges to the disabled, for example: PE for pupils with a physical impairment, science and 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.

With the creation of the new premises that opened fully in September 2016, it is possible (subject to constraints on the timetable) for pupils to access the full curriculum and all necessary facilities at the College without ever leaving the first floor. The exception to this will be Art and Design which remains located on the fourth floor of the college and there are no immediate plans to relocate this teaching room. Should we have a request from a pupil who is unable to use the stairs to study Art and Design, a plan would be made for them which may include having permanent access to the lift or to teach certain classes in a more accessible room.

Extra-curricular provision is still provided on a relatively small scale at the College and for most activities, provision can be made to allow for full or partial participation of disabled pupils. However there are some college trips that may be unsuitable for some pupils, for example with physical, visual or auditory disabilities and when this is the case alternative activities will be provided.

When required the College will provide specialist equipment to allow disabled pupils to access the curriculum. This may include but is not limited to:

- Specialist VDU equipment in ICT/computing lessons
- Large print versions of handouts and other documentation
- Test papers, handouts, homework etc printed on coloured paper
- Arranging seating plans to accommodate disabled pupils
- Rearranging timetables to allow disabled pupils to attend lessons on the ground floor only
- Use of ICT in the classroom to support learning

Information

Different forms of communication can be made available to enable all disabled pupils/parents to express their views and to hear the views of others. Access to information is planned, with a range of different formats available for all pupils, parents and staff. Information about the college can be provided on request in large-print if necessary.

Access Audit

The College is a four-storey building. For the purposes of this policy it is relevant to discuss access to the 'old' and 'new' premises. Both parts of the college are on the

same site and are both still in use. The 'older' premises is referred to as the 'old building' and the new section as 'Lab8.' In reality, Lab8 is an adjoining space accessed to the rear of the old building via double swing doors with no separate entrance and the 'buildings' are in fact on the same site. Both spaces are accessed from the outside by one main entrance to the front of the college. Access to the main door is via a ramp from the street and students and visitors are required to 'buzz' for access via a metal security door. Other than the emergency exits, this is the only access to the premises from outside. On the ground floor there is a large lobby, the reception area, the girls toilets and the doors to Lab8. All floors are accessed by a staircase to the left of the lobby area and by a lift. Access to the lift is currently given to staff, guests and students with a specific need (eg a disability, injury or illness). The lift can accommodate a wheelchair and is maintained and serviced regularly. There is a carpark which currently does not have a designated disabled parking space but a space would be made available if the need arose.

'Old Building'

From the stairwells, each of the four floors are accessed via a fire door. Wheelchair users and other users with disabilities may require assistance to gain access through these doors. Each of the four floors then has a similar layout with classrooms leading off a corridor to the south side of the building or to the east of the building.

On the first floor there are three classrooms to the south-side, including a computer room and three small labs to the east-side creating an L-shaped layout replicated on all four floors. On the second floor there are two classrooms, the staff room and a room currently used as a student study area. On the third floor there are five classrooms and a store-room. On the fourth floor there is an art room, a large classroom currently with a dual use as the middle school common room and two other classrooms.

On each floor there is a fire escape through the rear of one of the classrooms to the north of the building leading to an iron staircase.

The school has internal emergency signage and escape routes are clearly marked. This includes refuge areas for wheelchair users.

'Lab8'

Lab8 is a new development on one floor to the rear of the existing building. It officially opened in March 2016. It contains a large open plan study/break-out area eight class rooms including a computer room, a lab, the principal's office, the vice principal's office and an accessible medical room. There are also male and female disabled toilets and a small server/ICT admin room. The rooms are spacious and could accommodate disabled pupils. The open plan area is accessible and suitable for disabled users.

Management, Coordination and Implementation

We will consult with experts when new situations regarding pupils with disabilities are experienced. The Governors and Senior Management Team will continually monitor levels of accessibility.