

## 1. Introduction

All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law (the Equality Act, 2010). Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:

- a) increase access to the curriculum for disabled students;
- b) improve the physical environment of the school to increase access for disabled students; and
- c) make written information more accessible to disabled students by providing information in a range of different ways.

A person has a disability if they have a **physical** or **mental impairment** that has a **substantial** and **long-term** adverse effect on their ability to carry out **normal day-to-day activities**.

This is the Accessibility Plan for The Blandford School.

## 2. Other policies

Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- SEND/Inclusion Policy and related SEN Information Report
- Administering Medication Policy
- Supporting Children and Young People with Medical Conditions Policy
- Equality Information and Equality Objectives. It should also be read alongside the following school policies, strategies and documents:
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Behaviour and Attendance Policy
- School Strategy Plan

## 3. Our vision and aims

*'All students at The Blandford School, irrespective of their background or the challenges they face, have full access to the wide range of opportunities and experiences available at school.'*

At The Blandford School (TBS), we recognise that some of our young people may require additional support to achieve their potential. Each pupil, regardless of their starting point, is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is relevant to their educational needs. As an inclusive school, it is our intention to ensure that all young people have their needs met within a caring and supportive environment. We want all our young people to access all elements of school life, including school clubs, activities and trips. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010, by removing disadvantage faced by students with a disability and eliminating discrimination. We will ensure that through whole school training, all staff and governors will be aware of our duties to support our young people with disabilities, in line with the Equality Act, 2010.

In implementing our Accessibility Plan, we will consider the views, wishes and feelings of our young people and their families.

#### **4. Current good practice**

##### **Identification**

The Blandford School asks for information on any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parent(s) carer(s). We also carefully observe our students' progress and behaviour and will discuss any concerns with parent(s) carer(s), as necessary.

##### **Curriculum**

The Blandford School has improved access to the curriculum for disabled students through the following means:

- using multimedia activities and interactive ICT equipment (Interactive Whiteboards and iPads) to support specific curriculum areas, e.g. numeracy and literacy;
  - providing an adapted curriculum, designed according to need and where necessary with specialist input, for those students that require this;
  - offering a Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable of the impact of medical and other needs experienced by current students on roll;
  - organising classrooms so that they promote the participation and independence of all students;
  - staff INSET training regarding sensory impairments and the school environment;
  - modifying worksheets and curriculum content into large font for students with a visual impairment (VI), printing on different coloured paper etc. The Blandford School has already improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for disabled students by:
  - providing flat or ramped access to all school entrances;
  - installing a wheelchair accessible lift to the upper floor(s) in three blocks. It has not proved possible to install a lift to Block 4 because of the age and design of the building;
  - dedicating several parking bays outside the main school entrance for students and families, and visitors with a disability;
  - providing an accessible toilet with shower and changing facilities;
  - adding highlighting tape on all thresholds and steps, and yellow paint to the edges of pathways for students with reduced vision;
  - ensuring that there is good lighting throughout school, making use of natural light where possible and reducing glare through the use of roller blinds in the hallway and classrooms;
  - removing and fixing of potential trip hazards and keeping all floor spaces uncluttered;
  - providing fabric blinds, curtains, carpets and rubber seals to doors to improve sound quality;
- DCC Model Accessibility Plan
- ensuring data projectors, plumbing and heating are regularly serviced and not too noisy wherever possible.
  - made arrangements to relocate the school's medical room to a ground floor location;
  - made arrangements to relocate the school's Learning Support and Business & ICT faculties to improve accessibility for students with disabilities;

- timetabled ICT lessons for students with mobility issues to ensure they take place in a ground floor ICT suite;
- timetabled RE lessons for students with mobility issues to ensure they take place in a ground floor classroom;
- four bio-bidets in accessible toilets.
- The Blandford School already makes written information more accessible to disabled students through: modifying written information so that this is available in large print and using different coloured paper for students with a visual impairment; adhering to guidelines from specialists (such as the Hearing and Vision Support Services) regarding the presentation of all written information, paying attention to layout and colour.

TBS continues to upgrade facilities and methods of working to accommodate all students, visitors and staff. The school has seen some adaptations and upgrades during the academic year 2022-2023. Pupil toilets in block 5 have been adapted to create an emotionally safer environment. The introduction of a one-way system in block 1 and block 3 has helped reduce traffic during transition times helping to reduce sensory load. Most of the school site is now accessible to wheelchair users except for the first floor in block 4. The car park was resurfaced removing trip hazards for visitors and students accessing the school via reception. Steps and edges have been painted to provide high contrast for the visually impaired. Staff training and adaptations to the P.E. curriculum have enabled students with visual impairments to participate in lessons and extra curriculum activities.

Further upgrades planned for 2023-2024 to the school's IT will enable school wide access to assistive technology. This will provide reliable access to speech-to-text and text reader functions for our young people with fine motor difficulties, visual impairments, or language barriers and offer them better access to the curriculum.

