



NORTHWOOD  
COLLEGE  
FOR GIRLS

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G D S T  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

## NORTHWOOD COLLEGE FOR GIRLS ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

**(with regard to The Special Educational Needs  
and Disability Act (2001) and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010)**

For the 3-year period 2019 - 2022

**The following abbreviations have been used throughout this document:**

- NWC GDST Northwood College for Girls GDST
- SENCo Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- LST Learning Support Teacher
- SEND Special Educational Needs and/or Disability
- DFO Director of Finance and Operations

### **Background to the Accessibility Plan**

The *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001* (SENDA) extended the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to include education providers. This Act made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled pupils or other disabled people by treating them less favorably than others. Institutions were required to provide certain types of reasonable adjustments, for compliance by September 2005.

These requirements included:

- a. To ensure by September 2002 that admissions procedures and student services did not place a disabled person at substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled;
- b. To ensure by September 2003 that reasonable adjustments are made relating to the provision of auxiliary aids and services to ensure that disabled people;
- c. To ensure by September 2005 that reasonable adjustments were made to physical features of the school's premises where these may put disabled people at a significant disadvantage.

## **Policy Statement**

Northwood College for Girls is committed to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities and recognises its responsibility under the current legislation to ensure that it does not discriminate against pupils or potential pupils with a disability. In particular, the school recognises its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments, as specified in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that, in relation to the arrangements for determining admissions and providing education in its broadest sense, a disabled pupil is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who is not disabled.

To determine whether a disabled pupil or other person is placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who is not disabled, the school will take into account the time, inconvenience, effort or discomfort entailed in comparison with other pupils or visitors to the school. It understands that a 'substantial' disadvantage is one that is more than minor or trivial. Subject to the inherent limitations of the school site and premises and the specialist educational provision which is available at Northwood College, the school welcomes pupils with disabilities and specific learning difficulties and is committed to the continuing development of an "enabling" environment and a non-discriminatory culture within the school community.

Northwood College for Girls is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective. In addition to the provision of specialist support services for pupils with disabilities (as and when required) and specific learning difficulties, the school is committed to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to review their current work practices in light of the SENDA requirements.

Wherever practicable and in line with the SEND Policy Statement, the school will endeavor to cater for pupils and staff with restricted mobility by making adjustments to the teaching timetable and to premises so far as is reasonably practicable. Areas of the school which are used or visited by members of the public (for example, the Assembly Hall) are made accessible to the greatest extent possible as required.

## **Aims of the Accessibility Plan**

The Accessibility Plan has three aims

1. To increase the extent to which pupils, who are defined as disabled under the Equality Act 2010, are able to access the curriculum
2. To improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided, including extra-curricular activities
3. To improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

These aims are met through the successful implementation of the following objectives

## **Accessibility Plan Objectives**

- to apply a whole school approach to meeting every child's individual needs
- to identify, at the earliest opportunity, any pupil with SEND and to ensure that her needs are met
- to ensure that children with disabilities are included in all the activities of the school if at all possible
- to ensure that all learners make the best possible progress
- to ensure that all parents are informed of the provision in place for their child's needs; and that there is effective communication between parents and the school
- to ensure that learners are able to express their views and are involved in decisions which affect their education
- to promote effective partnerships and involve outside agencies when appropriate.

As part of its ideals, the leadership of Northwood College for Girls recognises its responsibilities to pupils, parents, staff, Governors and members of the wider community who have a disability, whether that disability is physical or not. Northwood College for Girls recognises its non-discrimination and planning duty under the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

- It should be noted that extra-curricular activities and outdoor pursuits are a central part of the Northwood College for Girls philosophy
- Prospective parents complete school registration and entry forms on which any special needs should be noted – parents are advised in the Additional Information booklet of the school's arrangements for addressing special educational needs

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**Review Date: August 2022**

- The school registration document is the basis for the legal contract between the school and the parent/guardian
- The school will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality but reserves the right to seek advice in assessing a prospective pupil for admission
- The school is committed to make all reasonable efforts to facilitate the admission of prospective pupils with special educational needs who will benefit from a Northwood College for Girls education within the boundaries of our special educational needs provision and of pupils with disabilities

### **Northwood College Principles and Values**

At Northwood College for Girls GDST, we are committed to offering all pupils a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure their best possible progress. We follow the principles detailed in the Equality Act (2010) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014) as appropriate to a selective school.

