

Cognita Schools Ltd



Accessibility Plan

Meoncross School

including EYFS



October 2016

Accessibility Plan

KEY FACTS:

- ✦ **This plan enables schools to ensure compliance with laws regarding opportunity for pupils/potential pupils.**
- ✦ **It is reviewed every three years.**
- ✦ **Cognita will comply with statutory requirements and guidance.**
- ✦ **Individuals are responsible for their discriminatory actions.**
- ✦ **The school's liability extends beyond the life of the pupil at the school.**
- ✦ **The spirit of the law is to make/consider reasonable adjustments.**
- ✦ **The plan outlines Cognita Schools' duties around accessibility and how to deal with claims.**
- ✦ **Guidance for creating each school's unique plan is given in the Appendix.**

1 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:-
 - 1.2.1. Admissions;
 - 1.2.2. The way we provide education for pupils;
 - 1.2.3. The way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - 1.2.4. By excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.3. The protected characteristics are:
 - 1.3.1. **sex;**
 - 1.3.2. **race;**
 - 1.3.3. **disability;**
 - 1.3.4. **religion or belief;**
 - 1.3.5. **sexual orientation;**
 - 1.3.6. **gender reassignment;**
 - 1.3.7. **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 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:-
 - 2.1.1. the definition of disability is less restrictive;
 - 2.1.2. direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
 - 2.1.3. failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
 - 2.1.4. 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 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 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.

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- 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 Our Vision

- 5.1. **Academic Excellence**
- 5.2. **Achievement in a wide range of activities**
- 5.3. **Care and respect for the individual within a safe environment**
- 5.4. **Creating opportunities for challenge and leadership**
- 5.5. **Good discipline and a sense of order**
- 5.6. **Service to others – in school and in the community**
- 5.7. 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 Our duty around Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

- 6.1. Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:--
 - 6.1.1. increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
 - 6.1.2. improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
 - 6.1.3. 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:--
 - 6.3.1. 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);
 - 6.3.2. identify actions;
 - 6.3.3. set goals and targets;
 - 6.3.4. consult on the proposed plan;
 - 6.3.5. publicize the plan;
 - 6.3.6. implementation; and
 - 6.3.7. evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan.

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

7 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 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 8.1. The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is Nathan Waites
- 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 Nathan Waites
- 8.5. Progress reports are provided termly to our school's compliance committee by Nathan Waites 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.

9 Related Policies, Guidelines, Templates and Forms

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



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APPENDIX 1 – MEONCROSS SCHOOL ACCESS PLAN – October 2016

	Targets / Aims	Strategies / How	Outcome	Timeframe	Cost	Goals Achieved	Responsible Person	Completed / Comments
Short term	To be able to respond efficiently to requests to provide written material in alternative formats.	The school will make itself aware of the services available through its LEA or other service providers e.g. Examination boards for converting written information into alternative formats.	If needed the school can provide written information in alternative formats.	Term 1 2016/17		Delivery of information to disabled pupils and parents improved.	BW/DT	
	Provide easier access for disabled parents to the school site	Allow access to area in front of Main House using automated gates.	Parents can safely drive in to collect their children, from the school site	Term 1 2016/17	£0 - spare cards available	Swipe card given to a parent to help facilitate collection of their child	SBM	Actioned
Medium term	Improve vision of teaching resources (projectors and interactive whiteboards in classrooms) - 1	Install Blackout blinds	Several classrooms are made more accessible to visually impaired children.	Term 1 2017/18	Approx £200-£500 per classroom	Blinds installed blocking out glare on whiteboards etc...	SBM	This has already been completed in the Jubille Building, Infant

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								Building. Year 6 and Senior Buildings
	Improve vision of teaching resources (projectors and interactive whiteboards in classrooms) - 2	Replace old projectors with new higher lumens projectors or large screen displays	Some projectors are old and nearing end of life. It is more cost effective to replace with a new projector than to simply replace a bulb, and the new projector provide a brighter crisper image.	Term 1 2017/18	Approx £600 per projector	Improved image quality on projection	SBM	ICT2, MFL1, Year 5 Year 4, Reception, have all benefited to date, with further cyclical replacement planned. History is a priority
	Ensure safe entry/exit to buildings	Some external fire doors have become sticky overtime, due to their wooden construction.	Replacement doors with glazing to allow for clear vision externally, and new door furniture fitted to provide secure easy to use doors.	Term 2 2017/18	c. £250 per door with fitting glazing and hardware	Allow better access	SBM / Caretaker	

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	<p>School plans to continue to improve access to designated areas over successive financial years. The school decides which of its areas will carry out refurbishment, and wherever possible, reasonable adaptations will be included within the project to make greater provision.</p>	<p>Planned use of major capital resources and discuss with Cognita using Minor Capex Funding</p>	<p>Recent examples have included the creation of two accessible ICT suites, and a Physics lab with height adjustable lab table, complete with gas and electric points.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>		<p>Physical accessibility of school increased.</p>		
	<p>Children can have access to all learning facilities regardless of location</p>	<p>The creation of ground floor facilities, means that via timetabling, pupils can access most curriculum resources on the ground floor of buildings.</p>	<p>Where this would not normally happen. Appropriate adjustments to the timetable can be made, using a 'teachers visit the pupil' rather than pupils traditionally visiting the class.</p>	<p>Ongoing if required</p>	<p>£0</p>		<p>KJ</p>	<p>If required</p>

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Long term	Ensure that all school trips & residential visits are accessible for pupils with learning or physical disabilities.	Thorough planning by trip leaders including pre visit where relevant	Trip leaders will consider the needs of all children within their group, and ensure wherever reasonably possible that arrangements are made for any disabled children or those with SEN to take part.	Ongoing	All trip leaders	Consultation with EVC as part of trip planning process	EVC	Ongoing
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APPENDIX 2
COGNITA
 IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST
 TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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.

Section 1 : How does your school deliver the curriculum?		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	✓	
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils? <i>Some classrooms have been specially adapted for wheelchairs and timeabling adjustments can be made if necessary.</i>	✓	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	✓	
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	✓	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?	✓	
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?	✓	
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	✓	
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	✓	
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?	✓	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	✓	
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	✓	
Are there high expectation of all pupils?	✓	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	✓	
Section 2 : Is your School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?		
Questions	Yes	No
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;	✓	

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playgrounds and common 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?	✓	
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	✓	
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?	✓	
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		✓
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		✓
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	✓	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	✓	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?	✓	
Section 3 : How does your School deliver materials in other formats?		
Questions	Yes	No
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?		✓
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?	✓	
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	✓	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		✓