



HANDEL HOUSE SCHOOL

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Disability Accessibility Policy

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Policy owner: Headteacher/Proprietor

Approved by: Headteacher/Proprietor

1. Policy Statement

Handel House School is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful and accessible learning environment for all pupils aged 3–11, including disabled pupils. The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils who are not disabled. Where appropriate, the school will make reasonable adjustments to its policies, practices, procedures and provision to enable disabled pupils to participate fully in education and wider school life. The school recognises that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory. Accessibility needs will therefore be considered as part of the school's planning and provision, as well as in response to the needs of individual pupils.

The school operates from a Victorian house. We recognise that the age, layout and architectural features of the building present inherent accessibility challenges, including steps, narrow corridors and different levels. The school is committed to addressing these challenges proactively, sensitively and lawfully while preserving the character of the building and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors.

Where permanent physical adaptations are not reasonably practicable because of the nature of the building, planning or structural constraints, cost, resources or health and safety considerations, the school will consider alternative reasonable adjustments which may provide effective access and participation.

This policy supports the school's aims, ethos, safeguarding responsibilities and duty of care and should be read alongside the school's Accessibility Plan, SEND Policy, Equality Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy, Admissions Policy and Complaints Policy.

2. Regulatory and Legal Framework

This policy has regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory requirements, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014, including:
 - Part 1 – Quality of education provided
 - Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils
 - Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
 - Part 6 – Provision of information
 - Part 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 years
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Relevant fire safety legislation and guidance

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including the duties to:

- avoid direct and indirect discrimination;
- avoid discrimination arising from disability;
- avoid harassment and victimisation;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations; and
- prepare, implement and review an Accessibility Plan.

Disability and special educational needs are related but distinct concepts. A pupil may have a disability without having special educational needs, and a pupil may have special educational needs without meeting the Equality Act definition of disability. The school will consider both frameworks where applicable.

3. Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as:

A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disability may include, where the statutory definition is met:

- physical or mobility impairments;
- sensory impairments, including hearing or visual impairment;
- speech, language and communication difficulties;
- neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism and ADHD;
- long-term medical conditions, including epilepsy and diabetes;
- severe allergies and other conditions which may constitute a disability;
- mental health conditions; and
- other physical or mental impairments which meet the statutory definition.

The school will consider the individual circumstances of each pupil rather than relying solely on a diagnosis or label when determining appropriate support or reasonable adjustments.

4. Aims and Principles

The school aims to:

- promote equality of opportunity for all pupils;
- enable disabled pupils to access a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum;
- identify and remove or reduce barriers to learning and participation wherever reasonably practicable;
- promote independence, dignity and wellbeing;
- ensure accessibility considerations inform strategic planning and daily practice;
- consider accessibility across the whole of school life, including lessons, assemblies, sport, educational visits, residential activities, performances, clubs and other enrichment activities;
- work collaboratively with pupils and their parents/carers when identifying accessibility barriers and determining appropriate adjustments; and
- review the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments and amend them where necessary.

The school recognises that reasonable adjustments will depend upon the individual circumstances and needs of the pupil. An adjustment that is appropriate for one pupil may not be appropriate for another.

5. Physical Accessibility and Premises

5.1 Victorian Building Context

The school operates from a Victorian building which includes features such as steps, narrow corridors, different levels and architectural features which may restrict the extent to which permanent physical adaptations can be made.

The school will:

- undertake regular risk assessments and accessibility reviews;
- consider accessibility when significant changes are made to the premises or the use of particular rooms;
- seek specialist advice where appropriate;
- use room allocation and timetabling flexibly to reduce physical access barriers;
- consider the allocation of more accessible teaching spaces for pupils with mobility needs;
- keep routes and access areas as clear as reasonably practicable; and
- consider alternative arrangements where a particular physical area cannot reasonably be accessed by an individual pupil.

The school will balance accessibility with the need to maintain effective teaching, safeguarding, fire safety and the safe operation of the school.

5.2 Reasonable Adjustments to the Premises

Depending on the individual circumstances, reasonable adjustments may include:

- temporary or portable ramps where appropriate and safe;
- installation or improvement of handrails;
- non-slip surfaces where appropriate;
- clear, high-contrast signage and visual cues;
- enhanced lighting where this would assist a pupil;
- adapted or alternative toilet arrangements where reasonably practicable;
- changes to room allocation;
- alternative routes around the building;
- appropriate assistance with access where required;
- changes to the organisation of activities; and
- other reasonable measures identified through an individual assessment.

