

# Accessibility Plan

September 2016



### KEY FACTS:

- ✦ **This plan enables schools to ensure compliance with laws regarding opportunity for pupils/potential pupils.**
- ✦ **It is reviewed every three years.**
- ✦ **Cognita will comply with statutory requirements and guidance.**
- ✦ **Individuals are responsible for their discriminatory actions.**
- ✦ **The school's liability extends beyond the life of the pupil at the school.**
- ✦ **The spirit of the law is to make/consider reasonable adjustments.**
- ✦ **The plan outlines Cognita Schools' duties around accessibility and how to deal with claims.**
- ✦ **Guidance for creating each school's unique plan is given in the Appendix.**

## 1 Background

- 1.1. On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. (For further information see the Equality and Diversity Policy).
- 1.2. The Act makes it unlawful for **Cognita and the school's governance committee**, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:
  - 1.2.1. Admissions;
  - 1.2.2. The way we provide education for pupils;
  - 1.2.3. The way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
  - 1.2.4. By excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.3. The protected characteristics are:
  - 1.3.1. **sex;**
  - 1.3.2. **race;**
  - 1.3.3. **disability;**
  - 1.3.4. **religion or belief;**
  - 1.3.5. **sexual orientation;**
  - 1.3.6. **gender reassignment;**
  - 1.3.7. **pregnancy or maternity;**
- 1.4. There is a still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.
- 1.5. The Equality Act applies to all independent schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005). Furthermore, as proprietors Cognita are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.

- 1.6. Any person such as staff in schools who act on behalf of the proprietor, Cognita and any governance committee, are responsible for their own discriminatory actions and the Proprietor (Cognita Schools and the governance committee) is also liable unless it can prove that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the staff member from doing the discriminatory action, or from doing anything of that kind.
- 1.7. The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or old pupil networks.

## 2 Disability Discrimination Act

- 2.1. The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:-
  - 2.1.1. the definition of disability is less restrictive;
  - 2.1.2. direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
  - 2.1.3. failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
  - 2.1.4. from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

## 3 Definition of Disability

- 3.1. The Act defines disability as *when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*
- 3.2. Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.
- 3.3. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelve months.-

## 4 Reasonable Adjustments

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (ie 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.
- 4.4. 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 include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.
- 4.5. Our SEN 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.

- 4.6. 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; eg hearing aids.
- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. 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.

## 5 Our Vision

*Achievement, Challenge, Excellence:*

*' A place where the best teachers ignite your child's passion to learn. Where your child will be challenged to attain academic excellence in a stimulating, caring and supportive environment, so that they will become independent, critical thinkers with knowledge and confidence to succeed in life'*

- 5.1. For example, we believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future. Context of Cognita's vision to be included.
- 5.2. Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.

## 6 Our duty around Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

- 6.1. Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:--
  - 6.1.1. increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
  - 6.1.2. improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
  - 6.1.3. improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.
- 6.2. Our plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.
- 6.3. Our approach includes the following:--
  - 6.3.1. access, audit and review (**See appendix 2**) (ie the nature of the schools' population, context, future pupil numbers, staff training needs, impact of anti-bullying strategies, timetabling, trips, medicines, clubs, outcomes for SEND in external exams, views of parents, pupils, voluntary sector, symbols, signage, font size etc);
  - 6.3.2. identify actions;
  - 6.3.3. set goals and targets;
  - 6.3.4. consult on the proposed plan;
  - 6.3.5. publicize the plan;
  - 6.3.6. implementation; and
  - 6.3.7. evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan.

6.4. Our accessibility plan is outlined on the attached proforma at **Appendix 1**.

### **7 Discrimination Claims**

7.1. Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against our school must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.

7.2. Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil against our school, would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.-

### **8 Monitoring & Evaluation**

8.1. The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is Simon Antwis.

8.2. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.

8.3. It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.

8.4. Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with our Cognita Facilities colleague by Nicola McGinley

8.5. Progress reports are provided termly to our school's compliance committee by Nicola McGinley and thereafter reported to our Senior Leadership Team.

