



Accessibility Strategy 2018 – 2019

Related documents include:
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Legal Status:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet the planning duties in Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Times and Periods for Accessibility Strategies and Plans for Schools) (England) Regulations 2005. To meet the Equality Act 2010 To meet the JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations 2018_19
Monitoring and Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal The Principal will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next official date for review is: September 2019

Introduction

Local education authorities and schools are required to develop accessibility strategies and plans, respectively, to improve access to school education for disabled pupils.

The strategies and plans are required to show how, over time, access to local schools will be increased by:

- Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils
- Making improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access to education and associated services
- Making written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled pupils, where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

Because the planning duties require LEA's and schools to make improvements, over time, to the physical environment of schools, physical alterations are not included in the reasonable adjustments duty, as they are for Colleges and universities.

The legislation requires the provision of information in alternative formats to be made within a reasonable period of time and taking into account the views expressed by pupils, or by their parents, about their preferred means of communication.

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The plans and strategies must be in writing and have to be resourced and implemented. Plans and strategies run for three years in the first instance, from April 1st 2015 to March 31st 2018, with review and revision for a further three years thereafter.

The governing body of the school is responsible for the school's accessibility plan. The development and implementation of the plan will involve different members of staff according to their responsibilities:

- The development of access to the curriculum will be led by those with curriculum responsibilities.
- The development of materials in different formats is likely to involve all staff in respect of materials used in their own teaching.
- The Head Teacher or a senior manager is likely to lead on improvements to the physical environment, the deployment of resources and the coordination of the plan across the whole school.

Ofsted inspects the quality of school plans and local authority strategies. In particular Ofsted expects to see the three key elements of the planning duties addressed in plans and strategies. The Secretary of State has powers to instruct schools and local authorities to draw up a plan or strategy if they do not have one, or to order improvements if this should be necessary.

As an approved examinations centre, the JCQ (Joint Qualifications Council) require that the school must outline how it seeks to comply with the Equality Act 2010, fully supporting the needs of disabled candidates and candidates with special educational needs during classes internal and external assessment and examinations.

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Abbey College in Malvern Ltd (Number 08661073)

Registered in England and Wales. Registered office: 6 Manor Park Business centre, Mackenzie Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 9TX
Member of ENGLISH UK, Accredited by the British Council for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, DfES Reg. No. 8856026



The Abbey College Accessibility Strategy

Access to the Curriculum

Access to the curriculum at Abbey College has only traditionally been hampered by students' English language skills. It is the responsibility of the English language Department to deliver English language support to academic students to better allow them to study substantive academic courses through raising the level of students' English language.

The College policy is to test all students in English and Mathematics upon arrival. This is followed by a counselling session with either the Principal or Director of Academic Studies or Director of Studies (EFL), where an appropriate academic course is decided upon, usually by mutual consent. The academic course will be one of the following:

1. Mainstream Academic Course (with English language support)
2. Intensive English Language (in preparation for joining a mainstream course)

The provision of intensive English language courses allows for students with even the most elementary level of English to access the curriculum.

With small classes the Abbey College is ideally placed to increase accessibility to the curriculum; subject teachers have the potential to differentiate between weaker and stronger members of the classes and allow for ability levels to access the curriculum.

The most obvious ways that this can be approached are as follows:

- Differentiated directing of verbal questions
- Differentiated tasks to complete in class
- Differentiated tasks to complete for prep
- Differentiated expectations

The small classes allow for teachers to spend time with individuals during a lesson, allowing for the more able to be stretched and those who require more individual support to be offered it. If a student requires 1-1 classes in a mainstream subject, it can often be offered by the College.

Mainstream academic teachers are given guidance in teaching English as a Second Language students through workshops regularly run by the teacher trainer or Director of Studies (EFL) or Principal, termly observations by the Director of Studies (EFL) or Principal and the peer observation programme, where mainstream academic teachers observe the classes that they teach in an EFL class being taught by an EFL teacher.

This policy is monitored through Academic, Departmental and Management Meetings, schemes of work, as well as classroom observations and the progress of individual student.

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Development of Materials

Materials used by teachers in the classroom tend to fall into two categories, either those purchased as 'purpose designed' resources, i.e. text books, or those created by the teacher, i.e. worksheets.

The choice of text books used in a class is determined by both the nature/level of the class and the level of English of the students. This is a relatively simple exercise for EFL classes where there are a vast number of text books that will fit every language level. In these cases the class level is determined at the start of the course and the English Department will identify a suitable course book for the students to follow. Sometimes, more than one course book is followed simultaneously.

The choice of text book is more restricted for GCSE and A level courses. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that their teaching and classroom activities will allow increase accessibility to the chosen textbook for students whose language skills may be less developed. Likewise, the teacher can produce additional materials for students who may need academically stretching beyond the content of the text book

The College has a teacher trainer/experienced teacher observe all teachers at least once a year. One purpose of these observations is to comment and make suggestions on use of classroom materials. There are also regular workshops run throughout the year for teachers; many of these workshops incorporate elements on development and use of classroom materials.

The College intends to increase the provision of PowerPoint projectors, interactive whiteboards and other ICT tools for suitability inside the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to research suitable software for departmental purchase to be used in tandem with these resources.

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Examinations – JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustment

Where applicable the college provides access arrangements and Reasonable adjustments for examination candidates with Special educational needs as defined under the Equality Act 2010, in line with the JCQ regulations for access arrangements and Reasonable adjustments.

Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which college complies with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010* requires the college to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The college is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- The needs of the disabled candidate;
- The effectiveness of the adjustment;
- The cost of the adjustment; and
- The likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not “reasonable”.

All applications for Access arrangements and reasonable adjustment must be agreed with the examination board prior to examinations and by the date defined by the examination boards.

The responsibility of the college with approval from the examination boards is to make reasonable adjustments for a candidate defined as disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

Evidence of need

The evidence of need will vary depending on the disability and the access arrangement(s) being applied for. (See chapter 5 - JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties)

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The Examinations Officer, Head of centre (The principal) and members of the senior leadership team will familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations

The Examinations Officer, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, will manage and arrange the access arrangements process within the centre.

Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team will support the Examinations Officer in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.

The Examinations Officer must work with teaching staff and Student Support staff to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

Where appropriate, the Examinations Officer will also need to work with specialist advisory teachers and medical professionals to identify needs and provide evidence.

The Examinations Officer will work with teaching staff to identify the most appropriate published format of modified papers (see pages 76 to 79 JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) which will enable the candidate(s) to access their examinations.

The JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations must be used when processing applications using Access arrangements online.

Failure to comply with the regulations contained in JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties have the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result(s).

Failure to comply is defined as putting in place access arrangements that are not approved, or permitting access arrangements within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence.

Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties are outlined in the JCQ - Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations 2018_19

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The Physical Environment

Unfortunately, the location of the Abbey College makes its campus unsuitable for many people with mobility issues. The campus is based on a very steep hillside making it an unsuitable and even dangerous environment for many with mobility issues. The scale of this problem is so ingrained into the campus site that it is impractical to look at ways that it could be completely overcome, short of moving the site of the school.

However, the College is continually enhancing accessibility around the campus and plans such measures as adding a pathway from the badminton courts to the old rose garden as well as an enhanced pathway to any outdoor facilities, such as the tennis courts, which are modernized through the addition of Astroturf or other similar measures.

Each case for a person to be admitted to the College with difficulties in manoeuvrability will be dealt with on a case by case basis, taking medical or expert opinion if necessary. The College would keep the interests of the potential student as the primary consideration in its deliberations.

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