



# Policy

<b>Policy title:</b>	Accessibility Policy
<b>Function:</b>	For information and guidance about Blue Coat School's commitment to accessibility. This document forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to inform students, parents, staff and the general public.
<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Statutory guidance:</b>	The equality act (2010) Advice on standards for school premises (DFE 2015)
<b>Audience:</b>	Students, Parents, Staff, Leaders, Governors, General public
<b>Ownership:</b>	Governing body/Headteacher
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	March 2017
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Finance and estates committee
<b>Next review:</b>	Every two-years – March 2019

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## Aims and objectives

- 1 This policy sets out The Blue Coat School's commitment to providing an environment that enables equal access and engagement for all pupils, staff, parents and visitors in line with The equality act (2010).
- 2 This policy provides guidance so that the school provides a positive experience for everybody it engages with regardless of:
  - social, ethnic, cultural or spiritual background
  - physical, emotional or learning need
- 3 This policy focusses explicitly on promoting and supporting good accessibility and is designed to complement the aims and objectives of the school's equality policy.
- 4 This policy supports the schools commitment to positively model everybody's responsibility to promote and support accessibility.

## Roles and responsibilities

- 5 The governing body will ensure that this policy meets current statutory requirements and that it is reviewed every two years.
- 6 The headteacher will ensure that:
  - this policy is reviewed and updated in line with legislation, statutory guidance and advice
  - the Blue Coat School adheres to and achieves the principles of accessibility set out by this policy
  - all employees are well guided about their responsibility to ensure everybody in the school community has equal access to all aspects of school
  - the accessibility action plan included in this policy is informed by consultation and that it is regularly and rigorously reviewed.
- 7 The deputy headteacher (curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment) will ensure that:
  - heads of department are well guided about strategies to support accessibility throughout the curriculum
  - heads of department carefully consider the outcomes of all groups of students during subject self-review.
- 8 The deputy headteacher (personal development, behaviour and welfare) will ensure that:
  - the school collects and records good quality information about students' needs
  - all staff have good access to information about students' needs
  - key stage leaders carefully consider the outcomes of all groups of students during pastoral self-review.
- 9 The director of resources will ensure that:
  - the school building provides adequate access to member of the school community
  - support staff teams understand and act on their responsibilities to promote accessibility for members of the school community that they engage with in their respective areas.

- 10 All employees of the school will have due regard for the principles and aims of this policy. Staff will ensure that they:
- understand their responsibilities as set out by this policy
  - are alert to any potential inequality of access
  - take action to address inequality of access where possible
  - report inequality of access to their line manager where necessary
  - engage with consultations about promoting good accessibility effectively

## Procedures and practices

### General principles

- 11 The Blue Coat School is committed to ensuring that all students, staff and visitors enjoy equal access to all aspects of school regardless of impairment, disability or special educational need in support of a culture of inclusion, support and awareness.
- 12 The school will be guided by The equality act (2010) in ensuring that no student, staff or visitor is treated less favourably than any other, and that where possible, reasonable adjustments are made to provide equal access to the curriculum, school site or information that the school shares.
- 14 The school is committed to taking positive action in the spirit of The equality act (2010) with regard to any form of accessibility.
- 15 The Blue Coat School also recognises its responsibility to adapt its approaches in line with changing accessibility needs.
- 16 The school will set out a 2 year accessibility action plan (Annex A) to support and achieve the principles of accessibility for all set out by this policy. This policy and the accessibility plan will outline these principles against 3 clear areas:
- access to the curriculum
  - access to facilities and resources
  - access to information.