8.6. Any failure to meet target deadlines are reported to the Governors Committee meeting and thereafter reported by exception to UK Compliance Committee.

### **9 Related Policies, Guidelines, Templates and Forms**

- Special Educational Needs;
- Equality & Diversity;
- Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff;
- Safeguarding Children including Child Protection;
- Health & Safety; and
- Premises Management.

**APPENDIX 1**

**CREATING AN ACCESS PLAN**

*This is an example of a plan that a school might produce after reviewing existing plans (in particular refurbishments and arrangements and SEN policy), looking at options for improving accessibility within existing arrangements and an audit of the school site for accessibility. The school should monitor the implementation of the plan and to keep under review the access needs of the school.*

**APPENDIX 2**

**IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST**

*This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.*

<b>Section 1 : How does your school deliver the curriculum?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?		
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectation of all pupils?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		
<b>Section 2 : Is your School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms; the assembly hall; canteen; library;		

## Accessibility Plan

gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities; playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all pupils?		
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?		
<b>Section 3 : How does your School deliver materials in other formats?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		



**Accessibility Plan March 2016-2017**  
**Delivery of/ Access to the Curriculum**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>
<b>Communication between Dyslexia Action (DA), ALN Co-ordinator and Teaching staff</b>	Review current practice and ensure that all staff are fully aware of difficulties and needs of individual ALN pupils including	Head Teacher, ALN Co-ordinator DA, SLT, Teaching Staff	Ongoing	Improved awareness of individual ALN pupils' needs

## Accessibility Plan

	IEPs. Not only those who attend DA but other pupils.			
<b>Communicate ALN pupils' needs to new/ supply teaching staff.</b>	Ensure information is included in new teacher / supply teacher information pack	Head Teacher, ALN Co-ordinator, Business Manager	Ongoing	All staff will be aware of pupils requiring additional support or monitoring
<b>Further develop access arrangements for ALN GCSE pupils.</b>	Continue to improve access arrangements including developing use of ICT and Claro Read	Exams Officer ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	All pupils will have every opportunity possible to access and achieve their potential in external/GCSE examinations.
<b>Subjects/ GCSE options</b>	Annual review of available subjects. Discuss choices with parents and pupils ensuring whole curriculum is available for all but bearing in mind that some may need a reduced curriculum load.	Head Teacher SLT ALN Co-ordinator Subject Teachers	Spring Term	Pupils/ Parents satisfied with GCSE choices.
<b>If required - specialist tools for disabled pupils.</b>	Procurement of specialist books with large print, writing slopes, pencil grips and packages such as Clara Read	ALN Co-ordinator, Business Manager	If/when required	Improved access to the curriculum

## Accessibility Plan

Area for Improvement	Action	Responsibilities	Timescale	Success Criteria
<b>ICT facilities/ equipment for pupils with ALN</b>	Purchase of sets iPad's and laptops for pupil use.	Head Teacher, Business Manager, ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	All pupils will have access to various technologies to improve learning. Pupils will benefit from being able to produce work on laptops instead of writing at length
<b>Individual pupil tracking and monitoring, target setting</b>	Continue implementation and use of Pupil Asset/Prep Trackers	Head Teacher, SLT, Teachers. ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Improved individual pupil tracking and assessment, target setting
<b>Staff Training</b>	Undertake an audit of staff training requirements, identifying specific staff training needs. Improve staff knowledge and skills in delivering the curriculum to all ALN pupils.	Head Teacher SLT ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Improved knowledge and understanding of ALN. Improved teaching skills.
<b>Extra-curricular activities</b>	Review all extra-curricular activities within the day and after/ out of school. Ensure accessibility is offered to all.	Head Teacher, SLT, Teachers. ALN Co-ordinator	September 2015-2016	Wider range of opportunities for all.
<b>Policies</b>	Complete review of Anti – bullying, Health and Safety and Child Protection procedures. Ensure that all staff have read and signed documentation.	Head Teacher, Deputy Head's, Business Manager,	Ongoing	Updated policies in line with school policy audit and any new legislation. Staff awareness improved Place all policies on M-Drive.
<b>Classroom assistant /Teaching support</b>	Review available pupil support to ensure best possible outcomes for pupils. Include any further requirements in School Development Plan and budget accordingly when possible.	Head Teacher, Deputy Head's, Business Manager, ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Endeavour to provide ALN pupils the support necessary.