Access to a broad and balanced curriculum is a stated aim and pathways are open to all students in Stage 3. Similarly, options at Key Stage 4 are not restricted. Lesson observations and curriculum reviews scheduled for 2023-2024 will focus on curriculum access for all our young people with SEND. Staff training during 2023-2024 focussed on the emotionally safe classroom and we will build on existing practices, such as, choral reading and direct questioning techniques to help reduce pupil anxieties and lesson avoidance. Curriculum reviews are ongoing, and consideration of alternative qualifications are being considered. The Prince's Trust Award was introduced in the academic year 2023-2024.

All students are tested for literacy difficulties on entry to the school and Exam Access Arrangements considered. Teachers can make a referral for assessment should they have concerns about a pupil's progress. Parent(s) carer(s) can raise concerns via their child's tutor or Head of Year. Where appropriate, Exams Access Arrangements will be put in place. It is important to note that the young person must use these arrangements as their normal way of working. Formal Exams Access Arrangements assessments will take place no earlier than the summer term of Year 9, as per Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requirements. If assessments indicate a long-term learning need and the pupil has used Exam Access Arrangements as their normal way of working, the school will apply to JCQ for Exams Access Arrangements on their behalf.

### **Arrangements for the admission of disabled students.**

Admission for all our young people is in accordance with the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Dorset Council 2023-2024 policy and Parent's Guide. Admissions documents can be found on The Blandford School website.

We encourage parent(s) carer(s) to visit the school and/or speak to the Inclusion Lead/SENDCo to discuss their child's needs and potential provision. TBS admission form includes space for parent(s) carer(s) to include any information relating to SEND and this is passed to the Learning Support department for consideration. All SEND information is recorded and passed to the relevant staff. We continue to develop strong links with our feeder Primary Schools and attend Year 6 planning meetings and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan annual reviews. For young people transferring to TBS at other times in the academic year, we request pupil information from the feeder school and undertake literacy assessments on entry.

For young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, consultation with the SEN Provision Lead and parent(s) carer(s) is carried out to ensure suitability of placement. Further information about this can be requested from the young person's SEN Provision Lead.

## **5. Implementation**

Our Accessibility Plan shows how access to The Blandford School has been improved for disabled students (and for staff and visitors to the school) and anticipates how we will make reasonable adjustments to support them whenever possible. We will ensure that we do so within a reasonable timeframe.

Reasonable adjustments are positive actions that help students with a disability to fully participate in school life. In doing this, we have thought about:

- how to ensure disabled students are as prepared for life as their non-disabled peers;
- how we can encourage students with a disability to take part in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits;
- how we might provide auxiliary aids and services (something or someone that provides help or support) to students with a disability to support their access to the curriculum;
- adding specialist facilities to our school as necessary and improving the physical environment;
- how we can improve the delivery of written information, including making this available in various preferred formats and within a reasonable timeframe;
- relocating and timetabling faculties, support areas and classes to improve accessibility;
- providing Teaching Assistant support in a way designed to improve independence over time in order to fully prepare students for the next stage of their education/careers.

Our Accessibility Plan has been written based upon information from the Local Authority (or site surveyor) and in liaison with students, parents, staff and governors of the school. It will advise other school planning documents.

The Blandford School will work in partnership with the Local Authority in developing and implementing this Accessibility Plan and will adopt in principle the Local Authority *Strategy for Accessibility*.

Environmental or physical works undertaken in the school to improve access will follow and be guided by the relevant building regulations as advised by the Site Surveyor and the *Local Authority Strategy for Accessibility*.

We will consult with experts when new situations regarding students with disabilities are experienced.

The Blandford School's Accessibility Plan will be implemented by the Headteacher.

Sufficient resources will be allocated by The Blandford School to implement this Accessibility Plan.

## **6. Monitoring**

The Blandford School Accessibility Plan covers a three year period but will be reviewed regularly and updated if needed. It will be monitored through the Governors' Resources Committee.

The governing body will monitor The Blandford School's activity under the Equality Act 2010 (and in particular Schedule 10 regarding Accessibility and Schedule 13 regarding Reasonable Adjustments) and will advise upon the compliance with that duty.

The Blandford School's Accessibility Plan may be monitored by Ofsted during Inspection processes in relation to Schedules 10 and 13 of the Equality Act 2010.

