



# Accessibility Plan 2021-2024

## Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

Schools and Local Authorities have to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. The duties are the same as those in the previous Disability Discrimination legislation and were replicated in the 2010 Act.

The Spires College's accessibility plans are aimed at:

- ▲ Maximising the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- ▲ Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided, and
- ▲ Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them.

## Notes

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one. A disabled person is someone who has a

"Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

The definition includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, poor mental health and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included.

If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoverers and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.

## **Vision and values**

The Spires College values all students and staff and wishes to ensure that its practices are fully inclusive. No student or member of staff should be disadvantaged by reason of disability.

The college will in all cases make reasonable adjustments to accommodate staff and students with disabilities.

## **Context**

Current student data shows that:

We have, as at the start of the academic year 2020/21, 143 students regarded as disabled under the terms of the DDA. These can be grouped as:

- ▲ Sensory impaired – 14 (12 x HI and 2 x VI)
- ▲ Physical mobility problems (including non-wheelchair users) – 8
- ▲ Autistic – 47
- ▲ ADHD – 15
- ▲ Long term medical needs – 7
- ▲ Speech and Language Difficulties – 27
- ▲ SpLD – 35

Some of these students regarded as disabled under the terms of the DDA may have more than one condition.

We have a much higher proportion of students with an EHCP or SEND diagnosis than similar schools nationally. Students with SEND in our school make better progress than similar students in other schools.

## **Determining Priorities**

In order to inform planning, the school will analyse information about:

- ▲ The nature of the college population for whom the college is planning
- ▲ The nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities
- ▲ The needs of students already in the school and moving through it
- ▲ The nature of the future intake (advance information from feeder primary schools)

The college regularly reviews the school's strengths and weaknesses in working with disabled pupils, including:

- ▲ The level of staff awareness of Equalities legislation.
- ▲ The presence of disabled pupils and their participation in the life of the college, for example, patterns of attendance and exclusions, areas of the curriculum to which disabled pupils have limited or no access, the participation of disabled pupils in after school clubs and school visits, parts of the school to which disabled pupils have no or limited access.

- ▲ The impact on disabled pupils of the way the college is organised, for example, school policies and practices around the administration of medicines, time-tabling, anti-bullying policy, school trips and teaching and learning.
- ▲ The physical environment of the college.
- ▲ The curriculum.
- ▲ The ways in which information is currently provided for disabled pupils.
- ▲ Outcomes for disabled pupils.

### **Involving disabled people**

The plan should be informed by:

- ▲ The views and aspirations of disabled students themselves
- ▲ The views and aspirations of the families of disabled pupils
- ▲ The views and aspirations of other disabled people or voluntary organisations
- ▲ The priorities of the local authority

## **The plans**

Planning improvements covers the following areas:

- ▲ The physical environment
- ▲ Access to education, benefits, facilities and services (the whole life of the school)
- ▲ Access to information usually provided in written form

## **Information Gathering**

The Spires College holds extensive information on all pupils attending the school. Information on pupils with disabilities will be gathered:

- ▲ Through the transition process when pupils join The Spires College in Year 7. The SENDCo and the Head of Year 7 will visit all pupils in their primary schools and the Primary School will send information to The Spires College at the point of transfer. The Spires College holds a Year 6 Parents' Evening where new pupils meet their child's tutor. There is an additional Induction Day for pupils with disabilities and bespoke extended transition activities available.
- ▲ Parents' Evenings and Annual Review meetings allow information to be shared between the college and the families of pupils with disabilities.
- ▲ Class teachers and other staff will share information relating to their observation and assessment of pupils with the SENDCo on an informal basis and at fixed review points, i.e. Annual Reviews.
- ▲ All SEN students have a link member of staff from the college SEND team who meet with them informally, with a review each term to include parents.
- ▲ Students with disabilities who have an EHCP will have a statutory Annual Review. The Local Authority, parents/carers and associated external professionals will be invited to this review, chaired by the SENDCo at The Spires College, and will review the provision for students with disabilities to determine whether it allows the needs of the child to be met.
- ▲ Students with disabilities whose needs are (currently) met under SEN Support will have their needs assessed and where appropriate will have a Learning Passport. This will be shared with parents and other professionals who will contribute to its formulation.
- ▲ The SENDCo will carry out a regular 'student voice' activity where a focus group of pupils with additional needs and/or disabilities will have the opportunity to express their views on all aspects of school.

