



Accessibility Policy

Policy title:	Accessibility Policy
Function:	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.
Status:	Approved
Statutory guidance:	The Equality Act (2010) Advice on standards for school premises (DFE 2018)
Audience:	Students, Parents, Staff, Leaders, Trustees, General public
Ownership:	Board of Trustees/Headteacher
Last reviewed:	October 2021
Reviewed by:	Finance and Resource Committee / Board of Trustees
Next review:	Every two-years – October 2023

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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 students, staff, parents and visitors in line with The Equality Act (2010) and Department for Education Guidance on 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 School's commitment to positively model everybody's responsibility to promote and support accessibility.

Roles and responsibilities

- 5 The Board of Trustees 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.
 - All staff are trained in Equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.
- 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.
 - The school collects and records good quality information about staff needs.
- 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 Staff will be well guided about any additional learning or special educational needs that students may have. This will be reflected in the teaching and assessment that students experience 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
 - all students, including those with impairment, disability and special educational needs are supported by appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations during school assessment and formal examinations so that their individual needs are met.
- 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 School's 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 courtyard, 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 to ensure that the school site provides supports adequate accessibility for all students, staff and visitors.
- 27 The School will ensure that students, staff and visitors who have impairment, disability or special educational needs are well guided and supported by the necessary arrangements in the event of a need to evacuate the school.
- 28 The School's 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

- 29 The Blue Coat School is committed to sharing written information in a format that all members of the school community can read and interpret.
- 30 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.
- 31 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).
- 32 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.
- 33 The School's 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

- 34 The Board of Trustees 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.

35 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 (October 2021-September 2023)

Priority 1: Ensuring the best possible access to the school's curriculum through ...				
Area of need	Current limitation	Improvement	Responsibility	Time frame
Physical needs	In a low number of incidents the location of resources, facilities and learning is not always ideal for students with temporary mobility issues.	Key staff to consistently implement an assessment of need on a case by case basis and implement appropriate action plan.	DHT (PDBW)	Ongoing
Sensory difficulties	Students with hearing impairment do not benefit from hearing amplification systems.	To seek provision for individual's to benefit from personal radio aids for lessons where needed.	DHT (PDBW)	On-going
Cognitive and learning difficulties	Support for students with cognitive and learning difficulties is taking place and although it is increasingly supported by subject teachers' further drive from all staff needs to be evident.	Strengthen monitoring processes for middle leaders and SENDCO that ensures subject staff continue to proactively support students with cognitive learning difficulties.	DHT (PDBW)	Ongoing
Emotional and health difficulties	Support for students with emotional and health difficulties is effective but can be developed so that it is identified earlier with a more proactive approach.	Raise awareness of indicators for all staff.	DHT (PDBW)	Ongoing

Priority 2: Ensuring the best possible access to the School's facilities and resources through ...				
Area of need	Current limitation	Improvement	Responsibility	Time frame
Good access throughout the building	Reception is accessed via a flight of steps from main car park. No safe pedestrian route into main car park.	Designate disabled (blue badge) parking areas outside of east wing for disabled staff and visitors. Restrict access to main car park for motor vehicles only. Improved access for cycles. All pedestrians to safely access school via main reception.	DOR	Ongoing
Better facilities	Location of existing toilets presents challenges and no disability assessment (sanitary ware and colour schemes).	Undertake an assessment of existing toilet facilities (student, staff and visitors) and plan for improvement during significant refurbishment /remodelling works.	DOR	Ongoing
Effective plans for emergency evacuation	No access to personal devices for notification of emergency alarm (light, buzzer). No specific information/instruction readily available. Personal emergency evacuation procedures in place (PEEP) and stairlifts/evacuation chair available. However, emergency access routes present challenges e.g. outside steps.	Explore feasibility of emergency personal devices. Prepare specific advice / guidance for visitors, students and visitors with access needs. Undertake an annual risk assessment of emergency access routes and guidance to all staff and visitors.	DOR	Mar 2022

Priority 3: Ensuring the best possible access to information shared by the school through a wide range of options to support...				
Area of need	Current limitation	Improvement	Responsibility	Time frame
Accessibility of letters, website and marketing information	Although the School has not had any instances where an individual was unable to access information shared by the School, there are currently no back-up strategies to respond to individual needs should they arise.	Review current approaches to sharing letters, website information and marketing information to develop new approaches to signpost recipients of information to alternative formats.	DOR / DHT (BDBW)	Mar 2022