



COTTESMORE SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

Aim

The aim of this plan is to set out how Cottesmore School intends to increase the accessibility of its activities and facilities over the three year period 2024-2027.

Cottesmore School is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all pupils. It has high ambitions for all of its pupils and expects them to be able to participate in all the aspects of school life that they choose.

The school will seek to identify and overcome barriers that prevent people with disabilities from accessing the facilities that the school has to offer.

Duty Under the Act

The Governing Board of Advisors recognises its duty under the DDA, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act of 2001 together with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 'Accessibility for disabled pupils'.

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of the school 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
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled such as written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled pupils.
- within a reasonable time
- in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- Not to discriminate against disabled people.
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To take reasonable steps (adjustments) to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage and to improve the developments in physical access to the education and other services
- To publish this Disability Access Plan in writing

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school. In deciding whether a step is reasonable, schools may take into account the need to maintain:

- Academic standards
- Available resources
- The practicalities of making a particular adjustment
- The Health & Safety of the disabled pupils and the interests of others

Cottesmore School is committed to meeting the full requirements of the Act.



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Definition of Disability

The DDA defines a disabled pupil as someone who 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”. The definition includes sensory impairments, learning impairments, dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy, ADHD, severe allergies and major illnesses.

Organisation and Responsibilities

Cottesmore’s Disability Access Group consists of The Headmaster, the SENCO, the Nurse and Bursar. The group seeks advice and input from other members of staff and others with expert knowledge of disability issues.

The Group’s responsibilities are:

- to review the school’s policies and procedures and facilities to maximize accessibility to the school by those with additional needs
- to ensure provision is given for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs as far as is possible.
- to make recommendations to improve accessibility by means of reasonable adjustment and by planning future improvements and by preparing and reviewing this plan
- to monitor the implementation of this plan and to review as necessary and at least every 3 years

Awareness

It is the school’s policy that staff and pupils are to be made aware of disability, understand its effects and accept and support disabled pupils as a part of school life.

Appropriate staff INSET will be provided to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.

Links with the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and handbooks will be reviewed in order to reflect inclusiveness and to aid understanding and integration

Increasing access to the school curriculum

During this planned period the school will research common forms of physical, medical and cognitive disability to gain a greater understanding of the major issues facing pupils with these conditions and practical methods of supporting them. As a result of existing experience of supporting pupils with educational support needs we find that they have a range of needs and that individual programmes of support need to be prepared and reviewed on a regular basis. The school will collate up to date information on disability.

The requirements of any pupil with additional needs admitted to the school will be discussed with appropriate staff and a programme of appropriate special provision 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

In all parts of the school, but particularly from Years 3/4 and above children move through the site to eat and to access specialist teaching rooms. There is some scope to consider the needs of an individual pupil when the timetable is being created but this will be limited.



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Staff will be made aware of pupils with a disability or special educational need by the SENCO, the school nurse or member of the Senior Management Team.

Staff will need to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns of all pupils according to their abilities and necessary differentiation should be reflected in departmental schemes of work.

Staff will continue to be made aware of strategies to make “reasonable adjustments” within the classroom so as to not place disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum.

The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management should not prejudice the progress of other pupils nor their Health & Safety.

Improving access to the physical environment

If outside funding can be made available in advance, it may be possible for the school to advance its programme of access improvements or to purchase additional specialist equipment or support for individual pupils.

Parents should be aware that the school site is reasonably large, boarding accommodation is located at the top of the house and the school building is a Grade II listed site and arranged over several floors. These factors present access challenges and students with impaired mobility may be somewhat disadvantaged by these problems. However, the school will make any reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils may still participate in school life.

The school will seek to address these issues over time as part of our buildings development and refurbishment programme but some improvements cannot be achieved by reasonable adjustments short of major alterations at prohibitive cost. The building development plans will extend past the period of this plan and the period 2022-2024 should see these plans moving forward and access improved.

Pre-prep -for children in the EYFS, a ‘local offer’ is available on the school website.



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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2021/22

Building	Compliance Status	Plans for implementation	Date scheduled	Date completed
Swimming Pool & Covered Sports Area	Pool and Centre ground floor have level access. Disabled toilets available.	Hoist to be included under next refurbishment	2027	
Boarding Facilities	Built as a large family home in 1894, the property is in a conservation area with strict planning restrictions	None at this stage on grounds of planning constraints and cost. As/when/if major refurbishment is planned, accessibility will feature heavily in the planning process.	2025	Ongoing
Sopwith Technology Centre – Art Room	Steps access and no ‘loop’ system	Consideration of a lift when next refurbished or when, as direct links between the buildings are part of the plan.	2028	
Signage and printed materials	Reviews have been carried out to meet the needs of current staff and pupils	Signs are currently being made for a number of areas around the school and grounds.	2019	October 2019
Pre-prep	Level and ramped access to ground floor of main building	The Pre-prep department has ramped access from the outside to the building, providing access to the ground floor of the main building. Fire exits from classrooms are down two steps.	New ramp built in 2019	2019
Fire alarm system	Audible system in place.	New system put in in 2019 including visual as well as audible warnings.	2019	October 2019
Curriculum I	Staff training on signs of mental health in themselves and children, and coping strategies of stress	Educational psychologist specialist training for whole teaching staff April 2018 (iWellbeing).	2019	2019
		Staff inset provided by Charlie Waller Memorial Trust focusing on Mental Health	2020	2020
		Staff training on Wellbeing App on iSAMS	2022	2022
		Staff training on Wellbeing Hub	2023	2023

Review arrangements: overview by Management annually
Full review by Governor Advisors September 2025

Reviewed August 2025
Review Due September 2026