

# DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME & ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## Introduction

Channing is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and prospective members of its community in line with the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act (2001) and the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act.

The school has a duty to ensure that all our pupils have equal access to the curriculum, supported as appropriate to their individual needs. This covers not only the content of lessons and teaching strategies but also minor adaptations to the physical environment of our buildings to address the needs of pupils with physical or sensory impairments, including the relocation of classes to the ground floor where feasible. We also need to ensure that parents and carers who have a disability have equal access to information about their daughter. This will involve, for example, relocating the venue for parents'/carers' meetings to facilitate physical access; provision of an interpreter for people who have a hearing impairment; agreeing a phone contact system to provide direct feedback to parents and carers.

Channing will apply the School Admissions Policy to all pupils, regardless of any disability of which the school is made aware, and will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate pupils, parents and visitors with disabilities.

In determining what is reasonable the school will have regard to:

- The financial resources available to the school
- The costs of any particular alteration to the premises, staffing arrangements, or special equipment required
- The practicality of making reasonable adjustments
- The extent to which aids and services will be provided via a Statement of Educational Needs, or by provision paid for outside the school's resources
- Health and Safety requirements
- The interests of other pupils

Parents of a pupil who has any disability or special educational needs are advised to provide the school with full written details at registration, prior to assessment. The School needs this information so that in the case of a pupil with particular needs, we can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments that can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the pupil's needs both during the admission process and if an offer of a place is made. Similarly, if special educational needs or a disability become apparent after admission, the school will consult with parents about reasonable adjustments that may allow their daughter to continue at the school.

Channing values all members of its community; all students, including those with additional needs, play a full part in its activities, participating in sports, plays, music, camps and trips. Adaptations for a pupil's participation in these activities are provided for through her Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

As part of the admissions process, staff will meet with parents to discuss whether or not a prospective pupil will be able to access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate this. In determining this, the school may advise additional assessments for further clarification. If after consultation the school decides that it cannot discharge its legal and moral responsibilities to educate the prospective pupil and/or its contractual duties

to the parent(s), the school reserves the right not to offer a place.

If the school is satisfied that with reasonable adjustments (and/or additional support provided from outside the school's resources) the prospective pupil can participate in the school and meets the entrance criteria, then, subject to availability, a place will be offered. Where the school agrees to provide additional services or equipment, parents may be charged for this service at a level which reasonably reflects the cost to the school of providing the service.

Most pupils stay at Channing for many years. It is possible that during their education a pupil may become disabled or her additional needs may first be identified, or become more serious. Continuing communication between parents and staff is vital for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to facilitate the pupil's participation in school.

If the school decides that it can no longer provide an environment suitable for the student to participate and thrive, it will consult with parents and, where appropriate, Channing will request and support the move of the student to another educational establishment.

Both Fairseat and Channing can be difficult to move around. Ramps and a Disabled WC have been included in the more recent constructions in the senior school and conversions and future developments will take account of access for the physically impaired.

In order to provide the best facilities for pupils, the school operates a system of fixed classrooms for particular subjects. Pupils need to move between sites, classrooms, laboratories and specialist rooms, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts.

The Accessibility Plan will help the school to continue to improve access to its buildings. In the shorter term, depending on the age of the pupil, it will seek to make adjustments to the timetable in such a way that, with additional support, physically disabled pupils will be able to access the curriculum.

### **Admissions**

The school's admissions and entry procedures are detailed in the Admissions Policy and this is kept under regular review. Before offering a place the school must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and facilitate the development of the prospective pupil to the best of her potential and in line with the standards achieved by the pupils' peers. The school operates an inclusion policy which it believes enriches school life, but the prospective pupil must be able to access the mainstream curriculum at an age appropriate level. The school will make reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of applicants while giving equal importance to ensuring that no other pupil's education is impaired.

In deciding whether to offer a place, Channing will be mindful of its responsibilities in meeting the needs of its existing students. Withdrawal for learning support is limited. We are used to teaching students with a range of abilities, but the school acknowledges that it may not be able to provide the level of intensive support required by some pupils.