The school will consider the effectiveness of a proposed adjustment, its practicality, cost, available resources, impact on the pupil and other pupils, health and safety implications and the extent to which it removes or reduces the disadvantage identified. The school will not assume that a physical alteration is the only way of meeting an accessibility need. Where an alteration is not reasonably practicable, alternative arrangements will be considered.

5.3 Emergency Procedures

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils can participate safely in emergency evacuation procedures. Where an individual pupil requires specific assistance to evacuate safely, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) or other appropriate individual emergency arrangement will be developed.

PEEPs will:

- reflect the individual needs of the pupil;
- identify appropriate assistance and evacuation arrangements;
- be communicated to relevant staff;
- be implemented during emergency procedures; and
- be reviewed when the pupil's needs, circumstances or the school's arrangements change.

Staff will receive appropriate training and guidance in emergency evacuation procedures. Emergency routes will be clearly identified and kept unobstructed. Accessibility arrangements must not compromise the safe evacuation of the whole school community.

6. Curriculum Access and Educational Provision

In accordance with the Independent School Standards, the school will seek to ensure that teaching enables disabled pupils to make good progress and participate as fully as reasonably practicable in the curriculum. This may be achieved through:

- differentiated teaching strategies;
- adapted learning materials;
- assistive technology where appropriate;
- flexible classroom organisation and seating;
- accessible presentation of learning materials;
- visual timetables and structured routines;
- sensory-aware approaches where appropriate;
- reasonable opportunities for movement, rest or regulation where appropriate;
- appropriate additional adult support where reasonably practicable;
- adjustments to assessment methods where appropriate;
- alternative ways of demonstrating learning where necessary; and
- consideration of accessibility within educational visits, sporting activities, residential activities, performances, clubs and other enrichment opportunities.

The school will consider reasonable adjustments to enable disabled pupils to participate in the wider curriculum and school life and will seek to avoid unnecessary exclusion from activities because of disability.

7. Communication and Information

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that information provided to pupils and parents/carers is accessible where reasonably required.

This may include:

- providing information in alternative formats where appropriate;
- using clear and accessible language;
- using supportive visuals and diagrams;

- using visual timetables and structured routines;
- adapting communication methods to meet individual needs;
- providing information in a format which supports sensory or communication needs; and
- working with parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate.

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss accessibility or communication requirements with the school so that appropriate arrangements can be considered.

8. Admissions and Transitions

The school welcomes applications from disabled pupils and will not unlawfully discriminate against a pupil during the admissions process.

The school will:

- engage in open and constructive dialogue with parents/carers concerning accessibility and support requirements;
- consider relevant information about a prospective pupil's accessibility needs;
- consider reasonable adjustments before admission wherever reasonably possible;
- assess whether particular activities, premises or arrangements present barriers and identify possible adjustments;
- work with previous settings and relevant professionals where appropriate;
- provide tailored transition arrangements where required; and
- review arrangements as the pupil becomes familiar with the school.

Admissions decisions will be made in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy and applicable legal requirements.

9. Staff Training and Responsibilities

9.1 Training

The school will provide appropriate information, guidance and training to staff to support inclusive practice.

This may include:

- disability awareness;
- equality and inclusion;
- reasonable adjustments;
- supporting pupils with mobility, sensory or communication needs;
- awareness of accessibility issues associated with the school's historic building;
- relevant medical or care needs;
- emergency evacuation arrangements; and
- specific training identified through individual pupil needs or risk assessments.

Training will be proportionate to staff roles and responsibilities.

9.2 Responsibilities

The Proprietor/Headteacher

The Proprietor/Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities in relation to disability and accessibility.

The Proprietor/Headteacher will:

- ensure that an Accessibility Plan is prepared, implemented and reviewed;
- ensure that accessibility is considered within strategic planning;
- ensure that significant accessibility issues are identified and addressed where reasonably practicable;
- ensure that appropriate resources are considered;
- monitor compliance with this policy; and
- ensure that appropriate action is taken where concerns arise
- ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented where appropriate;
- ensure that relevant staff are aware of agreed adjustments;
- consider accessibility when planning curriculum and school activities;
- liaise with parents/carers regarding accessibility needs;
- work with relevant staff and external professionals where appropriate;
- ensure that accessibility-related concerns are appropriately recorded and followed up; and
- report significant issues to the Advisory Board for further exploration

SENDCo / Inclusion Lead

The SENDCo or designated Inclusion Lead will:

- advise staff on accessibility and reasonable adjustments;
- contribute to individual pupil planning;
- support staff in implementing agreed adjustments;
- monitor the effectiveness of adjustments;
- liaise with parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate; and
- contribute to the review of the Accessibility Plan.

