Westhaven School Disability Access Policy

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Introduction

This Access Policy statement is based on a belief in equality and inclusiveness for all and confirms that everyone should have equal access to facilities and services regardless of disability, age, gender or race. The school is committed to continually improving accessibility which values and includes all learners, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

Westhaven School recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring that disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors are not disadvantaged or discriminated against because of disability. The school will take proactive steps to identify and remove barriers to participation, education and access wherever reasonably practicable. This includes making reasonable adjustments, providing appropriate support and auxiliary aids, and continually reviewing the accessibility of the school's environment, facilities, information and services. The school recognises that its responsibilities extend beyond physical access to buildings and include ensuring that disabled people can participate fully and equally in all aspects of school life.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 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.

Substantial means more than minor or trivial, and long-term generally means that the impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Disability may include physical, sensory, learning-related or mental health impairments, as well as long-term health conditions. Some conditions, including cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis, are automatically treated as disabilities from the point of diagnosis.

The school recognises that disabilities may be visible or non-visible, and that their impact may fluctuate or change over time.

Key Objectives

The school recognises that many of its learners, visitors and staff, whether disabled or otherwise, have individual needs when using school facilities. We recognise that for all learners, the nature of their disabilities may mean that they experience specific difficulties related to accessing education, and the physical environment. In order to ensure that the educational services it provides effectively meet the needs of disabled learners the school will:

- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are identified, implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that disabled learners can participate in all aspects of school life, including trips, residential visits, clubs, sporting activities and enrichment opportunities.
- Ensure that disabled learners and their families are involved in decisions about accessibility and support.
- Identify and address barriers relating to sensory needs, communication, learning and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensure that disability-related discrimination, harassment and victimisation are recognised, challenged and appropriately addressed.
- Ensure that equality information and progress against the school's equality objectives are monitored by governors.
- Inform all staff of this access policy so that the provision of educational services ensures the inclusion of all of our learners. Such communications will address the legal obligation of staff, and the school.
- Provide appropriate training for staff which will explain the school access policy and ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of it.
- Ensure that contractors, suppliers and external organisations providing services on behalf

of the school are aware of and comply with relevant equality and accessibility requirements.
- Consult with disabled learners, parents, staff and disability organisations. Regularly review whether its education (and other) services are both accessible and effective, and take appropriate action.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this plan on a regular basis.
- Operate an accessible complaints procedure whereby disabled people can make improvement suggestions and request assistance.
- Ensure that the School Prospectus makes reference to this Accessibility Policy.
- Ensure that the School's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Policy.
- Ensure that the terms of reference for all governors committees will contain an item on "having regard to matters relating to access".
- Address acts of disability discrimination via existing policies, the school development plan and the asset management plan.

Improving the Physical Environment

On entry to the school there is a ramp to access the reception area. The car park has 2 spaces designated for disabled badge holders and one school minibus has wheelchair access.

Most areas around the school are on one level and can be accessed by a wheelchair. Ramps and handrails are provided for use by learners, staff and visitors. There is a one way system around some of the Middle School buildings. All steps in school are highlighted by white tape.

Accessible toilet facilities, a changing bed and shower are located in the Middle School block and there is an accessible toilet in the main block and within Lower School, a further accessible toilet is available in an additional static classroom building near the field.

Most of the field is astro turf, which enables wheelchair access all year round to the facility. There is a wheel chair lift in the main hall, providing comfortable access to the cafe and stage area at the top of the school hall.

Signage around the school adheres to current Health and Safety regulations. Lighting is suitable for purpose in all rooms with blinds in most rooms to allow for adjustable lighting. Westhaven School now has an on site Braille machine and are making steps towards ensuring key signs are accessible in Braille in certain areas for learners who require this.

The evacuation procedures are made clear for staff, learners and visitors and there is a fire drill every term. Personal Evacuation Plans are in place for learners or staff needing assistance to evacuate classrooms in an emergency, these are reviewed regularly for any changes. Visitors

are asked when signing in if they require assistance in an evacuation situation.

The Site Manager monitors the general internal condition of the school on a daily basis, also monitoring Health and Safety issues and completing statutory building checks. Contractors are brought in for issues not within the remit of the Site Manager.

The school recognises that accessibility involves more than physical mobility. Consideration will also be given to the needs of people with visual, hearing, sensory, communication and other disabilities.