### Access to the curriculum

- 17 All students will have equal access to all of the learning opportunities provided by the school's curriculum and extra-curricular activities such as school clubs, cultural activities, social activities and school visits.
- 18 The school will always provide spaces that are conducive for all students to learn well. This includes careful consideration of the optimum learning environment for students with some special educational needs to ensure appropriate sight, acoustics and lighting.
- 19 Teachers will be well guided about any additional learning or special educational needs that students may have. This will be reflected in teaching strategies employed by teachers so that:
- classroom based learning meets the needs of all students
  - learning opportunities in practical subjects are equally available and accessible for all students

- all students learning needs are considered when making use of other resources and facilities around school
- 20 The Blue Coat School recognises its responsibility to ensure that all students develop a good understanding of an inclusive and supportive society. Where appropriate, teachers will give students the chance to observe, learn about, and participate in ensuring all students have equal access to good learning, development and social opportunities.
- 21 The schools Accessibility action plan (Annex A) sets out The Blue Coat School's current priorities to ensure that its curriculum provision can be equally accessed by and supports all students.

### **Access to the facilities and resources**

- 22 Students, staff and visitors should recognise that access to the school's site, facilities and resources is specifically linked to the role they have within the school's community. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy sets out a clear framework to support the school's commitment for equality of access within students, staff and visitors.
- 23 All students, regardless of impairment, disability or special educational need will have equal access to the floors, corridors and spaces provided by the school's site. This includes:
- learning spaces such as classrooms, libraries and study areas used for curriculum and extra curricular activities
  - large spaces such as the school hall or chapel used for collective events
  - domestic spaces such as toilets or the dining hall
  - recreational spaces such as the court yard, quad and other outside spaces used at social times such as break and lunch
- 24 All staff, regardless of impairment, disability or special educational need will have equal access to the floors, corridors and spaces provided by the school's site. This includes:
- the spaces that they are required to use to undertake their role such as classrooms and other learning resources
  - the facilities and resources necessary to deliver their primary duties effectively such as staff working and social spaces
  - parts of the site required to support their engagement with students, other staff, parents and visitors of The Blue Coat School such as interview rooms, meeting venues and large spaces used at parents evenings and other events
- 25 All visitors, regardless of impairment, disability or special educational need will have equal access to the floors, corridors and spaces required for appropriate engagement with the school. This includes:
- the spaces that are required to support school visitors primary reason for attending school
  - the facilities and resources necessary to support school visitors primary reason for attending school
  - domestic spaces such as toilets or the dining hall as necessary
  - parts of the site required to support their engagement with the students and staff of The Blue Coat School such as interview rooms, meeting venues and large spaces used for school events
- 26 The school will be guided by the DFE's Advice on standards for school premises (2015) to ensure that the school site provides supports adequate accessibility for all students, staff and visitors.

- 27 The schools Accessibility action plan (Annex A) sets out The Blue Coat School's current priorities to ensure that the above principles are realised for all students, staff and visitors.

## Access to information

- 28 The Blue Coat School is committed to sharing written information in a format that all members of the school community can read and interpret.
- 29 The school will always seek to get to know the needs of students, staff, parents and visitors so that it can take proactive steps to support them when sharing information. A range of different formats of information will always be considered students, staff, parents and visitors to enable all members of the community to engage well with information that the school shares.
- 30 In support of maximum coverage and good accessibility, the school will make use of electronic platforms to share information that can be modified or adapted to suit the individual needs of the members of the school community. This will include:
- The school website
  - Email
  - Social media (Twitter, Facebook).
- 31 The school recognises that there will be occurrences when the needs of students, staff, parents and visitors are not known in advance and commits to helpfully providing alternative formats to support the specific needs of individuals in such cases.
- 32 The schools Accessibility action plan (Annex A) sets out The Blue Coat School's current priorities to ensure that the above principles of good and effective information sharing are realised for all students, staff and visitors.

## Monitoring, review and evaluation

- 33 The governing body will review the effectiveness of this policy by holding the school to account about:
- stake holders views about accessibility at The Blue Coat School
  - concerns or complaints against the school that relate to accessibility
  - outcomes of the school's accessibility action plan.
- 34 In support of governors duty to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's efforts to promote accessibility, the school will:
- seek stakeholders views about accessibility
  - review records of concerns or complaints that relate to accessibility
  - monitor enrolment on all course to evaluate the impact of its work to ensure equal access for all students
  - monitor participation in extra-curricular opportunities to promote, guide and support equal access for all students
  - rigorously review all of the outcomes of the school's accessibility plan.