## Physical environment

The Spires College currently consists of two premises – the main school and the Football Stand undercroft. The college has an off-site playing field, located around 0.5 miles from the main site. The college also utilises local sports facilities including a swimming pool and tennis centre.

The main school was constructed in 2001 and is equipped with lift access to both upper levels. Emergency evacuation procedures are in place and equipment is provided, with suitable training in place to ensure that wheelchair users and others with disabilities can be evacuated safely. Contingency plans are in place if the lift breaks down at any point in the day.

There is level access to the Football Stand undercroft, which is a single storey building. There is stepped access to the emergency fire exit and ramps for a wheelchair user have been provided.

All three premises are equipped with disabled toilet facilities. In 2013 the school added a toilet room with changing facilities. The main site also has gender neutral toilets on the ground floor.

Arrangements are made for students with disabilities to be dropped off close to the school entrance which offers level access. Parking is not permitted in these drop off areas and school staff ensure that they are available when needed.

The school does not have powered doors that would permit unaccompanied access around the school which means that wheelchair users are provided with helpers to navigate around the school. The school has a very large number of fire doors within corridors and it is not practical to fit opening and closing mechanisms. However, a large number of fire doors have been equipped with door retention mechanisms, which means that they can be “propped open” to allow for easier access.

The school provides specialist furniture (e.g. desks and chairs) so that students can access the curriculum.

The school canteen and dining area, whilst accessible to wheelchair users, does not have any special arrangements for serving food to wheelchair users or special dining tables. Students who need assistance in ordering and collecting food in the canteen have a pass to go to lunch just before the bell, supported by an LSA as necessary. If appropriate SEND students can eat their lunch in the SEND Department where a family-style lunch environment is provided.

The school has two Local Authority Enhanced Provisions; one for students with an Autistic Spectrum Condition and one for those with a Hearing Impairment. The physical environment in both provisions has been adapted to meet the needs of these students, with the HI Provision maintaining a supply of relevant equipment.

The school's external areas are accessible. The Multi Use Games Area has ramped access. The swimming pool has levelled access, allocated disabled changing and a pool hoist. The tennis centre has levelled access and disabled changing facilities. Transport arrangements are in place for travel to and from the tennis centre and playing fields should it be required.

The college had an Environmental Audit in 2017 with another arranged for Spring 2021 to ensure our environments are fully accessible to our visually impaired students.

## **Access to the curriculum**

All areas of the curriculum should be available to pupils regardless of their disability. Where an activity cannot be made accessible or would be inappropriate, an alternative activity should be made available. Some aspects of the Physical Education may be inappropriate for an individual wheelchair user but an alternative physical activity such as table tennis or swimming could be accessible. Laptops are made available for students with physical disabilities that may impair their ability to write. Planning to improve access to the curriculum will include identifying reasonable adjustments to offer an equality of opportunity.

The college employs a team of specialist teachers and specialist learning support assistants to ensure curriculum accessibility for every student.

Pupils with Hearing Impairments can utilise the School's FM system which links to their hearing aids. Staff regularly receive training updates on working with pupils with hearing difficulties. In areas where the FM system is not installed, students can use individual devices that work remotely of the main system.

Depending on the impairments of disabled pupils, planning specific staff training will improve access to the curriculum. Training is available from a number of sources. The SENDCo provides regular training updates for staff relating to the needs of individual pupils with disabilities.