The school will seek to ensure that internal and external routes, signage, lighting, acoustics, facilities and learning environments are accessible and appropriate to individual needs.

Accessibility arrangements will be reviewed regularly, and any identified barriers will be considered within the school's ongoing premises management and accessibility planning.

Access to the Curriculum

Westhaven School is committed to ensuring that disabled learners have equal opportunities to access and participate in all aspects of the curriculum and wider school life. This includes classroom learning, assessments, educational visits, residential experiences, extracurricular activities, clubs, sporting opportunities, performances, assemblies and other school events. Where barriers are identified, appropriate reasonable adjustments will be considered and implemented to enable learners to participate as fully as possible.

The school will consider individual learning, communication, sensory, physical and emotional needs when planning activities and will provide appropriate adaptations, specialist resources, assistive technology and additional support where required. Westhaven School will regularly review the effectiveness of these arrangements, taking account of the views and experiences of learners and their families.

Westhaven School offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all learners and provides specialist provision to enable all learners with learning difficulties to access the curriculum and aid their educational development. Class staff teams know the profile of their class and individual needs and learning activities are planned to match the learner's need.

Positive Behaviour Management

The Behaviour Policy describes the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected in school. Westhaven School is committed to promoting positive behaviour, respect and inclusion for all learners. The school recognises that a learner's disability may affect their communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation and behaviour. Staff will seek to

understand the underlying reasons for behaviour and consider whether disability-related needs or barriers are contributing factors. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in the application of behaviour expectations, rewards, sanctions and disciplinary procedures to ensure that disabled learners are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation relating to disability will not be tolerated and will be addressed in accordance with the school's relevant policies. Where restrictive physical intervention, restraint, isolation or other restrictive practices are considered, the school will follow the relevant legal requirements, safeguarding procedures and associated policies, with due regard to the individual needs, rights and welfare of disabled pupils.

Westhaven School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training and guidance to support inclusive behaviour management.

Access to Education

Westhaven School recognises that all children should have access to education in accordance with the Equality Act and adheres to the code of practice which advises on the statutory responsibilities of education bodies in the preparation of accessibility strategies and seeks to:

- Improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education as identified in the Asset Management Plan and the School Development Plan.
- Increase access to the curriculum for learners with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that learners are as equally prepared for life as are able-bodied learners; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and assistive technology, which may assist these learners in accessing the curriculum.
- We aim to improve the delivery of written information to learners, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

Communication and information

Westhaven School recognises that accessible communication and information are essential to ensuring equality and inclusion.

The school will make reasonable efforts to provide information in formats appropriate to

individual needs. These may include:

- Braille
- Large print documents.
- Interpreters.
- Easy Read and simplified information.
- Visual supports, symbols and pictures.
- Accessible electronic documents.
- Alternative and augmentative communication methods.
- Appropriate communication support where required.

The school will consider the communication needs of learners, parents, carers, staff and visitors and will seek to provide information in a suitable format within a reasonable timeframe.

Staff will be made aware of individual communication needs to ensure that information is accessible and meaningful.

Making adjustments

Westhaven School recognises its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled learners are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with learners who are not disabled. Reasonable adjustments may include changes to policies, practices and procedures, adaptations to teaching and assessment arrangements, additional support, specialist equipment, auxiliary aids and alternative methods of communication. The school will seek to anticipate potential barriers rather than waiting for difficulties to arise or for a formal request to be made.

Westhaven school will also continue to identify and address barriers within its physical environment through its statutory Accessibility Plan, premises management and longer-term development planning.

Reasonable adjustments will also be considered for disabled staff, parents, carers and visitors in accordance with the school's legal responsibilities.

Adjustments will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of the person's needs and circumstances, and will be reviewed to ensure that they remain effective.

Please also refer to our long term accessibility plan: Westhaven School Accessibility Plan 2026

Monitoring

The implementation of this Disability Equality Statement will be monitored by the school's leadership team and governing body. The school will regularly review its practices and arrangements to identify barriers to disability equality and assess the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments and accessibility improvements.

Monitoring will include consideration of:

- The accessibility of the curriculum and wider school activities.
- The effectiveness of reasonable adjustments.
- Incidents of disability-related bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Pupil and parent feedback.
- Staff awareness and training.
- Progress against the school's Accessibility Plan and equality objectives.

The statement will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner where changes in legislation, guidance, school provision or identified needs make this necessary.

Responsibility for implementation will be shared across the school, with oversight from the governing body.