

THE ORATORY SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024/25 – 2026/27

A. Ethos and aims

1. The Oratory School ('the School') strives to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school and therefore aims to ensure that each and every pupil can participate fully in the life of the School. The School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access, valuing and including all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

B. Legislation and guidance

2. The School is committed to meeting legislative requirements, providing access and nurturing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness. This document meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. The School's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy sets out the School's policy on reasonable adjustments.

3. The School will not treat disabled pupils less favourably and will make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage. The School has regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for the implementation of this Policy.

C. Definition of disability and scope of the plan

4. A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

5. The School's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy outlines the School's provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and how we ensure equal opportunities for all our pupils, increased access to the curriculum, physical access to the school and access to information particular to students with SEND. This Accessibility Plan provides an outline of how the School will manage this aspect of the SEND provision.

6. The School's Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:
- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum. This includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the School such as participation in sport, co-curricular activities or school trips. It also includes entry into the school.
 - improve the School's physical environment for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or

services provided or offered by the School. This includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education, and

- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. This will include planning approaches by which the School will make written information (e.g. handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about school events) more accessible to pupils with SEND. The delivery of such information should be within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking into account the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

7. The School recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities; we also respect the parents and child's right to confidentiality.

8. The School is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues. Please see our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Equal Opportunities Pupil Policy.

9. The plan will be made available online on the school website, and paper copies are available upon request from the Head's office.

D. How the plan is constructed

10. The School has a disability committee which consists of the Head, Bursar, Senior Deputy Head, Director of People, Estates Manager and Head of Curriculum Support and may co-opt additional members whose expertise in any field would be of assistance. The committee's terms of reference are:

- a. to review annually the School's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect pupils and prospective pupils who are disabled
- b. to make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education in many aspects to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future
- c. to prepare the School's SEND policy
- d. to prepare the School's accessibility plan
- e. to review such plans and policies as necessary and at least on an annual basis.

11. The School's disability review committee have been central to the drawing up the School's plan. They have considered the following when developing and reviewing the plan:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Education
- Extra-curricular activities
- Governing body representation
- Physical school environment
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Sporting education and activities
- Staff training
- Welfare

E. How the plan is reviewed and monitored

12. The School's disability committee meets annually to frame recommendations for inclusion in the plan. These recommendations include input from the senior leadership team and the document is then placed on the agenda for the Lent term meeting of the governing body . Costings must be allocated to the various aspects of the plan, together with clear time-frames for completion of the various elements. The Head reports to governors identifying which measures have been achieved

and where any delay in implementation is foreseen. The plan is then updated with adjusted time-frames where necessary.

13. The school's governors are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the accessibility plan during the period to which it relates. A new plan will be drawn up every three years.

F. Queries and complaints

14. Any queries in relation to the Accessibility Plan should be directed to the Head by email on head@oratory.co.uk. The School's Complaints Procedure covers the Accessibility Plan and will apply where concerns cannot be resolved informally.

G. Other relevant policies

15. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- SEND Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

H. Our Accessibility Plan is divided in to 3 sections which describe how we plan to:

- (i) improve 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;
- (ii) improve the provision to disabled pupils of information which is already in writing for pupils who are not disabled;
- (iii) increase the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with SEN) can participate in the School's curriculum.

(i) How do we plan to improve the physical environment of the School?

School facilities generally

The School facilities consist of a variety of buildings of various age and construction types. The main school building is around 120 years old and has various extensions and additions, including a large dining hall, Chapel and various ancillary rooms, classrooms and facilities.

Various other buildings include boarding premises and sports facilities, offices and maintenance premises.

Details of the accessibility within the premises is included in Appendix 1.

Restricted mobility issues

A list of the facilities and comments on accessibility follows this introduction.

Whilst the School has shown that it can accept pupils with some disability problems, accessibility for wheelchair users is challenging in some areas, as a direct consequence of the nature of some of the listed buildings. The School is planning to purchase a portable chair lift to improve accessibility across the school site.

When new builds take place disability access requirements are required to be taken into account by law.

When major refurbishments are undertaken opportunities to enhance disabled access are considered and implemented where reasonable. When any part of the School is refurbished, due consideration should be given to enhancing access for those with impaired mobility e.g. installing lifts, ramping steps and installing disabled toilet facilities.

In the most recent buildings or refurbishments the doors installed are of a disabled access size, but in other areas the types and set-up of doors and door furniture present difficulties for wheelchair users. When the portable ramps are used it will generally be possible to provide wheelchair users with assistance opening and holding doors. Where permanent ramps are fitted consideration will also need to be given to adjusting the door arrangements.

Sight impairment issues

When redecoration is carried out, the opportunity is taken to consider improving accessibility for the partially sighted by increasing rather than reducing such contrasts.

Hearing impairment issues

No classrooms or larger indoor spaces have hearing loops or other disability aids.