Purchasing specialist equipment increases access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. The school will always consider the purchase of books with large print, writing slopes and pencil grips, or adjustable desks and chairs.

The changing rooms at the school playing field (Quinta) features a changing room for users with a disability, but there needs to be a review of the site access arrangements and a review of other barriers to inclusion in activities on the field.

The participation of disabled pupils is monitored by the SENDCo as part of the schools Monitoring and Self Evaluation Process.

Pupils with disabilities are included in school visits. Inaccessible venues are not chosen if the group has a pupil who cannot access the venue; instead an alternative venue is used. The college does experience difficulty in transporting pupils with disabilities with their peers. It is often necessary to use specialist vehicles.

The SENDCo liaises regularly with a variety of professionals who work with individual students to ensure that our practice is as advised and planned and is enabling good student progress. We also provide further therapies in school to maintain and enable good holistic development. Professionals we work with regularly include: Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, School Nursing, CAMHS, Paediatrics as well as our HI and VI Advisory Teachers.

## **Access to written information**

The school issues individualised Learning Passports for every student identified as having an Educational need and placed on SEN Support. Students with an EHCP have an Individual Education Plan which includes the long term targets from their plans. Learning Passports and

Individual Education Plans include guidance on best practice to support student's individual needs including those with Dyslexia and other SpLD.

The college will take steps to make reasonable adjustments to allow pupils and parents/carers with visual needs to access school letters or other communications.

When required, the school will conduct an IT or learning accessibility assessment in conjunction with the Visual Impairment or ICT outreach services.

<b>Adopted:</b>	February 2021	<b>Review Due:</b>	January 2024
Reviewed: Amended:			

## Action Plan 2016-19

### Information Gathering

<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Survey Parents/Carers of pupils with disabilities and additional needs by group to gain parental perception of access issues at The Spires College.	Parent Questionnaire to be created and sent to parents/carers.	School understanding of concerns of parents and carers improved.	July 2021	KLK
Pupil voice to be undertaken regularly with focus group of pupils with accessibility needs.	Pupil and staff time.	Pupils afforded the opportunity to articulate their views and concerns regarding accessing the school and curriculum.	First to be completed by May 2021	KLK
Annual Reviews used to identify patterns or recurring issues affecting accessibility of pupils.	Staff time.	Parents and pupils afforded the opportunity to articulate their views and concerns regarding accessing the school and curriculum.	Ongoing	KLK



## Physical Environment

Action	Resources Required	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Lead
Exterior steps to be marked clearly	This will be undertaken as "small works" funded by school revenue resources	Ensure all students with a visual disability are able to navigate exterior steps safely.	July 2021	JDN
Undertake feasibility study to provide powered door mechanism to the inner door in Reception.	Capital cost and revenue lifecycle costs both funded by College resources via a PFI Contract Variation	Easier access to building.	September 2021	JDN
Obtain specialist advice about marking of support columns in corridors and dining area	Changes would be undertaken as "small works" funded by school revenue resources	Ensure all students with a visual disability are able to navigate corridors safely.	July 2021	JDN
Keep toilet provision under review to ensure it is fit for purpose.	Staff time. Door markings.	Ensure all students, staff and visitors have easily accessible toilets.	Ongoing	JDN
Designated medical room for students who are tube fed.	Identify suitable space, review and change fittings and furniture as required. Changes to be funded from school revenue resources.	A suitable space for tube fed students to receive intimate care.	September 2021	JDN

### Access to the Curriculum

<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Wheelchair access study to Quinta Playing Fields.	Initial study.	Recommendations made regarding how Quinta could be made wheelchair friendly and plans made for transport.	December 2021	JDN KLK
Curriculum Review to ensure that all learning pathways are fully accessible to all learners.	Staff time.	New curriculum design is made with the needs of all Learners in mind.	Ongoing	KLK

### Access to Written Information

<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Keep access to written information under review.	Staff time	Any new issues regarding access to written information are identified quickly and resolved.	Ongoing	KLK