SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY ACT (SENDA) POLICY & PLANS

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Policy Statement (1)

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), which places a legal requirement on all schools:

1) Not to treat disabled students 'less favourably'
2) To make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students are not at a substantial disadvantage
3) To draw up plans to show how, over time, they will increase access to education for disabled students (see accessibility plan policy)
4) To comply with the Disability Equality Duty

Policy Statement (2)

1) This policy applies to all members of the AKS Lytham school community, including those in our EYFS setting.
2) AKS implements this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.
3) This policy is made available to all interested parties in accordance with our *Provision of Information* policy. It should be read in conjunction with the school's *Admissions* and *Special Educational Needs* policies.
4) AKS is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's *Equal Opportunity* policy document.
5) This policy is reviewed at least annually, or as events or legislation changes require, by the Director of Finance and Operations, the Whole School Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body. The deadline for the next review is no later than 12 months after the most recent review date indicated above.
6) The Local Governing Body will renew on a later date but as of this time it is a live document and practiced in the school.

Key Personnel

1) Annie Millard: Director of Finance and Operations and Health & Safety Co-Ordinator
2) David Harrow: Headmaster
3) Amanda Ilhan: Head of Nursery and Preparatory School
4) Robert Duncan: Head of Estates and Grounds
5) Cathy Hurst-Endresz Head of Learning Support/SENCO
6) Vicky Reynolds: Nursery SENCO
7) Nasreen Mirza: Prep SENCO

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 statutory guidance describes disability as 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people.' This includes children,

young people and adults, as students, employees, governors, parents and carers and other members of the wider community that might use school premises for leisure or other activities. The definition of disability covers a broad spectrum of impairments including:

1. Cognition and Learning needs,
2. Communication and Interaction needs
3. Sensory, Medical or Physical needs
4. Social, Mental and Emotional needs

Legislation Requirements

The legislation and related guidance make clear that schools need to have a 3-year plan, currently extending from 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2027, which sets out procedures to achieve the following aims, with timescales:

a) Increase the extent to which disabled students (including those with learning difficulties) can participate in the whole curriculum. [Schools are required to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education. However, schools may select students by ability and aptitude, as long as this is not done as a way of excluding students with a disability.]

b) Improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

c) Improve the provision to disabled students of information which is already in writing for students who are not disabled.

Admissions and Disabled Students

AKS is an academically selective school and we welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in our caring environment.

Wherever possible, disability will not prevent a student from selection who otherwise meets the academic standard required and who is in a position to benefit from the education offered at the school and can cope on the school Estates. The school will assess any special arrangements necessary for a disabled student on a case-by-case basis and, provided that such arrangements can be made without causing undue disruption to the normal operation of the school or significant additional cost, the disability will not prevent admission.

We advise parents of children with physical disabilities to discuss their child's requirements with the Headmaster before he or she sits the entrance examination, to enable us to make appropriate provision for him/her. Parents must provide a copy of a medical report or EHC Plan or assessment to support their request, for example, for large print material or other special arrangements.

In the case of an applicant with specific learning difficulties, a full professional report must be submitted in advance of any entrance assessment. Allowance will then be made, but the overriding criterion will be the student's ability to cope with the curriculum and level of support offered.

Practice on Entry

Each student with a disability may require special consideration and /or provision to take account of their individual needs. If appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical (or other) advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for their child once they have accepted the offer of a place and before he/she becomes a student at the school. We recognise that some disabled students may also require specialist support from our Learning Support Department, and we would normally discuss this issue with parents before their child enters the school. Copies of the *Special Educational Needs* policy are available from the General Office, on request, and on the school website

Parents and prospective parents of disabled children may also wish to see the school's SENDA Plans. These show the ways in which we plan to make our buildings progressively more accessible to disabled students, parents and visitors. The school has an active monitoring policy and will do its best to make adjustments to take account of an individual student's needs, within the constraints imposed by its historic buildings on a scattered Estates. We are progressively introducing facilities for wheelchair users as our buildings are upgraded.

Improved Access to the Curriculum

By 1st September 2013, the school had introduced the following measures to assist disabled students to access the school curriculum:

1) A number of physical aids have been introduced; these include the use of Interactive White Boards (IWBs) and use of laptops in lessons. The Senior School does provide 1:1 laptops to all students;. The school's ICT network provides access to students in almost all locations. Effective use of these facilities has ameliorated difficulties of mobility.
2) In constructing the Timetable, the school has given sympathetic consideration to individual needs. Also, furniture, seating arrangements and the classroom layout have been altered to facilitate access and learning.
3) Staff have been provided with guidance on a variety of teaching approaches to meet the needs of different learners, and opportunity has been provided through, for example, INSET, to share experience of successful teaching strategies. Professional development on learning and teaching has been provided on a regular basis.