When any major venue is built or refurbished consideration should be given to installing hearing loops.

(ii) How do we plan to improve access to written information?

Clearer directional signage has been introduced around the site to help pupils to find their way better.

The School's data management system identifies pupils who need to have written instructions magnified or adjusted in some other way. It is the School's policy that those who work with pupils identified as needing such adjustment should bear the responsibility for knowing the need of the student they are working with and acting in the way recommended to address that need.

The use of pictorial or symbolic representations is to be explored further particularly for First and Second Form and in EAL classes.

(iii) How do we plan to improve participation in the School's curriculum?

Actions taken to date include:

- Improved communication between Head of Curriculum Support and Housemasters to ensure there is a coordinated approach to the academic and pastoral aspects for SEND students;
- Introduction of assistive software to replace a human reader in an exam;
- Word processor usage in class and exams for those needing this facility;
- Students are required to have a school managed device so all SEND students can access the curriculum when at home and in particular those with mental health needs are able to access their learning remotely;
- Introduction of read and write program to help those with reading difficulties;
- Use of reading pens, coloured overlays and photocopying on coloured paper;
- Provision of individual learning support lessons, delivered by qualified specialists;
- Purchase of dyslexia-friendly books;
- Availability of sensory balls to help students become lesson-ready.

	Improvement/action	Reason	Staff responsible	Timing
a	Provide a quiet space for those with SEND at lunchtime in addition to measures already in place which include a meditation club and students being allowed to eat outside the Ref. where necessary.		Head of Curriculum Support & Senior Deputy Head	Underway
b	Re-introduce social support sessions for students with autism.		Head of Curriculum Support	Underway
c	Ensure all school trips and visits are accessible to all pupils by vetting venues and transport for suitability	Ensure availability to all students	Asst Head, Co-Curricular	Ongoing
d	Review the use of speech-to-text as a normal way of working for a pupil with a disability		Head & Head of Curriculum Support	ASAP

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Appendix 1 – accessibility within premises

Building	Use	Comments
Faber building & Wootten House	General subject teaching, library, admin, Chapel, dormitories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main Reception is not at ground floor level which provides some difficulties in disabled visitor access. Wheelchair access from outside is possible using ramps to the front door. It may in fact be easier and quicker to use one of the rear doors for access into the building. • A mobile chair lift is available for use across the school site. • The disabled toilet facilities in the vestibule are reasonably accessible from any part of the ground floor of the main building. • Access to all the upstairs dormitories is very limited. The back stairs are narrow and quite steep but there is access via the main stairs, using the stair climber. • Apart from the steps to lower areas, access around the remainder of the ground floor is good. • Doors are generally compliant in terms of width for wheelchair access • If some kind of access could be provided to the first or even second floors there are one set of steps within each floor. Ramps could be provided in both places without much difficulty. • Library shelves are available at wheelchair-accessible height. • Access to the staff accommodation on the first and second floor is restricted and would be very difficult to provide.
Morey building	Main teaching block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair access is available only to a few classrooms on the ground floor. • Staff accommodation is available in a Graduate/GAP flat on the ground floor. • Lessons require rearranging for pupils unable to climb stairs. • The lift has been out of order for some years and will be replaced when funds are available. • Evacuation chair is available for anyone unable to evacuate the building speedily.
Boarding Houses – Norris & FitzAlan	Boarding/staff accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift in both houses to provide disabled access to all 3 floors. • Disabled toilets available. • Access to communal areas

Dining Room	Dining Room /kitchen/staff and visitors toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is access to the dining room using the ramp at the Norris-side door entrance. • Double doors between the dining room and main building do not pose any access problems. • There is a disabled toilet facility on the ground floor but this is within Wooten House so access would need to be granted in advance.
Theatre	Theatre performances and school assemblies etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the theatre requires use of the portable chair lift. • There is easy access from the main hall to the hallway of Tomlinson building. There is a disabled toilet in the foyer • Doors are generally compliant in terms of width for wheelchair access
Sport Centre	Indoor sport facility, indoor facility for boarders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building is accessible to wheelchair users through the main doors. • Disabled toilet and changing room is provided • Water fountain accessible to a wheelchair user.
ART/DT	ART & DT classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ramp is provided at the theatre access, providing access to the ART rooms. • Access can be achieved into all the DT classes through an additional external door. • There is access to the theatre disabled toilet which is by the ART rooms.
St Joseph's Chapel		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External doors comply in width but there are very small stairs which could require a ramp for disabled access. • Pews are fixed and while there is space for a wheel chair by the old organ it is a fire exit route. • Stairs to gallery are narrow and steep but this is only used for overflow purposes in any case. • This building has very limited scope for change but there is a Chapel within Faber which has full disabled access.
Visitor parking in front circle	Visitor access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the building by ramp available at front door or via the Tolkien Room double doors.