Any complaint relating to the application of this Accessibility Plan (and any action or omission relating to it) must be made in accordance with the Blandford School Complaints Procedure.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Review date \_\_\_\_\_

**The Blandford School ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – 2023-2026 : Improving access to the curriculum**

<b>What needs to be done?</b>	<b>How will this be achieved?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>	<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>
<i>Continued CPD programme to focus on key areas of need, as identified by key data, and to adapt curriculums accordingly.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CPD delivered by internal staff and external agencies.</i></li> <li><i>Senior Teacher and Inclusion Leader to review curriculum offer and develop accordingly.</i></li> <li><i>Faculty/Subject Leaders to revise curriculum offer and resources in response to CPD and feedback from curriculum scrutiny.</i></li> </ol>	<i>Deputy Headteacher</i>  <i>Assistant Headteacher, CPD</i>  <i>Inclusion Leader</i>	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li><i>Progress in line with national data.</i></li> <li><i>Curriculums adapted to support pupil needs.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Continued strengthening of relationships with support services, Hearing Impairment, Vision Impairment, MHST and CAMHS to support adaptation of curriculum offer.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>CPD delivered by internal staff and external agencies.</i></li> <li><i>Senior Teacher and Inclusion Leader to review curriculum offer and develop accordingly.</i></li> <li><i>Faculty/Subject Leaders to revise curriculum offer and resources in response to CPD and feedback from curriculum scrutiny.</i></li> <li><i>Introduction of the Prince's Trust qualification.</i></li> </ol>	<i>Deputy Headteacher</i>  <i>Assistant Headteacher, CPD</i>  <i>Inclusion Leader</i>  <i>Heads of Department</i>	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li><i>Progress in line with national data.</i></li> <li><i>Curriculums adapted to support pupil needs.</i></li> </ul>

## **The Blandford School ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – 2023-2026: Improving the physical environment**

This plan is structured in conjunction with the school's Asset Management Plan, Health & Safety Audits, the Capital Build Programme and the Suitability Plan. The plan considers the essential work necessary to ensure reasonable adjustments have been made to the fabric of the main buildings to accommodate accessibility issues. As far as possible, work has been undertaken on temporary buildings to facilitate accessibility arrangements. In some cases Health & Safety issues necessitate more prompt action.

<b>What needs to be done?</b>	<b>How will this be achieved?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>	<b>Cost (est.) £</b>	<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>
<i>Explore upgrade of pupil toilets to create emotionally safer areas.</i>	1. <i>Pupil toilets programme of works costed and potentially upgraded.</i>	<i>Headteacher Site Manager</i>	<i>On going programme of replacement and upgrade.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pupil voice.</i></li> <li>• <i>Staff voice.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduced anti-social behaviour.</i></li> </ul>
<i>To improve the physical environment to accommodate for visitors, staff and students with visual impairments and/or visual processing difficulties.</i>	1. <i>Actions addressed from annual Vision Support Service report.</i> 2. <i>To develop uniform approaches to written information, taking into account visual impairments and/or visual processing difficulties.</i>	<i>Headteacher Site Manager Vision Support Service Inclusion Leader</i>	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual Vision Support Service report highlighting progress.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pupil Voice.</i></li> </ul>

What needs to be done?	How will this be achieved?	Who is responsible?	When will this be done?	Cost (est.) £	How can we tell if this is successful?
<i>To improve the physical environment to accommodate for visitors, staff and students with hearing impairments and/or auditory processing difficulties.</i>	1. <i>Actions addressed from annual Hearing Support Service report.</i>	Headteacher Site Manager Hearing Support Service Inclusion Leader	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual Hearing Support Service report highlighting progress.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pupil Voice.</i></li> </ul>
<i>To improve the physical environment to accommodate visitors, staff and students with sensory difficulties.</i>	1. <i>Actions addressed from ASC Specialist Teacher report.</i>	Headteacher Site Manager ASC Specialist Teacher Inclusion Leader	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li>• <i>ASC Specialist Teacher report highlighting progress.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pupil Voice.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Explore upgrade of block 4 to include lift access.</i>	1. <i>Installation of a lift costed and potentially installed in block 4.</i>	Headteacher Site Manager Inclusion Leader	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lift access in block 4.</i></li> </ul>



**The Blandford School ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - 2023-2026: Making written information more accessible**

<b>What needs to be done?</b>	<b>How will this be achieved?</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will this be done?</b>	<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>
<i>The availability of written information to be reviewed to ensure these are presented in accessible formats.</i>	<i>1. To provide easy read versions of school policies.</i>	<i>Headteacher Inclusion Leader</i>	<i>Progress reviewed annually and reported to the Governing Board.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li><i>Pupil, visitor and parent/guardian voice.</i></li> </ul>
<i>To make available assistive technology for those with visual impairments.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Upgrade assistive technology to include iPads, laptops and audio recording devices.</i></li> <li><i>2. Replace projector bulbs and replace faulty blinds to reduce screen glare.</i></li> <li><i>3. Make available assistive technology for classroom and examination purposes.</i></li> <li><i>4. Present all written information in a format accessible to a read function.</i></li> </ol>	<i>Headteacher Teachers Exams Manager ICT Inclusion Leader</i>	<i>Summer 2024</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Students and their families feel supported, and their needs understood.</i></li> <li><i>Pupil voice.</i></li> <li><i>Greater access to assistive technology.</i></li> <li><i>Lessons observations show appropriate use of assistive technology.</i></li> <li><i>Improved pupil outcomes.</i></li> </ul>