4) Staff information on disability/learning difficulties has been regularly updated. The Head of Learning Support has addressed staff during a number of INSET sessions and at staff briefings/meetings. The Special Educational Needs and Teaching & Learning policies have been updated to give details of the procedures and methodologies in place to ensure that the needs of all students are catered for. This document, in conjunction with individual Department Handbooks, reflects the ways in which the curriculum has been differentiated, individualised, adapted, enhanced and elaborated to meet the needs of students with a disability. For example, large print documents to be given to those with impaired vision.

Improved Access to the Physical Environment

One of the obvious issues that the school has, in common with many other schools, is its layout, which consists of many older buildings of several storeys and without lifts. The buildings have evolved since the school was founded over 100 years ago. Another issue is the system, again common to many schools, of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires students to go from classroom to classroom, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. It is not hard to conclude that any student with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage, if not prohibited altogether from access to some of the educational and other facilities the school offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to physical features of the school at prohibitive cost. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position.

A number of simple measures have been introduced at the school to assist disabled people in getting around, and this work will continue. These measures include:

1) **Disabled Parking -** Two bays are available to the left of the front door of the Senior School and 4 bays are available close to the front door of the Nursery and Prep School.
2) **Ramp Access** – Wheelchair access to Senior School is a ramped entrance doorway by the dining hall. A portable ramp is available as required. Sloped access is available at the front door of the Prep School.
3) **Accessible WC** - A new disabled WC has been created near the dining room of the Senior School and there are two disabled WCs in the Prep School.
4) **Dedicated Wheelchair Spaces -** Positions for wheelchairs are available at all major school events in the Senior Hall, Nursery and Prep School Hall and by the lift area.
5) **Lifts** a disabled lift in the English/Languages Block provides access to the first floor. A space for a lift has been provided in the senior school which, when fitted, will allow

easy access to the Science/D&T departments in due course. A lift is in use at the Nursery and Prep School.

6) **Minibuses –** We have 2 minibuses that have access ramps, should there be a need.

Access for Disabled Visitors

It is incumbent on all members of the school – staff and students – to show them consideration, courtesy and a willingness to assist. Common sense and good manners should be sufficient guidance. However, it is important that all members of the school are aware of the various accessible facilities and can give clear directions.

Visitors with a disability must be expected at the school at any time, and more often than not, we will receive no prior warning. On these occasions it is important that we are all in a position to assist as may be required.

At other times the school would expect to be advised that a certain visitor has a disability. Indeed, we hope to encourage this forewarning. In either case the following procedure is to be adopted:

1) Initial warning of a visit by a disabled person from whichever source passed to Headmaster, Head of Nursery and Preparatory School, Senior/Preparatory Reception and Nursery.
2) Notify the Head of Estates and Grounds who is to co-ordinate the reception of the visitor. This will include:
   a) Advising on parking arrangements.
   b) Personally meeting and escorting the disabled visitor to Reception.
   c) Assisting further in the visit if this would be appreciated.
   d) Escorting the visitor back to their car.
3) In the absence of the Head of Estates and Grounds, the task should be delegated to another member of staff.
4) Good liaison will ensure that any disabled visitor to the school is efficiently and confidently handled, making the visit more relaxed and giving the School the opportunity to make a good impression.
5) Fire Precautions - Students with temporary disabilities (crutches) should be allocated a 'buddy' to assist them out of the building in an emergency evacuation.

Improved Delivery of Written Information to Disabled Students

The school will make every effort to provide information that is given to our students (from timetables and hand-outs to information about school events) to ensure a higher level of access for students with disability. This most obviously applies to those with visual or hearing impairments and those with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia.

By 1st September 2013, a number of measures had been introduced at the school to assist disabled people to access written information. These measures include:

1) The introduction of IWBs across the whole school in 2012. This has dramatically increased the potential for lessons to be tailored to needs of disabled students. Notes and work undertaken on the whiteboard can be provided in a number of different formats. Students with a visual impairment have been given notes with a larger font and have been seated in a location to enhance their participation in lessons.
2) All policies and other school documentation have been adapted, on request, to improve access to written information for disabled students and parents.
3) When appropriate handouts, worksheets etc. are photocopied onto coloured paper for those with Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome.

This provision will continue to be reviewed and improved, where deemed necessary and possible.

Medical Support

The school has a full-time Matron, as well as a number of qualified first aiders that are available to provide immediate first aid if and when required. The Headmaster/Head of Nursery and Preparatory School are always happy to discuss any student's health problems with parents as well as the management of any medical condition.

Staff Training

Teaching staff receive training on the learning needs of students with special education needs and other disabilities.

SENDA Review Committee

The school has set up a SENDA Review Committee which consists of the members of the LGB Health and Safety Committee and may co-opt additional members whose expertise in any field would be of assistance. The Committee's terms of reference are:

a) to review the school's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect students and prospective students who are disabled;
b) to make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education in its many aspects to students or prospective students with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future and to prepare this Disability Policy;
c) to review the school's SENDA Policy & Plans annually.