Our commitment is based on the following principles:

- All children have an equal right of entitlement to an appropriate and worthwhile education.
- All children are special, different and have individual needs.
- All children are equally valued within our school and have a right to voice their views.
- All children have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, delivered in a relevant and differentiated manner, enabling progression and continuity to be experienced.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disability occur in every classroom. Every teacher in school teaches children with special educational needs and/or disability.
- Every member of staff has regard to the needs of the individuals within the school.
- Pupils and parents are valued as genuine partners.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

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 defines an individual as disabled if he or she 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'. Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This might include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

## **The School in Context**

NWC GDST is an independent day school for girls from 3 -18 years. The school is selective and offers places to children with a range of specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and autistic spectrum disorder, who meet our entry criteria and for whose needs we are able to provide appropriate support. The SENCOs and LST are qualified to teach and assess students with dyslexia/specific learning difficulties. We also offer places to children with disabilities, physical impairments and/or long-term medical conditions, if we feel that we can provide appropriate support for their learning and physical needs. We try to ensure that, wherever possible, all pupils have the same level of access to all areas of the curriculum. Differences in programmes of study only occur on rare occasions where it is deemed in the best interests of the pupil.

Parents of children with disabilities or learning needs are encouraged to arrange to visit the school to discuss their child's requirements.

**The Accessibility Plan is linked to the following policies and documents:**

- Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Health and safety Policy

## **The Accessibility Plan**

This section details the School's approach to improving pupil access to the physical environment, information and the curriculum.

### **Access to the Physical Environment**

The school is divided into a number of physical areas. Access to all areas, and the availability of suitable facilities within each area, have been assessed by means of an Access Audit undertaken by an independent buildings surveyor, taking account of their use.

The Access Audit report has been formally received by the leadership team of the school and its recommendations have been accepted wherever considered practicable in the context of the school's current and foreseeable needs and the school's Disability Policy Statement. The Access Audit report thus incorporates the Accessibility Plan for Northwood College.

The plan will be reviewed annually to monitor and evaluate:

- Rectification actions taken during the previous year and their effectiveness
- Targets and rectification plans for the next academic year
- Planned responses to any further legislative changes
- The consequences to the rest of the school of actions taken

Every effort will be made, both financially and physically, to allow the development of the school environment to effectively increase the participation in the day-to-day life of the school by disabled pupils. As the financial circumstances of the school allow all efforts will be made to:

1. Make plans to make all academic areas of the school accessible by disabled pupils to be included in the GDST Long Term Maintenance Improvement Plan
2. Undertake an annual fire risk assessment and update the school's fire evacuation procedures to account for disabled pupils



3. Ensure that all newly constructed buildings will be accessible for disabled pupils
4. Ensure that all other areas of the school which might fall outside the scope of the Acts will be considered for disabled access improvements
5. Ensure that all new teaching equipment purchased will meet the needs of disabled pupils
6. Ensure that all teaching areas are fitted with diffused lighting
7. Ensure that appropriate noise levels are maintained (50 – 70 DBs)

At NWC GDST, the SENCO and LST are accommodated in rooms on the ground floor of Upper School. The School does not have a special unit. There is a lift in the Performing Arts Centre and another in the Pavilion; pupils who are physically disabled have access to all rooms in these buildings. Any lessons in the areas of the Senior School which have restricted access are timetabled, as far as possible, in teaching areas which are accessible to pupils who are physically disabled. Disabled toilet facilities are located in the Pavilion, Performing Arts Centre and Sports Complex.

Disabled parking spaces are available for staff and visitors.

### Access to the Physical Environment | Plan of Action

Action Point	Progress to date	Delivery Date	Budget Allocation
Vincent House   Improve classroom lighting and toilet access	Completed	Summer 20	CapEx
Whole site   Improve external lighting	Moving into final phase following ongoing works since 2018	Summer 20	Delegated Maintenance
Science building replacement. Completely accessible	Construction started. Due for completion April22	April 22	CapEx
Improvements made to site wide fire alarms (including visual alerts)	Works to Old School completed in 2019. Works to Vincent House completed summer 20	Ongoing	Delegated Maintenance
Improvements made to external site access	Pathways re-laid to remove trip hazards	Ongoing	Delegated Maintenance
Improve Sports Hall lighting	Completed	Summer 21	Delegated Maintenance

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## Access to the Curriculum & Information

Aim	Current Good Practice	Additional actions to be taken	Success Criteria
<p>Improve access to the curriculum for students with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are screened for dyslexia in Year 4 (Junior School) and Year 7 (Senior School). Pupils joining in later year groups are also screened.</li> <li>• Junior and Senior SENCoS and Learning Support Teacher (LST) have a specialist teacher/assessor qualification.</li> <li>• All SEND students have a pupil profile which is reviewed annually. Profiles are already in place when students join in Year 7.</li> <li>• SENCo regularly attends appropriate CPD to maintain current good practice for all SEN pupils</li> <li>• Where appropriate, dyslexic pupils are excused from studying foreign language.</li> <li>• Curriculum progress is tracked for all pupils, including those with SEND.</li> </ul>		<p>Pupils' progress is in line with or exceeds their predicted grades based on underlying ability irrespective of individual learning difficulties or disabilities.</p>
<p>Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new staff attend an induction session with the Senior SENCo and receive written information detailing</li> </ul>	<p>SENCo to deliver all school training on ADD and ADHD, and Sensory Processing Difficulties</p>	<p>Teachers will feel equipped to deal with the needs of ADD and ADHD pupils. Pupils with ADD and ADHD, and sensory difficulties will achieve outcomes in line with their underlying ability and will have reduced levels of</p>