At Channing we are particularly mindful of the importance of links between home and school. The SEN Code of Practice highlights, "*The relationship between parents of pupil with Special Educational Needs and the school which their pupil is attending has a crucial bearing on the Pupil's educational progress and the effectiveness of any school-based action.*"

### **Adjustments to the School Buildings and Grounds**

Within the context of our school, which contains many steps and levels, with narrow staircases and corridors, all refurbishment and new buildings will be planned with the intention of improving access for disabled pupils. Consideration will be given as to whether making alterations will be part of a logical plan, and provide value for money. Where a risk assessment has been undertaken, relating to a student with a disability, subject staff should implement the recommendations within their own teaching environment.

### **Access to the Curriculum**

In all parts of the school, pupils move throughout the school to specialist rooms. There is some scope to consider the needs of an individual pupil when the timetable is being created, but this will, by the nature of a complex timetable, be limited. The school will make best use of time-limited support for pupils with statements or pupils with additional needs to enable them to gain maximum benefit.

The requirements of any pupil with additional needs admitted to Channing will be discussed with Heads of Department, Subject Co-ordinators, class teachers and teaching assistants and special provisions will be made. In some cases the school may ask parents to pay for a learning support assistant approved by the school to support the delivery of the curriculum. With differentiation in mind, any particular needs will be discussed and consideration given to ensuring the success of the pupil and the rest of the class.

Staff must ensure that the specific needs of every pupil has been met by forward planning of every lesson, and the production of differentiated material to meet identified needs.

Consideration must be given to the text presented to students, considering the need for simplified versions where this is appropriate. Similarly, pupils who have difficulty accessing standard size print should be identified on, or prior to, admission and appropriate provisions should made for them in every lesson.

The use of computers, projectors and DVDs must be considered in the context of pupils' disabilities. Recognition must be given that some formats, whilst beneficial to many pupils, will not be appropriate for all. An assessment should be made of the impact of using a technology with a class where a disabled student is working.

### **Physical access**

There are physical constraints limiting access to sports and other school facilities. When booking an off-site facility the school will check the accessibility for all pupils. Risk assessments for trips are prepared on a regular basis and take account of the particular needs of disabled pupils.

As new furniture is required, consideration will be given to purchasing items of variable or flexible height.

When educational sessions are run by outside parties, they will be made aware of pupils' additional needs. The school will provide detailed information and any assistance possible.

### **Trips**

The medical needs of all pupils will be carefully considered when deciding on school trip, transport arrangements and whether extra support staff are required. This is part of the risk assessment process and it is done in full consultation with parents.

### **Diet and Medication**

For an additional fee the school provides hot and cold lunches to pupils. Within the limits of a small kitchen, a number of options are available and it is possible to accommodate the needs of those pupils on special diets.

The school employs School Nurses who will give medication to pupils in accordance with written guidance from parents or guardians. Medication can be refrigerated and stored securely. If a pupil feels unwell she can visit the nurse and seek assistance. Information on any medical condition should be provided to the School Nurse (preferably in writing) as soon as it is diagnosed so she can brief staff on any emergency procedures to be followed.

### **Welfare**

Channing School has a long tradition of pastoral support. Our ethos is of accepting and valuing differences. Our policies support this approach and are embodied in the Channing *Code of Positive Behaviour*, Fairseat's *Golden Rules* and our system of pastoral care.

The school takes very seriously any suggestion that a pupil feels excluded or subject to bullying. All girls are made aware of the school's code of positive behaviour and are regularly reminded of it. Girls are encouraged to speak to teachers about any concerns, to feel empowered to challenge unfairness on their own behalf and on behalf of others. The PSHE curriculum addresses themes of self-esteem, peer pressure, individual strengths, rights and differences as well as specific topics of disability.

Heads of Section and Form Tutors seek and receive feedback from staff on pupil performance, and where concerns are expressed they address these problems directly with the pupils and/or their parents and develop strategies to support them. Similarly the Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator will liaise regularly with Heads of Section, Form Tutors, subject specialists, parents and pupils.

If staff consider it appropriate they make recommendations to parents for a meeting with the Head of Section or the Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator who may then advise a referral to an educational psychologist and/or other specialist. If pupils find it difficult to fulfill the full timetable of activities, staff, in consultation with parents, may consider a reduction in the number of subjects studied to allow time for greater personal study and/or learning support.

If parents believe that their daughter has been unfairly treated by the school they may utilise the published complaints procedure.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Headmistress, Head of Fairseat and Bursar will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The Bursar is responsible for this policy.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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