

The Bicester School
Accessibility Plan



Date for Review: September 2025



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2022 - 2025

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act – DDA, as amended by the SEN (Special Educational Needs) and Disability Act 2001, requires all schools, academies and LAs to plan to increase, over time, accessibility for disabled students. Schools are required to produce plans for their individual establishment and LAs are required to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their areas.

The Bicester School (TBS) is required to plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum
- Improving access to the school's physical environment (buildings and grounds)
- Improving written information for disabled students

At a legislative level, there are three main strands for disabled students:

- The SEN Framework (the Education Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001)
- The Disability Discrimination Duties (Sections 28A-28C of the DDA 1995)
- The planning duties (Section 28D-28E of the DDA 1995)

The Education Act 1996 states that 'children have a special educational need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them'. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents, or hinders, them from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions or would do so if special educational provision were not made for them.

1. Starting Points

1.1 The purpose of the policy

TBS strives to be an inclusive school with academic success at its heart. The aim of this policy is to lay out the way in which our students with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities can access the full range of provision on offer at the school.

1.2 Involvement of disabled students, staff, parents and other users of the school

The views and aspirations of students with an Education or Health Care Plan (EHCP), those on SEN Support and disabled students are formally gathered annually through the Annual Review process. This seeks to establish what is going well and any concerns or barriers to progress from the student's point of view. Their parents also can express their views either in writing or simply verbally at the review meeting.

This includes the opportunity to express any concerns or queries they may have regarding their child's progress and the provision in place for them.

Areas for development:

- Questionnaire / audit issued to appropriate parents and analysis of results
- Amendments of the Disability Equality Scheme and Access Plan because of information gathered.

1.3 Information gathering

Within the current TBS population of around 1300 students (as of January 2022), there are currently 14 students with an EHCP and an additional 188 students recorded as receiving SEND support.

Disabled students currently in the school have the following needs:

- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Diabetes
- Behavioural, Emotional, (and Social) Difficulties (BESD)
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Physical difficulties (including Dystonia / Chloreform Movement Disorder / Multiple Exotoses / Scoliosis/ Chondromalacia Patellae / Perth's Disease / Patella and Achilles Tendonitis / Osgood Slatter's Disease / Chorea/ Hemiplegia/Marfan's Syndrome)
- Co-ordination Difficulties (including Development Co-ordination Disorder)
- Sensory Issues
- Raynaud's Disease
- Heart Conditions
- Cystic Fibrosis

Definition

Students falling within the definition of disabled will have a wide range of needs and requirements including mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions.

TBS does not automatically consider students with a disability to have special educational needs, as can be seen below.

The DDA definition states that 'a person has a disability 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 carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act duties above are owed to all students who are defined by the Equality Act as being disabled and under the planning duties schools and local authorities have a general duty to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled students.

- The Equality Act defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).
- Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and hidden impairments.
- In the Equality Act 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning difficulties, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the student's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

Normal day-to-day activity

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects the student in everyday life in one or more of the following ways:

- mobility.
- manual dexterity.
- physical co-ordination.
- continence.
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight.
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.
- perception of risk of physical danger

The SEN Framework is designed to meet the special educational needs of individual

children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, what is normally available in schools maintained by the LA. In general, children with SEND must be educated in a mainstream school or Academy

unless their parents object to this or it will have an adverse effect upon the provision of efficient education for other children. TBS must demonstrate that they will take reasonable steps to allow this to happen.

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) by introducing new duties on LAs, schools and academies relating to disabled students and prospective students. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools, academies or LAs to discriminate against disabled students in their admissions and exclusions policies, education and associated services.

There are three main duties:

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility strategies (LAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing, over time, the accessibility of schools for disabled students (the 'planning duty').

1.4 Impact Assessment

For the purpose of the DDA 1995 schools, academies and LAs are required to consider the needs of students in relation to physical adaptations, curriculum access and auxiliary aids and services. These areas also fall within the scope of the SEN framework.

Please note that these duties are all 'anticipatory'; TBS must consider the requirements of current and future disabled students. This means that schools are expected to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extracurricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of TBS.

In deciding whether a step is reasonable, the school may consider the:

- Need to maintain Academic standards
- availability of resources
- practicalities of making a particular adjustment
- health and safety and interests of all students

However, it is the view of both the Department for Education and the Disability Rights Commission that, where schools have already developed inclusive cultures and practices, these legal duties should mean little extra work.

TBS embraces the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act and the requirement to implement a Disability Equality Scheme. TBS does all that is reasonably practicable to meet the needs of the disabled students, staff or visitors. The SENCO works closely with the relevant advisory bodies to provide the most appropriate support to students with disabilities. This process invariably involves working closely with the student and the student's family. Every effort is made to integrate disabled persons into

the mainstream activities of the school.

2. Identifying the main priorities for deciding actions

The accessibility plan is required for:

Increasing access for disabled students to the curriculum
Improving access to the school's physical environment
Improving written information for disabled students

The following plan outlines the school's policies in relation to Access and Disability.

3. Making it Happen

- Clear allocation of lead responsibility
- Clear allocation of recourses
- An indication of expected outcomes for performance criteria
- Clear timescales
- A specified date to process for review

Access to Exams - Disability Policy

- All major exam rooms are on the ground floor (Main Hall E003, Sports Hall L025 and L019).
- Chairs are available when queuing outside when needed.
- The Lecture Theatre (D014), Food Hall 1 (E004) and the area outside L019 are used to gather students prior to exams.
- There is an appropriate toilet near or in all these areas.
- Emergency evacuation procedures are appropriate for all candidates.
- All areas have had internal risk assessments carried out.
- If any candidate needs to take regular medication, invigilators will facilitate this.
- The Exams Officer should be notified if there are any exceptional health issues.
- Any specialised equipment will be provided.
- Invigilators will be briefed of any exceptional issues concerning communication or other factors which may affect the candidate.
- Recruitment of invigilators will follow normal school policy concerning disabled applicants.
- All invigilators will either receive group training including disability issues or will work alongside an experienced invigilator.
- SENCO will make the Exams Officer aware of any issues concerning individuals in the main exam rooms.
- The SENCO/Exams Officer will take the lead in making access applications based on their close knowledge of the needs of students under their care. They will produce a list of the students involved together with their concessions and this list will be available in all exam rooms in the files.
- Any complaints made by candidates with disabilities should be directed in the first instance to the

Examinations Officer who will initiate an enquiry.