	<p>school procedures for identifying/teaching students with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil profiles include strategies for differentiating lessons for individual pupils.</li> </ul>		<p>anxiety.</p> <p>SEND pupils will continue to achieve in line with their underlying ability.</p>
Ensure exams access for qualifying students with pupils with learning special educational needs and/or disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior and junior SENCOs, as well as the LST, are qualified to assess for access arrangements. All SEND students are reassessed at the end of Year 9 as per guidelines issued by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).</li> </ul>	<p>SENCO required to attend annual updates of JCQ guidelines.</p> <p>Where necessary (and allowed by JCQ guidelines) provide practical assistants, so that physically disabled students have equal access to the practical element of public exams.</p>	SEND pupils will have the same level of access to pupil exams as their non-disabled peers.
Ensure that, wherever possible, extra-curricular activities, including school trips, are accessible to pupils with SEND.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on school trips and extra-curricular activities which are available to all students equally.</li> <li>• Risk assessments are completed for every trip and extra measures/staff put in place where necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>Liaise with Duke of Edinburgh Award representative and World Challenge organisers re. provision and support for physically disabled students.</p>	Physically disabled students will, wherever possible, have equal access to DofE and World Challenge trips.
Classrooms / pastoral areas are organised to ensure access for physically-disabled students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessments are completed for practical lessons where a disabled student is present.</li> <li>• Timetables are amended so that students with mobility difficulties are accommodated in ground floor classrooms.</li> </ul>	<p>Parents and medical professionals will be involved in discussions about the requirements of potential pupils prior to joining the school. In such cases SENCO will attend research possible impact of such difficulties and cascade information to teaching and pastoral staff, e.g. VI pupils in</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lockers allocated at end of rows for disabled student.</li> <li>• Additional coat hooks and towel holders provided at lower heights for student with restricted arm movement.</li> <li>• Physical aids (e.g. Dycem mat) provided where necessary.</li> <li>• PE staff trained to adapt activities to suit the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and to provide as full access as possible to the PE curriculum.</li> </ul>	the Junior School	
To ensure appropriate delivery of material (school brochures, newsletters etc.) to students with SEND (and parents where applicable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloured overlays are available on request in public exams.</li> <li>• LST is able to screen pupils for symptoms of visual stress.</li> <li>• Teaching staff wear an induction loop when teaching hearing impaired (HI) student.</li> <li>• Needs of HI and VI students are taken into account when making classroom seating plans.</li> <li>• Visual timetables provided (for autistic spectrum condition students).</li> </ul>	Different formats to be considered according to need including, but not exclusively: internal signage; large print resources; braille; pictorial representations.	
Ensure appropriate teaching delivery for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENCo briefs teaching staff about specific students at the</li> </ul>	Continue to liaise regularly with LA HI teacher.	Equal access to teaching for all disabled students.

<p>students with physical needs, e.g. HI, VI.</p>	<p>start of each academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom seating plans are organised to meet the needs of disabled students.</li> <li>• SENCos liaise with LA Hearing Impairment Teacher.</li> </ul>	<p>Regularly review provision in place for students with physical needs.</p>	
<p>Plan extra investment in classroom technology to improve lesson communication.</p>	<p>The majority of teaching spaces now have new High Definition screens replacing old technology</p> <p>Multiple classroom sets of bookable laptops and Ipads available for pupil use</p>	<p>We will continue the roll out of new screen technology across 21/22. We have invested heavily in the deployment of 1-2-1 devices (chromebooks) across the last 18 months.</p>	<p>Academic staff are able to ensure their pupils can readily view displayed information in the classroom and have easy access to IT equipment</p>
<p>Reduce the impact of mental health issues on pupils, staff, parents and carers whether individuals suffer directly, or indirectly due to mental health issues suffered by others close to them, and having specific regard to the impacts of COVID-19, lockdowns, self-isolation and period of school closure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School will encourage positive discussion of mental health matters within its community to eradicate any perception that mental health is a taboo subject.</li> <li>• Mental Health Awareness Week will be a key point in each year when additional activities will be organised to increase participation and openness.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pastoral Team of tutors supports all pupils across the school with immediate access to further support where necessary from ;</li> <li>• The School Counsellor- pupils ac self-refer or be referred and</li> <li>• The School Coach – pupils can self-refer or be referred</li> <li>• Ensuing that mental health issues remains a regular topic raised in assemblies and form times</li> <li>• Maintaining a staff wellbeing scheme that includes a helpline and access to specialist support</li> <li>• Delivering a PSHE programme that promotes positive mental health and explores mental health issues</li> </ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensuring that SEN students are guided to CBT support where appropriate. Sessions are held virtually in school by providing a laptop and room, following disruption to sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li><li>• Well- being clubs for SEN pupils with Social Communication needs are held at break times and lunchtimes</li><li>• Interventions such as 'Circle of Friends ' are held for lonely pupils</li></ul>		
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