

Accessibility Policy and Plan

Approved by the Head teacher, Principal and Governors of The Bridge SEN School

Date of review	January 2021
Date of next review	January 2023

Introduction

This policy for The Bridge School is prepared in accordance with the planning duty in Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) amended part 4 of the DDA so that it became applicable to education and to prevent discrimination against learners with disabilities in their access to education. In compliance to these Acts, amendments and directives, The Bridge SEN School upholds three duties:

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- Plan to increase access for disabled students

The policy applies to all staff members (teaching, non-teaching and support staff), the Governors, stakeholders, social workers and other professionals either working in the school or undertaking an assessment at the School.

The Policy is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy may be obtained from the School Admin. office. All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. All new employees are required to state that they have read and understood this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the *Policies Register*.

Legal Status

This policy is prepared with regard to the guidelines given under:

- **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995,**

- **SEN and Disability Act 2001** (SENDA) amended part 4 of the DDA
- **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**
- **Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010**
- **Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice**
- **Regulatory Requirements**, Part 3 Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils and Part 5 Premises of and Accommodation at Schools of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England)(Amendment) Regulations currently in force.
- **Equality Act 2010, Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice**: to 25 years (DfE: Jan.2015)

This plan has been created to meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on his or her ability to undertake normal day to day activities. Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more - 3 - than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled Student faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

Aim

The Bridge School prepares this plan which is intended to be practiced by everyone working at The Bridge, published, reviewed, revised and implemented by the Principal and Head Teacher. Our aim is for all learners to access a robust and balanced curriculum in a safe learning environment and there will be clarity of provision for them. All learners are valued and our school aims to treat all its students fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students alike without discrimination of any kind. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to all students

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues. The school supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns. The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To enable students with SEN needs participate in The Bridge SEN School curriculum to the maximum extent possible and meet with their learning objectives
- To improve physical environment of the School so that all students with SEN needs can take advantage of the education, facilities and services
- To enhance the delivery of information methods by taking into account the views expressed by the students and parents on their most preferred ways of communication.
- actively promote the accessibility and inclusion of all SEN students at the School, so that they all can access education and services provided at The Bridge SEN school alike
- To ensure that all members of staff of the School are aware of and follow the Bridge School approach to student accessibility, inclusion and wellbeing

Principles:

The Bridge SEN School recognises its duty to:

- ensure that compliance with the DDA is consistent with the School's Equality Policy; its Equal Opportunities Policy and any other School policy that has a focus and impact on it's disabled students, staff and parents/carers
- not discriminate against disabled students, staff and parents/carers in admissions and exclusions or in provision of education and associated services
- not treat disabled students, staff and parents/carers less favourably
- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students, staff and parents/carers at a substantial disadvantage
- publish an Accessibility Plan (detailed herein as follows).

The Accessibility Plan:

The Bridge SEN School's plan is as follows:

- In performing their duties, members of Staff, Teachers and School Governors will have regard to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Code of Practice for Schools (2002)
- The School recognises and values parents' or carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects their and the child's right to confidentiality
- The School provides all students with a broad, balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, promoting the development of a more inclusive curriculum
- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to students' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- accommodating the needs of disabled staff and parents/carers as far as is reasonably practical.

Activity:

This section outlines the main activities and facilities which the School already has in place or undertakes, or is planning to implement or undertake, in order to achieve the key objectives.

Education and related activities:

The School already offers a broad and balanced curriculum with a diverse range of additional opportunities that are appropriately differentiated so as to maximise student access and to encourage wider participation. The School will continue to review provision and seek input from students, parents/carers, relevant specialist advisers and appropriate health professionals on a regular basis.

Physical access to students and environment

The School has in place full disabled access to all its facilities and has ensured that such access has been maintained in its recent development of additional teaching spaces. This is in full compliance to both premises at 148-150 Old Kent Road, and 167 Old Kent Road.

Full access is also in place to all external parts of the School's site. The School has similarly ensured that there are sufficient toilet/washroom facilities within its teaching areas designed specifically for disabled users. There are dedicated sensory rooms for the exclusive use of SEN students at both premises. As has been best practice in the past, the School will continue to take account of the needs of its students with physical difficulties and other impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, any change in layout, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes.

Students do not have unsupervised access to potentially dangerous areas. Doors to these areas are locked at all times, when not in use. All flammables are kept securely locked. These areas have been identified as 'risky areas' for which there is a risk assessment done. In the kitchen area and computer suite, students will not be allowed to enter without supervision. They will not be allowed to operate any gadgets, switches or sockets directly – these acts will be facilitated by support workers, teachers or teaching assistants.

Physical environment

Action	Strategy	Timescale	Responsibility	Success criteria
When new structural or fit-out works are carried out for access requirements	All contractors to work to meet Southwark Council Environment Access Standards	Ongoing	School Administrator / Academic Manager / Assigned Contractors	All works supported by school Principal, Senior Management and in-line with regulations in the Equality Act 2010.
Investigate quality and appropriateness of facilities for the disabled	Continued liaison with outside agencies to ensure disabled facilities fit current needs of the School.	Ongoing	School Administrator / Academic Manager / Principal	On-going use of facilities, any reasonable adjustments considered and implemented.
School is aware of the access needs of students, parents/carers	All new starter forms to include information regarding access needs e.g. the need for large print in correspondence or printed in other easily readable languages including pictorial	(At term starts) for new starters	School Administrator	On-going dialogue between parents and carers and school Administrators to ensure that appropriate support is in place.

	signs. Audit accessibility for parents / carers for day to day routines and for one-off events.	Ongoing	Office staff/Event organizers	
To make the school more accessible for the hearing impaired	Hearing impaired parents will always be escorted from the reception to a designated place in the Library and will be supported by a qualified staff member.	Ongoing	All staff members	Hearing Impaired are able to attend meetings in the School Library or in any other area of the school as necessary.
To make the school more accessible for the visually impaired	Review signs with symbols, review size of type on visuals in reception area through H&S audits	Ongoing	School Administrator / Academic Manager / Principal	On-going dialogue between parents and carers. Appropriate adjustments made as found.
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