



## AKELEY WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL & NURSERY: Accessibility Plan

### 1.0 Background

1.1 On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. (For further information see the Equality and Diversity Policy).

1.2 The Act makes it unlawful for **Cognita and the school's governance committee**, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:-

- admissions;
- the way we provide education for pupils;
- the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
- by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

1.3 The protected characteristics are:-

- sex;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity;

1.4 There is a still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.

1.5 The Equality Act applies to all independent schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005)Furthermore, as proprietors Cognita are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.

1.6 Any person such as staff in schools who act on behalf of the proprietor, Cognita and any governance committee, are responsible for their own discriminatory actions and the Proprietor (Cognita Schools and the governance committee) is also liable unless it can prove

that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the staff member from doing the discriminatory action, or from doing anything of that kind.

- 1.7 The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or old pupil networks.

## **2.0 Disability Discrimination Act**

- 2.1 The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:-

- the definition of disability is less restrictive;
- direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

## **3.0 Definition of Disability**

- 3.1 The Act defines disability as *when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

- 3.2 Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

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

## **4.0 Reasonable Adjustments**

- 4.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

- 4.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.

- 4.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (ie via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.

- 4.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.

- 4.5 Our SEN policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 4.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; eg hearing aids.
- 4.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 4.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils.

## 5.0 Our Vision

- 5.1 We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected. We aim to provide a secure and happy environment in which each individual is helped to fulfil their potential and to emerge with maturity, confidence and a sense of independence.
- 5.2 Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.

## 6.0 Our Duty around Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

- 6.1 Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:-
- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
  - improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
  - improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.
- 6.2 Our plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.
- 6.3 Our approach includes the following:-
- access, audit and review (**See appendix 2**) (ie the nature of the schools' population, context, future pupil numbers, staff training needs, impact of anti-bullying strategies, timetabling, trips, medicines, clubs, outcomes for SEND in external exams, views of parents, pupils, voluntary sector, symbols, signage, font size etc);
  - identify actions;
  - set goals and targets;
  - consult on the proposed plan;

- publicize the plan;
- implementation; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan.

6.4 Our accessibility plan is outlined on the attached proforma at **Appendix 1**.

## **7.0 Discrimination Claims**

7.1 Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against our school must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.

7.2 Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil against our school, would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.

## **8.0 Monitoring & Evaluation**

8.1 The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is Clare Page, Headteacher.

8.2 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.

8.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.

8.4 Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with our Cognita Facilities colleague by Clare Page, Headteacher.

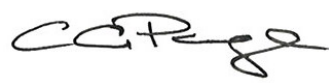
8.5 Progress reports are provided termly to our school's compliance committee by Stephen Coverdale, Business Manager, and thereafter reported to our Senior Leadership Team.

8.6 Any failure to meet target deadlines are reported to the Governors Committee meeting and thereafter reported by exception to UK Compliance Committee.

## **12.0 Other Associated Policies & Procedures**

- Special Educational Needs;
- Equality & Diversity;
- Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff
- Safeguarding Children including Child Protection;
- Health & Safety; and
- Premises Management.

Adopted: April 2013  
Reviewed: April 2015  
Next Review Date: April 2016

Signed   
Mrs C G Page, **Headteacher**

APPENDIX 1



**AKELEY WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL & NURSERY:  
Accessibility Plan**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected. We aim to provide a secure and happy environment in which each individual is helped to fulfil their potential and to emerge with maturity, confidence and a sense of independence.

**AIMS OF THE SCHOOL**

- to maintain and strengthen a school ethos which reflects a positive atmosphere in which each person is valued.
- to encourage excellence and provide a high quality environment in which each child is challenged to do his/her best.
- to provide equal access to equal opportunities.
- to provide a secure, structured environment based on mutual respect in which self-esteem and confidence are encouraged.
- to encourage and expect the development of good manners and courtesy, truthfulness and considerate action, personal responsibility, self-discipline and social responsibility.
- to instil in each child the need to realise that they are part of a community and that they have an obligation to put back into life at least as much as they take out of it, whether it is to their family, their school or their country.
- to expect and encourage sensitivity to the beliefs and convictions of others, seeing this sensitivity as a cornerstone of spiritual and moral development.
- to improve communication at all levels because we believe in openness and consultation.
- to provide continuity and progression in order to enable children to make smooth transitions from each phase of education to the next.
- to support and encourage every child to achieve because of our conviction that each individual has ability.
- to celebrate the achievements of individuals in all areas of school and community life.
- to provide a challenging and supportive well-structured staff and to enhance personal and team development.

## AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

As part of its Mission Statement, Akeley Wood Junior School & Nursery acknowledges its duty to pupils, staff, parents and members of the wider community who have a disability. Where pupils or prospective pupils are concerned, Akeley Wood Junior School & Nursery acknowledges its non-discriminatory and planning duties under The Equality Act 2012.

