

PLYMOUTH COLLEGE

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Including Early Years Foundation Stage



Last reviewed:	August 2025
Next review date:	August 2028
Responsibility:	Head / Bursar

The Accessibility Plan is founded on the educational aims and ethos of Plymouth College.

1. Introduction

This policy relates to all pupils at Plymouth College and Plymouth College Preparatory School and has due regard for the specific requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Throughout this policy document, the terms 'the School' and 'Plymouth College' refer to all sections of Plymouth College, unless otherwise specified.

For the avoidance of doubt, Appendix 1 relates specifically to the Senior School (and references to the school in Appendix 1 are references to the Senior School only) and Appendix 2 relates specifically to the Preparatory School (and references to the school in Appendix 2 are references to the Preparatory School only).

2. Aims

Plymouth College is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all pupils and staff. Over a three-year period (August 2025 to August 2028), the School aims, within the constraints of resources available, to continue to

- ensure that no pupil or member of staff is less favourably treated in the School's procedures and practices in respect of: admissions, recruitment, promotion, staff development, teaching environment and access to the premises;
- enable each pupil to fulfil his/her potential, within an educational programme that has the development of the whole person at its core;
- fulfil the requirements of the legislation to make 'reasonable adjustments';
- examine each disability case to determine the best adjustments that can be made to accommodate a disabled pupil's needs, and to ensure that he/she has appropriate access to the School and curriculum.

There are no generic answers as to what is a reasonable adjustment. The reasonable adjustment duty is always child specific and context specific. In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, the School will take into account the following:

- whether the adjustment will remove the substantial disadvantage;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;

- the resources available internally or from external providers (such as health and education services);
- the practicability of making the adjustment;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards;
- health and safety requirements;
- the interests of other pupils including those who may be admitted to the School; and
- the School's charging structure generally.

3. Definitions

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") retains the previous definition of disability: a person has a disability if he/she has "a physical or mental impairment" which has a "substantial and long-term adverse effect" on his/her ability to carry out "normal day-to-day activities". This applies to members of staff and pupils.

Long-term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

In accordance with the definition of 'special educational needs' in the Children and Families Act 2014, disability can also include pupils with a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the general educational facilities provided for pupils of their age.

Conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia and autism have potential to fall within the definition of disabled when they have a 'substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Pupils develop at different rates and those pupils who may need additional support for a short period of time are unlikely to fall within the meaning of disabled.

The legal definition of 'disability' expressly excludes certain conditions: a tendency to set fire, steal, physical or sexual abuse of other persons, exhibitionism and voyeurism. Tattoos, piercings and addictions to alcohol, nicotine and other substances are also expressly excluded from the protection of the Act.

Unlawful Discrimination

It is unlawful to treat a disabled person less favourably for a reason related to his/her disability than a person who does not have a disability, without justification.

It will also be unlawful to fail to make 'reasonable adjustments' to admission and curriculum arrangements, and in relation to education and associated services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not disadvantaged in comparison with pupils who are not disabled, without justification.

Less Favourable Treatment

For 'less favourable treatment' to lead to unlawful discrimination, it must:

- be for a reason related to the person's disability;
- be less favourable treatment than the treatment given to a non-disabled person; and
- not be justified.

4. Actions

Pursuant to the provisions of the Act, the School is required to make (within the previously cited resource constraints):

- improvements in access to the curriculum for disabled pupils (including those with learning difficulties);
- physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services (e.g. extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips); and

- improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled pupils.

There is an additional requirement for schools to explore whether or not students with behaviour issues may or may not have an underlying disability leading to this. For example, the following may be underlying reasons for poor behaviour:

- mental illness, mental health problems, learning difficulties, dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy;
- behaviour difficulties arising from social or domestic circumstances are not covered by the Act. Other School policies cover these areas.

The School will take into account all these requirements when considering the inclusion of disabled pupils in the School's curriculum. Any decisions regarding admission will be made in good faith, with the School's interpretation of the child's best interests (and those of other members of the community), being of paramount importance.

The following actions will be implemented:

Staff:

- identify and liaise with staff who have a disability;
- identify where 'reasonable adjustments' can be made, and report to the Schools' Management Board* those that cannot be made within the allocated resources; and
- implement and maintain procedures that identify and eliminate areas of possible 'less favourable treatment' for disabled staff.