Review – Admissions and Education

The Committee has reviewed the school's admissions, disability and accessibility policies, and encourages parents of children with disabilities to discuss their child's requirements

with the Headmaster before he or she sits the entrance exam so that we can make adequate provision to meet their specific needs. This will enable the school to consider any reasonable adjustments that may be required. The school at present makes the following educational provision for a small number of students with identified learning difficulties:

a) permanently employed learning support teachers in both the Nursery and Preparatory and Senior Schools.
b) Dedicated teaching areas in both Senior School and Preparatory School.

Review – Improved Access for Disabled People to the School Curriculum

1) The school will with immediate effect consider physical aids to help children with disabilities gain access to the education at AKS. The following changes would be considered to support a student: specialist ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, specialist portable aids for children with poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils. Copies of text books may be downloaded onto individual laptops depending upon the needs of the student. The use of assistive technology to support learning is now embedded into practice across the school and is used effectively to support access arrangements in examinations.
2) The school will also endeavour to allow students to partake in recreational and extra-curricular activities where issues surrounding safety and the difficulty of supervision can be addressed.

Review – Improved Access to the Physical Environment

At present, some of the first floor of the Senior School is not accessible by wheelchair. Whilst lifts would certainly be helpful in parts of the building, the Government acknowledges that schools, along with other organisations, are clearly restricted in their ability to install them immediately. Nevertheless, retrofitting of lifts in the long term is certainly under active consideration at the School with cost and practicalities important factors.

To assist in improving access to the physical environment, a local company, Aegis Services Limited, conducted a DDA Access Audit in early 2013. A costed Action Plan was produced and the actions will be reviewed and implemented in a planned and controlled manner as funding permits.

Review – Access to Written Information for Disabled Students

The school will make every effort to provide information that is given to our students (from timetables, hand-outs to information about school events) more accessible to disabled students. This most obviously applies to those with visual or hearing impairments. The school will respond to any reasonable request made by disabled students and parents.

Review Date

Review of provision and targets will be annual in the summer term of each year.

Appendix 1.

Action Plan for April 2024 to March 2027

ACCESS TO THE WHOLE CURRICULUM

Increase the extent to which disabled students (including those with learning difficulties) can participate in the whole curriculum. [Schools are required to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education. However, schools may select students by ability and aptitude, as long as this is not done as a way of excluding students with a disability.] The accessibility plan will be under review during the period by the SENDA Committee and will be revised if necessary. It is the SENDA committee's responsibility that the plan is implemented and will allocated adequate resources.

Timescale	Action	Person Responsible for completing	Date Completed
Ongoing	As a part of our INSET planning over the next three years, provision will be made to further develop the knowledge and skills of subject staff in supporting students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Dyslexia Awareness Week is a focus each year. Pupils will continue to develop their learning profiles and evaluate how staff take these into account to support their learning.	Cathy Hurst-Endresz	Reviewed annually
Ongoing	Student Support Ambassadors – a project to celebrate the work of children with dyslexia and provide peer support across school. We now have a team of senior staff support Ambassadors in Senior School. These staff access training and disseminate information within their departments. The number of staff ambassadors have increased over the past year and represent English, Maths, Science, Performing Arts, History, PSHE/RS and MFL	Cathy Hurst-Endresz	Reviewed annually

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

Timescale	Action	Person Responsible for completing	Date Completed
As finance permits	**Lift –** A lift shaft was installed when the building was remodelled. The installation of the lift will be considered when funds allow.	DFO	
As finance permits	**Permanent Ramp** – a portable ramp is currently used for events and anyone requiring wheelchair access and this arrangement works well. Whilst a permanent ramp been discussed on previous plans the cost is prohibitive at circa £10,000. The mobile ramp is permanently at the door and works well.	DFO	
By Easter 2016	**Wall –** During our policy review in January 16, we identified that the area used for SEN in the Preparatory school could on occasion become less quiet. A wall and door to be installed to make this into a classroom.	DFO	Completed May 2016
2017/2018	**Minibus** – New minibus to be purchased that will enable wheelchair pupils to be transported.	DFO	Completed November 2017.

IMPROVEMENTS OF WRITTEN INFORMATION

Improve the provision to disabled students of information which is already in writing for students who are not disabled.

Timescale	Action	Person Responsible for completing	Date Completed
2020/2021	Consider access of the prospectus when down loading from the website. Consider an enlarged print version. Consider an audible version.	Marketing	

ongoing	In September 2015, the school began to employ a new management information system with the aim to move the vast majority of its communication with parents and students to electronic mediums, including reports. This will allow the use of text enhancement and text reading software in the home, or the use of support services at other locations, to improve access to written information for disabled students and parents.	Head / DFO	Mostly completed, but ongoing review.

Updated	7th July 2026
Reason for changes	Annual review
Name of the owner	Annie Millard – Director of Finance and Operations H&S Co-ordinator/Cathy Hurst-Endresz – Head of Learning Support
Audience	Staff/School community
Location	Whole School Team and School website
Review date	July 2027