## Annex A: Accessibility action plan (Sept 2016 – Mar 2019)

Priority 1: Ensuring unrestricted access to the curriculum for students with...				
Area of need	Current limitation	Improvement	Responsibility	Time frame
Physical needs	Some areas of school are not accessible for students who may be restricted to a wheelchair	Create and complete an assessment of what physical changes are needed and develop a phased plan to ensure adequate access to all areas of school	DHT (PDBW)	Sum 18
	The location of some resources, facilities and learning is not always ideal for students with temporary or ongoing mobility issues	Develop process to assess individual needs which can be used to support students on a case-by-cases basis		
Sensory difficulties	There is currently no quiet facility to assist students who may have moments where sensory overload is difficult for them	Identify and develop a 'quiet place' to support students with sensory needs	DHT (PDBW)	Sum 18
Cognitive and learning difficulties	Support for students with cognitive and learning difficulties is taking place but is not currently driven by subject teachers	Strengthen processes for subject staff to take a more central role for students with cognitive learning difficulties	DHT (PDBW)	Sum 18
Emotional and health difficulties	Support for students with emotional and health difficulties is effective once identified but can be developed so that it is more pro-active.	Further develop current work to better distribute student support across subject and key stage teams	DHT (PDBW)	Sum 18
	Subject staff and form staff are offering increasing levels of support but they would benefit from more confidence	Develop staff capacity through available training		

<b>Priority 2: Ensuring the best possible access to the schools facilities and resources through...</b>				
<b>Area of need</b>	<b>Current limitation</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Good access throughout the building	<p>Reception accessed via flight of steps from main car park</p> <p>Inadequate pedestrian route into car park</p> <p>Inadequate signage for visitors</p> <p>Access to/from some parts of building</p> <p>Reception facilities</p>	<p>Designate disabled (blue badge) parking areas outside east wing for staff and visitors</p> <p>Undertake an assessment of pedestrian routes from main car park (pathways, curbs etc) and plan for improvement</p> <p>Improve signage for visitors</p> <p>Install stair lifts at Shirley Hall</p> <p>Consider hearing loops</p> <p>Incorporate access needs and improvements when undertaking refurbishments</p>	DOR	Aut 17
Better facilities	<p>No disability assessment of toilets (sanitary ware and colour schemes)</p> <p>Location of existing toilets presents challenges</p>	Undertake an assessment of existing toilet facilities (student, staff and visitors) and plan for improvement	DOR	Aut 17
Effective plans for emergency evacuation	<p>Inconsistent/adhoc notification of need for PEEPs</p> <p>Lack of personal devices for notification of emergency alarm (light, buzzer)</p> <p>No specific information/instruction available</p> <p>Emergency access routes present challenges eg outside steps</p>	<p>PEEPS: raise awareness through KSLs and LS</p> <p>Explore benefit / purchase personal devices</p> <p>Prepare specific advice / guidance for visitors, students and visitors with access needs</p> <p>Undertake assessment of access routes and plan for improvement</p>	DOR	Aut 17

<b>Priority 3: Ensuring the best possible access to information shared by the school through a wide range of options to support...</b>				
<b>Area of need</b>	<b>Current limitation</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Parents needs	Do not routinely collect and record information about how we can support parents (including EAL)  Inconsistent/adhoc consideration	Incorporate opportunity for parents to volunteer information about specific needs during admission process. routinely update via annual data check and record on SIMS	DOR	Aut 17
Visitors needs	No system for identifying needs of planned visitors  Ad hoc / inconsistent consideration of access needs to school public events eg school show  Access to information	Explore benefit of installing loop systems in strategic areas of school. School web-site section on 'Accessibility for Visitors' via the where to find us page. Sign post planned visitors to web-site for info.	DOR	Aut 17
Staff needs	Recruitment: historic health questionnaire used without follow-up  No formal/routine process for updating staff needs	New OH recruitment assessment undertaken and risk assessments carried out where appropriate Annual data check of staff information.	DOR	Aut 17