Pupils:

- identify pupils who have disabilities;
- ensure that non-discriminatory practices are developed;
- identify where 'reasonable adjustments' can be made;
- train all staff in their responsibilities towards disabled pupils;
- delegate responsibilities and tasks to other staff as appropriate; and
- liaise with parents and any agencies as necessary.

Premises:

- The School recognises that, according to the Equality Act 2010, it is not required to remove or alter physical features to meet its reasonable adjustments duties.
- However, to meet its obligations, the School will ensure that the needs of disabled staff and pupils are fully considered in any strategic planning for the development of the School campus.
- When determining the refurbishment or redevelopment of new build projects, the School will take into account the need to make the School campus more accessible for staff and pupils with disability.
- The School will respond appropriately to reasonable minor adjustments to the environment to enable a member of staff and/or a pupil with a disability to have access to the full teaching and learning of the School.
- The School will bear in mind health and safety requirements and the interests of other pupils in all the above considerations.

Auxiliary Aids:

The School recognises that through the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 it is now required, where deemed reasonable, to provide auxiliary aids and services 'where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled'.

The decision as to whether the School can reasonably provide auxiliary aids and services is a specific judgement in relation to each disabled pupil which should be exercised on a case-by-case basis.

Anything which helps, aids or renders assistance for disabled pupils is likely to be an auxiliary aid or service. For example:

- Provision of larger computer monitors, large print or information on audio tapes for those with a sight impairment;
- Induction hoops and/or training a member of staff in British Sign Language so they are able to communicate with pupils with a hearing impairment; or
- Portable ramps or handrails for those with a physical impairment.

5. Justification

Less favourable treatment can be justified if the reasons are material to the circumstances and substantial.

In addition, for pupils, non-admission to a school can be justified if it is as a result of a 'permitted form of selection'. Selective schools can continue to select so long as the criteria are not such as to only exclude disabled pupils. All non-selective schools when they have reached their admission limit can admit pupils according to criteria, which must not, amongst other things, discriminate on the grounds of disability. Schools with a religious designation may select by religion and single sex schools by gender.

6. Awareness

Appropriate staff INSET will be provided to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Head, Bursar and the Head of Operations will keep the School accessibility plan under review during the period to which it relates and, if necessary, revise it.

APPENDIX 1

SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AUGUST 2025-2028



1. Introduction

Plymouth College is strongly committed to providing the highest quality of teaching and learning and support to all pupils in the pursuit of academic and personal excellence. We have high expectations of all of our pupils and we strive, wherever possible, to ensure that each and every pupil can take part in the whole school curriculum. We value and appreciate the contribution that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can bring to the school.

2. Entry Requirements

Plymouth College is a non-selective school. However, the school must feel confident that a prospective pupil will benefit from the education offered in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers so that there is a good chance that he/she will have a complete, happy and successful school career. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the school. The school's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils, and potential pupils, regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments so as not to put any disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers. The objective is to ensure that, subject to meeting the entry requirements and practicalities, the school is open to all regardless of disability.

3. Admissions

The school asks all parents to complete a Registration Form in respect of a prospective pupil. In addition, once their child has been offered a place at the school, all parents complete the School's Health Questionnaire. Collectively these documents provide details of the nature and effect of any (potential) disability, medical condition or special educational needs. The School requests that subsequent disclosures will be made, if required. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. The purpose of obtaining this information is to allow the school to consider any adjustments it might need to make.

Parents of a disabled or potentially disabled child are required to provide full disclosure of any medical, Educational Psychologist or other reports regarding their child's disability, medical condition or special educational needs. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Failure by parents to make the necessary disclosure of information may prevent the school from making adequate provision of support.

The school recognises the potential enhancement to school life and education provided by inclusive policies, however equal importance will be attached to ensuring that no pupil's education is impaired by this approach. The school's pastoral care system provides strong support for all pupils whether disabled or otherwise. Where pupils need particular treatment or medication the Health Centre, run by a qualified Nurse, provides necessary assistance.

The school also has a strong Learning Support Department, run by a qualified SENCO, to assist pupils with learning difficulties. Lastly, the school also has a part time Counsellor.

The School will meet with parents of prospective pupils with disabilities to discuss on an informal basis whether the school can cater for their child's needs.

From the beginning of the application process to the school, parents will be given clear information regarding charges for additional support or assistance, reflecting what the Schools Management Board* have decided is reasonable.

4. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with learning difficulties) can participate in the school's curriculum

The SENCO leads and coordinates the support for students with special educational needs (SEND). The SENCO develops and oversees the SEND policy, coordinates support, liaises with parents and professionals, identifies when intervention is needed to support pupils' academic progress. The Department has finite resources and cannot meet the needs of all disabilities. Though this is not exhaustive, such difficulties as might be supported by the Department, comprise, for example:

- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, autism, ADHD and dyspraxia.
- English as an additional language (in conjunction with the School's EAL Co-Ordinator)
- Physical or medical disabilities.
- Behavioural and emotional problems.
- Pupils who need support due to school absence over a long period of time.

The requirements of any pupil with additional needs admitted to the school will be discussed with appropriate staff and, where reasonable, a programme of special provision will be made.

There is some scope to consider the needs of an individual pupil when the timetable is being created.

The school reserves the right to charge for additional learning support and assistance but may offer support to pupils free of charge – for example, in English and Mathematics.

Staff will be made aware of pupils with a disability or special educational need by the SENCO, the School Nurse, member of the Senior Leadership Team or Head of Year / Head of Boarding.

Pupils with additional needs will have clearly defined strategies devised by the SENCO. This information will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised on at least an annual basis. These strategies will be shared with staff and used to guide and inform classroom teaching.

With respect to charging for additional support or assistance for those pupils with additional needs, the following reasonable adjustments might be made on a case by case basis:

- Withdrawal from academic lessons which are replaced by extra Maths or extra English lessons in small groups.
- Interventions to support the emotional well-being of pupils.
- Dyslexia screening is provided free of charge and parents are signposted for a more comprehensive assessment if required.
- SENCO supports parents with signposting for formal diagnosis and writes detailed reports to support referrals.
- Assessment for exam considerations is coordinated by the SENCO and more comprehensive assessments are charged for but at a preferential rate compared to outside providers.

Staff will need to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns of all pupils according to their abilities and needs, and necessary differentiation should be reflected in classroom practice and teaching resources.

Through Whole School, Faculty and Departmental INSET, staff will be made aware of strategies to make reasonable adjustments within the classroom so as not to place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum.

The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management should not prejudice the progress of other pupils, nor their health and safety.

The school will make special arrangements for the sitting of public examinations in accordance with the school and examination board special arrangement protocols managed by the SENCO and, when required, the receipt of a written assessment by a recognised, qualified practitioner. It is also possible that pupils who encounter physical or emotional disability in the period up to the exams may be, with consultation, awarded special arrangements. This process is overseen by the Examinations Officer, in liaison with the SENCO.

5. Improving the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the School

Parents should be made aware that the School site is large and that many of the School buildings are arranged over several floors. These factors present access challenges and pupils with impaired mobility may be somewhat disadvantaged. However, the School will make any reasonable adjustments, on a case by case basis, to ensure that disabled pupils may still participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life.

All improvements to the School have to be funded by fee income and consequently there are budgetary constraints on development and adaptations. If outside funding can be made available in advance, it may be possible for the School to advance its programme of access improvements or to purchase additional specialist equipment or support for individual pupils.

6. Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

We provide written/electronic information to pupils in ways that are user-friendly and fully support the pupils in their learning experience.

In disseminating information we will take into account disabilities, for all members of our community - staff, pupils and parents.

We recognise that communication with a parent who is visually impaired may need to be by telephone, or another medium, rather than letter/email.

The School will seek to make reasonable adjustments so that information can be made available to pupils in an alternative format within a reasonable period of time should the school receive a request for such help. This might involve an alternative format such as Braille or audio tape or large print or orally or through sign language.

Signage in the school will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all signs are clear and understandable for the visually impaired. Replacement signage will take into account appropriate colour schemes, size of font etc.

*Plymouth College is part of the Galaxy Global Education Group. The College is managed by the Schools Management Board of the Galaxy Global Education Group (*which is responsible for Group Governance and Local Advisory Board Liaison, Co-ordinating Learning Initiatives & Setting Group KPIs, Regulatory Compliance, Safeguarding Oversight & Student Voice*). The Local Advisory Board (LAB) is an advisory sub-committee of the Galaxy Global Education Group Schools Management Board, providing local insight, support, and challenge to the school's leadership in regards to educational standards and school improvement, safeguarding and welfare, community and stakeholder engagement, compliance and reporting. The Chair of the LAB is appointed by the Chair of the Schools Management Board and the LAB is composed of 3-4 local members appointed by the Chair of

the Schools Management Board (with whom formal governance authority rests) and approved by the Board of Directors of the Galaxy Global Education Group.