



## APPLEFORD SCHOOL

### ACCESSIBILITY PLAN SEPTEMBER 2023 – AUGUST 2026

**This Policy applies to the whole school, including boarding**

The Policy is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school.

**We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.**

All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. This policy also takes into consideration the National Minimum Standard (NMS) for residential special schools (RSS).

In our school the term 'staff', in the context of safeguarding, is inclusive of all staff and is also inclusive of students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietor.

#### **Legal Status:**

- Equality Act 2010 (which defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities')
- *Schedule 10 of the Equality Act*
  - Complies with Part 1(2)(d)(ii) The Quality of Education Provided (curriculum) of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010

#### **Appleford Strategy:**

Appleford's strategy is to address and comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA), as amended. Schools are under a duty to prepare an Accessibility Strategy and Plan to increase the accessibility of their individual schools.

#### **Availability:**

This Policy is made available to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: available from the School Office electronically, or hard copy from the PA to the Headmaster' office.

**Monitoring and Review:** This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by Dr Peter Gardner (Managing Director), the Advisory Board and Mr David King (Headmaster). The Proprietor will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. The Proprietor recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the update/reviewed policy and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronically.

Date reviewed: September 2023

Date of next review: September 2024

Signed:



Dr Peter Gardner  
Directing Lead and Proprietor



Mr David King  
Headmaster and Company Director

The Special Needs and Disability Act 2001 refers to disabled students in a wide sense, including those with special educational needs and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Act obliges us not to treat disabled students less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in matters of admission and education. This Accessibility plan covers the following areas:

- the extent to which disabled students (including those with learning difficulties) can participate in the whole curriculum;
- making written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled students, where it is provided in writing for students who are not disabled;
- proposed developments in physical access to education and associated services.

**Disabled Staff:** We will ensure that in recruitment procedures any advertisements, short listing and interview procedures are without any hint of direct or indirect discrimination. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Appleford will make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure that disabled staff or prospective staff are not placed at a disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled staff. This includes an acceptance of the need to make reasonable adjustments to accessibility and physical layout of classrooms as well as reasonable improvements for visual, auditory or other impairments. Staff duties may also be adjusted, if possible, to meet the needs of the individual.

**Applies to:**

The whole school along with all activities provided by the School, including those outside of the normal school hours.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching), the Advisory Board and volunteers working in the school.

**Introduction:**

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Appleford School must take steps to make reasonable adjustments for students and applicants with disabilities so that they are not put at a substantial disadvantage when compared with students and applicants who are not disabled. Appleford therefore seeks to cater for each situation on its individual merits. We are committed to providing an environment which values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We challenge attitudes about disability and accessibility, developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. We take positive action, in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010, with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school and this includes improving the delivery to children with special needs which is readily accessible to all. This Plan sets out the principles underlying our approach to making adjustments for students and applicants with disabilities and the factors Appleford will take into account when considering requests for reasonable adjustments.

Therefore, our three-year Accessibility Plan is for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled children can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled children are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by Appleford School.
- Improving accessibility to assessment, recording and reporting systems.

**Background: The Equality Act 2010** places a duty on all of us to have due regard to:

- promotion of equality of opportunity between disabled persons and others;
- elimination of discrimination and elimination of harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encouragement of participation by disabled persons;
- taking account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than others;
- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.

*Appleford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- School Prospectus
- Single Equalities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Curriculum Teaching and Learning Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Risk Assessment and Student Access to Risky Areas Policy
- Positive Mental Health and wellbeing Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

**Accessibility Plan Content:** Our three-year plan includes how we plan to (with timescales):

- increase the extent to which disabled children (including those with special educational needs) can participate in Appleford School curriculum;
- improve the provision to disabled children of information which is already in writing for children who are not disabled;
- improve the physical environment of Appleford School in order to increase the extent to which disabled children are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *'physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'*. This has some overlap with the definition of 'special educational needs' in the Children and Families Act 2014, which includes any student with *'significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age'* or *'a disability which means that a student cannot make full use of the general educational facilities'* provided for children of their age in mainstream schools. Not all children are disabled by their SEND and vice versa. For the purpose of the disability access plan, 'disabled children' refers not only to those with physical disabilities but could include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'. We do not treat disabled children less favourably; we also take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled children at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education.

In producing this plan, the following Senior Leaders have had input into the development of the plan:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher

Pupils at Appleford School are not discriminated against, particular regard being paid to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and to their cultural background, linguistic background, special educational need, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or academic or sporting ability. Appleford School embraces diversity and exhibits tolerance. All Equality Objectives are seeking to protect children identified by the **Nine Protected Characteristics (NPC)**: Race; Disability; Sex; Age; Religion or Belief; Sexual Orientation; Gender re-assignment; Pregnancy and Maternity and children who are linked by association.

Appleford School Accessibility Plan has been developed and drawn up based upon information supplied by DfE and consultations with children, parents, staff and the Board of Governors. Other outside agencies and specialists have also been consulted. The document will be used to advise other school planning documents and policies and will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes. Appleford School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. Appleford School Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled children, staff and visitors to the school within a given timeframe, anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

**The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:**

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- increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of Appleford School, such as leisure and cultural activities or schools visits – it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;
- improve and maintain access to the physical environment of Appleford School, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- improve the delivery of written information to children, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events;
- ensure the information is made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

Our Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information. Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and the Board of Governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

The Accessibility Plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the school, which was originally undertaken by Appleford School and remains the responsibility of the Board of Governors. It may not be feasible to undertake all of the works during the life of this accessibility plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. An accessibility audit will be completed by Appleford School prior to the end of each period covering this plan to inform the development of a new Accessibility Plan for the on-going period. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when school policies are reviewed.

