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EXETER CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Nursery | Pre-Prep | Prep

Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan (SENDA) 2024-2027

Last reviewed: Sept 2024

Next review: Sept 2027

Governor Oversight: Financial and General Purposes

This policy and the plan seek to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) (revised 2005) and the SEN Code of Practice (2014), and reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014.

Linked policies

This policy and plan will contribute to the review and revision of related school policies:

- Learning Support and SEND Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- SENDA Action Plan (available from the School Office on request)
- EDI Policy

These policies and plan are available in a large print version on application to the School Office.

Exeter Cathedral School (the School) is committed to treating its pupils including EYFS and applicants fairly. According to the Equality Act 2010, we must take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by comparison with other pupils and applicants who are not disabled. Exeter Cathedral School strives to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school and therefore aims to ensure that each and every pupil can participate fully in the life of the School. The School seeks to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by endeavouring to make reasonable adjustments to our policies and practices (the way we do things) and in providing additional support or assistance where possible.

Definition of disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010: 'A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' In most cases, disabilities will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more. Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives i.e. Diabetes.

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Key objective

To reduce and, where possible, eliminate barriers to accessing the curriculum and to full participation in Exeter Cathedral School's community for pupils and prospective pupils with a disability. The School's Accessibility Plan contains relevant actions to:

- seek to make reasonable adjustments to support the academic and holistic wellbeing for all pupils;
- support pupils with EHC plans to access and fully participate in the School's curriculum;
- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in and benefit from the School's curriculum;
- improve the School's physical environment 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; and
- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Exeter Cathedral School is housed in a complex range of multi-storey buildings of various ages, several of which are listed. The school is situated in the centre of the city in several locations around the Cathedral Close. Some of the buildings are on various levels with steps leading to the entrances; these present significant restrictions in accessibility. Major building works would be required before the buildings could successfully meet the needs of pupils in wheelchairs or those with severe mobility problems.

Principles

Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with Exeter Cathedral School's aims, its Equal Opportunities Policy, its EDI Policy, and the operation of the School's Learning Support and SEND Policy. Exeter Cathedral School recognises its duty under the Act:

- to ensure every pupil is protected from harm and neglect and that every effort is made to enable all pupils to learn and develop independently, and to feel safe and secure;
- not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, provision of education and associated services;
- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably;
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage; and
- to publish an accessibility plan

In performing their duties, Governors and staff will have regard to the Disability Rights Commission Codes of Practice (2002). Exeter Cathedral School recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and the child's rights to confidentiality. Exeter Cathedral School provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles. It endorses the key principles in the Education Act (National Curriculum) 2002 which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs; and
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and for groups of pupils.

Responsibility for reviewing the Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan (SENDA) rests with the school's Governors, who delegate the day to day monitoring of this to the Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team and SENDCo, who may engage the support of experts in any field which would be of assistance. A new plan will be drawn up every three years.

The plan should be read in conjunction with the School's Admissions Policy and the Learning Support and SEND Policy.

When reviewing the Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan (SENDA) the following areas are considered:

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- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Education
- Extra-curricular activities
- Physical school environment
- Sporting education and activities
- Staff training
- Welfare
- Governing body representation
- Selection and recruitment of staff

Admissions

The School has reviewed its admission literature, policy, examinations, assessments and procedures (including access to scholarships, awards and bursaries) which requests information (to be treated as confidential) giving the school details of the nature and effect of any disability so as to enable it to consider any adjustments it might need to make and to consider whether those adjustments are feasible.

The school asks parents to provide disability information in respect of a prospective pupil at the time of application. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

The school has had experience of working with pupils who are disabled. Specifically, children with Downs Syndrome; Diabetes and minor physical disabilities. In addition, there are generally several children on the school roll who have IEPs and/or EHCPs and receive 1:1 support in specific learning areas.

Education and related activities

Exeter Cathedral School will continue to seek the advice of LEA services and of appropriate health professional from the local NHS Trust.

Exeter Cathedral School staff regularly review their teaching strategies to ensure that any potential barriers to learning and participation by disabled pupils are removed. Our teaching and non-teaching staff are supported with training and updates designed to raise awareness of disabilities and to enable them to minimise any potential difficulties for pupils.

Physical environment

Exeter Cathedral School will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishment of the site and premises.

One of the obvious problems which the school has (in common with many other schools) is its layout which covers a wide area and consists of many separate and some historic listed buildings of several storeys and without lifts, located around public spaces/roads. Another is the system in some years, again common to many schools, of having fixed rooms/areas for specialist subjects, based on the valid requirement to have all the specialist facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, often across public land (some of which is cobbled) often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. With regret, a pupil with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these difficulties, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities that the School offers. With the exception of rehousing some lessons to the ground floor to accommodate a mobility impaired pupil in limited buildings, these matters cannot be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to physical features of the school at prohibitive cost and which may require consent from the School's landlord and/or the council and/or the Church Commission. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position, in

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line with reasonable financial considerations. If such adjustments are required to be made yet are seen to be not feasible or at a prohibitive cost, the School reserves the right to decline to offer a place to the potential pupil. In addition, and in consultation with the parent/guardian and overseen by the Senior Deputy Head and the Director of Finance & Operations (DFO), the School will always seek to make reasonable adjustments.

Provision of information

Exeter Cathedral School will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LEA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

Financial planning and control

The Headmaster and the DFO, together with the Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee, will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process.

Key points in implementing SENDA

The following are major points for the School to consider relating to the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act):

- Interview prospective parents in an accessible location and with opportunities for parents and pupils to disclose their needs and discuss support in privacy.
- If a pupil or parent discloses a disability, specific learning disability or medical condition, ensure that you do what you need to do, especially about informing the relevant members of staff (including the Head of Learning Support), within the limits of appropriate confidentiality.
- Prepare teaching materials in electronic formats (in order that alternative formats can be produced from the electronic copy) wherever possible and practicable.
- Plan curricula with the needs of any disabled pupils in mind, including consideration of possible alternative forms of presentation and assessment for disabled pupils when needed.
- Plan assessment regimes with the needs of disabled pupils in mind, including consideration of alternative assessment arrangements to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.
- Ensure you have a reasonable knowledge of the other services to whom you could refer a pupil who has additional needs.
- Be aware of staff development opportunities and give priority to these in order to ensure that teaching practice meets individual pupils learning requirements.

Reasonable adjustments

The School will always seek to make reasonable adjustments to support its pupils. It is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Similarly, it does not need to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with the education and service provided by the school.

Temporary disability

Every effort is made to accommodate pupils who suffer an accident or illness and are temporarily incapacitated in some way e.g. a pupil with a fractured limb may be able to attend all normal lessons but could not take part in physical education; these lessons could be spent in the library.