- Akeley Wood Junior School & Nursery is a selective School and admission to the School depends upon the prospective pupil meeting the required criteria, and thereby strengthening its educational standards and values.
- Central to the School's philosophy is the provision of an environment rich with extra-curricular activity.
- The School asks parents to disclose whether their child has a disability, special educational need, medical condition or any special circumstances prior to his/her assessment for entry to the School. The School is then able to support every child as appropriate.
- In assessing any pupil, or prospective pupil, the School may take such advice and require such assessments, as it deems appropriate. Subject to this, the School will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.
- Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments, based upon the information given and advice received, to enable a prospective pupil to take up a place at Akeley Wood Junior School & Nursery, and to satisfy the admissions criteria outlined above, the School is committed to providing those reasonable adjustments.
- As part of its commitment to support every pupil, the School provides specialist teaching through its Learning Support Department. Where the School agrees to provide services in addition, parents will be charged for this service at a level that reasonably reflects the cost to the School of providing that service. Details of costs will be provided in writing.

## Cognita Schools – Policy Document

- Once offered a place, the School asks parents to complete an Acceptance Form and to disclose whether their child has a disability, special educational need, medical condition or any special circumstances. All parents are therefore asked to complete a detailed information sheet about their child before he/she enters the School.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **The School's Layout and Facilities**

Akeley Wood Junior School & Nursery is not required to provide auxiliary aids and services or to make physical changes to its existing buildings. A pupil with restricted mobility is likely to be put at a disadvantage by these problems. A pupil with severely restricted mobility may be unable to access some or all of the educational and recreational facilities that the School offers. Where practicable, in line with the Disability Policy, the School will make reasonable adjustments to the timetable to allow pupils with restricted mobility to attend lessons in parts of the School which they can access.

## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **General**

The School will review this plan on tri-annual basis:

- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of action taken in the previous School year.
- To set relevant targets for the next School year.
- To respond to any further legislative changes.
- The School will make a log of all reasonable adjustments and it will be available to interested parties.

## Cognita Schools – Policy Document

### **INCREASING THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISABLED PUPILS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

As budgets allow:

- The School will develop its unified SEN and Disability documentation and procedures.
- Training will be provided for staff, especially learning support staff, in order to support pupils with disabilities or SEN. Access to specialist help will be provided where reasonable and practicable.
- INSET sessions will on occasions each year be devoted to disability or SEN issues
- Where physical access to the site is difficult for a prospective pupil, the School recognises the need to be proactive in enabling such access. Accordingly pupils with relevant disabilities will, where practicable, be:  
Placed in a classroom that is most convenient for physical access.

Prioritised in the writing of the timetable with regard to accessible rooms and set allocations.

### **IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE SCHOOL**

As budgets allow:

- As part of its 5 Year Improvement and Development Plan, the School will consider the provision of disabled access to all academic areas of the site.
- The School will not less than once every two years undertake a fire safety risk assessment and will update the School's fire evacuation plan on an annual basis.
- PEEPS (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) will be set up for any pupils/staff with specific SEN or disabilities to provide additional support to ensure their safe evacuation in an emergency.
- The School will aim to make newly constructed buildings fully accessible to disabled pupils
- All conversions to existing areas of the School that sit outside the scope of legislation will be considered with regard to disabled access, and every reasonable effort made to improve access within the scope of the work.
- All new equipment purchased for teaching will be considered as to the suitability of its use by pupils with disabilities. Every reasonable effort will be made to purchase equipment which better meets the needs of the pupils than the existing equipment.
- Diffusing lights will be installed where computer use makes it necessary. Faulty lighting will be replaced within 24 hours wherever possible.




Cognita Schools – Policy Document

**IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION TO DISABLED PUPILS**

As budgets allow:

- The School will arrange for documents to be provided to prospective parents who have a child with a disability in a form that meets that need, if so requested, and it is reasonable to do so.
- The School will continue to provide INSET for all teachers in order to support them to a better understanding of pupils with SEN or disabilities.
- The School will plan to invest in classroom technology to improve communication to pupils with SEN and disabilities.

Updated: April 2015  
Next Review Date: April 2016

Signed   
Mrs C G Page  
**Headteacher**

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**APPENDIX 2**

**IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS : A CHECKLIST**

*This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.*

<b>Section 1 : How does your school deliver the curriculum?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	<b>By SENCo</b>	
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils?		<b>X</b>
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	<b>X</b>	
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	<b>X</b>	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?	<b>X</b>	
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?	<b>X</b>	
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	<b>X</b>	
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	<b>X</b>	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	<b>X</b>	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	<b>X</b>	
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	<b>X</b>	
Are there high expectation of all pupils?	<b>X</b>	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	<b>X</b>	
<b>Section 2 : Is your School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms; the assembly hall; canteen; library; gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities; playgrounds and common		<b>X – Due to listing of building</b>

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

rooms – allow access for all pupils?		
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		<b>X – Due to building restraints</b>
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	<b>X</b>	
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?	<b>X - PEEPS</b>	
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		<b>X</b>
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		<b>X – to be reviewed</b>
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	<b>X</b>	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room’s acoustics and noisy equipment?	<b>X – All new building works includes additional sound proofing</b>	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?	<b>X</b>	
<b>Section 3 : How does your School deliver materials in other formats?</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	<b>X – If required</b>	
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	<b>X</b>	
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	<b>X</b>	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	<b>X</b>	