**Accessibility Plan March 2016 - 2017**

**Physical Access/Environment**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>
<b>Ramp access to buildings</b>	Disabled access currently provided in Administration Block, Dining Hall, Prep School and Senior School. Assess possibility of improved/permanent ramp access into buildings and site.	Business Manager/Maintenance Team	September 2015	Create mobile ramps to ensure Access to all buildings on site.
<b>Review disabled access toilets throughout the site to ensure compliance with</b>	Decide on location and find out costs involved.	Business Manager/Maintenance Team	Capex 2015-2016	Meet the standards stipulated with the Building Regulations, Approved Document M 2004 and the British Standard BS 8300-2009.
<b>Assess accessibility in current main school building</b>	Ensure that all pupils use stairs safely. Ensure that bags are stored safely and do not obstruct corridors and landings.	Teachers and Maintenance Team	Ongoing	Improved accessibility to all areas.
<b>Critical Incident and Fire Evacuation Plans</b>	Ensure that all pupils and staff are assessed in respect of their ability to evacuate the facilities effectively and address their specific needs	Business Manager/ Teachers	Ongoing	Ensure that PEEPS are created for all pupils and staff will access needs Ensure that the access is reviewed for those pupils with accessibility needs.
<b>Car Parking</b>	Review car parking areas to consider safety/ accessibility	Business Manager, Maintenance Team	September 2015	Improved accessibility for disabled/elderly, less mobile drivers.

## Accessibility Plan

Area for Improvement	Action	Responsibilities	Timescale	Success Criteria
<b>Timetabling</b>	Ensure the timetable is constructed with sympathetic consideration given to those pupils and staff with individual needs. However, the location of specialist equipment may preclude some possibilities	Deputy Heads/ Business Manager	Ongoing	Ensure classrooms, furniture and seating arrangements are appropriate to facilitate access and learning.
<b>Classrooms</b>	Organise classrooms optimally to promote the participation and independence of pupils-with particular reference to disabled pupils	Deputy Head/Business Manager/ ALN Co-ordinator	September 2016	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning of all pupils with particular emphasis on pupils with specific needs

## Accessibility Plan 2016 -2017

### Provision of Information

Area for Improvement	Action	Responsibilities	Timescale	Success Criteria
<b>Communication</b>	Audit of needs of current and prospective pupils and other school users Review school website	Marketing Manager/ ALN Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Improved communication to all school users
<b>Individual pupil tracking, monitoring and assessment</b>	Continue assessment of pupils using Pupil Asset/ Pupil Trackers– Implement Firefly as a learning platform, parent portal, intranet and VLE.	Headteacher/ SLT/ Teachers/ ALN Co-ordinator/	Ongoing	Improved awareness of individual pupil performance and progress enabling more targeted teaching and learning to take place and increased communication between key stakeholders
<b>Questionnaires/ surveys/ parental and other school users' opinions</b>	Carry out an Accessibility Audit	Head Teacher/Business Manager. Maintenance Team	January 2016	Audit Completed and Action Points remedied
<b>Signage</b>	Ensure all signage in and around school is clear and appropriate	Headteacher/Business Manager/Maintenance Team	By Ongoing	Clearer signage for all
<b>Written information to pupils/ parents</b>	ALN Co-ordinator to work with staff on ensuring information is available in different formats e.g. large print, simplified diagrams, orally, coloured paper, differentiation of work, where necessary. Analysis of	ALN Co-ordinator and all staff- to discuss at Faculty Meetings ALN Co-ordinator to meet with parents on request Head Teacher - through lesson observations.	Termly staff meetings Continuous	Differentiated information to cover all needs Improved understanding from staff on children's learning styles

**Accessibility Plan**

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	teaching and learning styles and impact on pupils			
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