All Staff

All staff are expected to:

- treat disabled pupils with dignity and respect;

- implement agreed reasonable adjustments;
- identify and report barriers to participation;
- raise concerns promptly;
- follow relevant individual plans and risk assessments;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality; and
- seek advice where they are unsure how best to support a pupil.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- provide relevant information about their child's accessibility needs;
- work collaboratively with the school in identifying appropriate adjustments;
- inform the school of significant changes in circumstances or needs; and
- discuss concerns about accessibility with the school at an early stage.

Pupils

Pupils will be encouraged, in an age-appropriate manner, to express their views about barriers they experience and the adjustments that help them to participate fully in school life.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- regular review of the Accessibility Plan;
- accessibility reviews and premises risk assessments;
- consideration of individual reasonable adjustments;
- feedback from pupils and parents/carers;
- monitoring of participation in curriculum and wider school activities;
- review of accessibility-related incidents, complaints or concerns;
- consideration of accessibility within health and safety planning; and
- discussion with relevant staff and external professionals where appropriate.

The school will consider whether agreed reasonable adjustments are effective and will amend arrangements where circumstances or pupil needs change. The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, school provision, premises or individual pupil needs.

11. Accessibility Plan

This policy should be read alongside the school's Accessibility Plan. The Accessibility Plan sets out the school's current priorities, actions, responsibilities and timescales for improving accessibility for disabled pupils. The Accessibility Plan will address, as appropriate:

1. increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
2. improving the physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate fully in school life; and
3. improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils where it is provided in writing or other formats to pupils who are not disabled.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly and updated where appropriate.

12. Complaints and Concerns

The school encourages parents/carers to raise accessibility concerns at an early stage so that the matter can be considered constructively. Where a parent/carer believes that an accessibility need or reasonable adjustment has not been appropriately addressed, they should raise the matter with the Headteacher in the first instance. Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, it may be addressed through the school's Complaints Policy. The school will seek to respond to accessibility concerns promptly, fairly and sensitively.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information concerning a pupil's disability, medical needs or accessibility requirements will be handled sensitively and in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and applicable data-protection legislation. Information will be shared with staff and relevant professionals where there is an appropriate educational, safeguarding, health or operational reason for doing so and in accordance with the school's information-sharing arrangements.

14. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid and Medical Needs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection / Privacy Policy

	Focus/objective	Action	People concerned	Time frame	Cost	Outcomes/Review
Short Term 1A	To reduce potential barriers upon entry.	Investigate the extent to which disabled students can access the curriculum.	M.Raisborough H.Tooke Advisory Board	2026-2029	Time	Increased awareness of student needs. Determining PD needs of staff.
Short Term 1B	To make the learning environment more accessible to students with disabilities.	Investigate how the school site could be improved for disability access.	M.Raisborough H.Tooke Advisory Board	2026-2029	Time	Increased awareness of possible problem areas.
Short Term 1C	To improve the delivery of written information.	Investigate how we can increase the extent to which students with disabilities can access information.	M.Raisborough H.Tooke Advisory Board Spectrum	2026-2029	Time	Awareness of the use/ possible limitations of existing resources. To enable future planning and purchase of appropriate and more specialist resources if required.

	Focus/objective	Action	People concerned	Timeframe	Cost	Outcomes/Review
Medium Term 2A	To improve delivery of the curriculum.	Staff development and awareness training of learning styles and resources available.	All staff.	2026-2029	Time and training costs as required.	Increased understanding of how to meet the needs of ALL children.
Medium Term 2B	To improve accessibility.	Investigate the possibility and possible implications of improving access to all ground floor rooms, including entry doors, corridors and toilets.	M.Raisborough H.Tooke Advisory Board	2026-2029	Time	School staff to be updated and familiarised with making reasonable adjustments in classrooms and lesson planning in order to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.
Medium Term 2C	To further improve the delivery of information in written form.	To develop an awareness throughout the school of the need to improve resources, displays and signage in classrooms.	All staff	2026-2029	Time	Improved understanding of how to deliver information to students with a variety of disabilities and implementation where necessary.

	Focus/objective	Action	People concerned	Timeframe	Cost	Outcomes/Review
Long Term 3A	To further improve understanding of curriculum delivery.	Staff training on the implications for classroom practice of different forms of disabilities.	All staff	2026-2029	TBA	Shared understanding of how to make reasonable adjustments in the classroom to improve the learning environment.
Long Term 3B	To further improve accessibility of the premises.	Obtain costings of required work i.e. wall handrails, ramps, stairlift.	M.Raisborough H.Tooke Advisory Board Local Builders	2026-2029	Time	Costings in situ for anticipatory need