**Admissions Policy:** Each pupil with a disability requires special consideration and treatment. If appropriate, adjustments will need to be put in place. We recognise that some disabled pupils may require specialist support, and we would normally discuss this issue thoroughly with parents and their medical advisors before the child enters Appleford School. Once parents have accepted the offer of a place for their child and before they become a pupil at Appleford School, we will also discuss the adjustments that can reasonably be made. Copies of our SEND Policy may be obtained on request.

Appleford School asks parents to complete a form in respect of a prospective pupil at the time of application. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil, the school may take advice and require assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, Appleford School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. The admissions staff welcome information concerning a prospective pupil's special needs at the earliest possible stage in the application process. Such information will enable Appleford School to consider any adjustments it might need to make and to offer the best possible advice.

Appleford School policy is to support all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil who is not disadvantaged because of his or her disability.

#### **When does the duty arise?**

A student or applicant is disabled if they suffer from a *'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on his or her ability to carry out normal daily activities'* (Equalities Act 2010). In most cases, disabilities will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more.

#### **What is the scope of the duty?**

Appleford School seeks to ensure that students with disabilities and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by making reasonable adjustments:

- to our policies and practices (i.e. the way we do things); and
- by providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. additional support or assistance).

There is no standard definition of an auxiliary aid or service. Examples include:

- pieces of equipment;

- extra learning support assistance;
- note-taking;
- induction loops;
- audio-visual fire alarms;
- readers; and
- assistance with guiding.

### **The school's response**

In some cases Appleford School will be able to agree to and implement the requested adjustment as soon as possible. In other cases, for example where the adjustment would be logistically difficult or more financially costly, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the substantial disadvantage that the student or applicant is suffering and what measures it is reasonable for the school to take. In these cases, Appleford School may seek input from teachers, other experts (such as doctors and/or educational psychologists), therapists, parents and the child in question.

### **How will the school decide whether an adjustment is reasonable?**

When considering whether it would be reasonable to make the adjustment, the school will consider the following factors:

- whether making the adjustment would overcome the substantial disadvantage the child is experiencing;
- the practicability of the adjustment;
- the effect of the disability on the student;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;
- the school's resources;
- health and safety requirements;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; and
- the interests of other pupils (and potential pupils).

**Summary of Current Provision:** Appleford's physical layout consists of buildings which have grown since the school was founded. There are fixed classrooms for each subject in the secondary phase, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to move from classroom to classroom.

Many of the targets in our Accessibility Plan, once met, will become an annual provision.

TASK OR ISSUE	ACTION	LEAD	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
<b>Facilities</b>				
Ensure ramped accesses to all ground floor corridors.	OT and Operations Manager to audit. Installation of ramp to Prep playground	Operations Manager	Jan 2020	Completed
Investigate feasibility of improving access within any plans for redecoration and refurbishment of buildings. Consider appropriate colour schemes to benefit pupils with visual impairments and install window blinds where appropriate.	Continuing refurbishment and upgrading of existing facilities where appropriate.	Operations Manager	On-going	Completed and on-going
	New furniture provision for Elm Boarding House	Co-Heads of Boarding	Easter 2023	
Upgrading of Maddington Boarding House	Provision for Boarding pupils	Operations Manager	Autumn 2023	Completed
All signage should take into account pupils with SpLD.	All on-going instruction / directional signs will be pictorial	Operations Manager	On-going	Completed and on-going
Improve Art / Food Tech room for Prep School	For Prep pupils to access Food Tech	Headmaster	Easter 2023	Completed
Improve Library facilities for whole school.	New Library created	Headmaster	Autumn 2022	Completed
Improve access from The Willows to The Beeches	Create paved walkway across graveled area (The Willows)	Operations Manager	Summer 2024	
Improve access to SENDCo, access arrangements and Exams offices.	Investigate fitting a handrail on the steps beside the medical room on the Second floor of Oak House.	Operations Manager	Summer 2025	
<b>Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils</b>				
Ensure effective provision for healthcare and medication provision.	Review / Update medical policy and procedures.	Head of Medical	On-going	On-going Review Spring 2024
Establish an annual audit of Health and Safety across the school site	To be provided to the Proprietor	Operations Manager	Annually	On-going with revisions as required
Ensure the school can protect and support pupils with allergies as practicably as possible.	Establish Risk Assessments for pupils with severe allergies. Ensure all staff are informed about any allergy and food lists updated.	Registrar Head of Medical	On-going	On-going
Ensure medical information for specified children is clearly disseminated to required staff for school or off-site activities.	Liaison with parents to formulate plans. Information on specific pupils, including asthmatics and diabetes to be disseminated.	Head of Medical Registrar	On-going	On-going

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	Diabetes training for staff. Emergency Asthma and Epi-pen box in school office. Defibrillator on site			
Health and Safety training for all staff as part of initial induction or as required.	All staff to complete online or site-based training in Health and Safety, including Fire-safety.	Operations Manager	On-going	Provided at induction and INSET
To provide opportunity for pupils to develop their mental wellbeing.	Pupils are given the opportunity to attend Pastoral drop-ins. Cosy Club and Identity Club. Orchard Garden for a place to sit quietly	Head of Pastoral Care	On-going	On-going
Wheelchair available for emergency use.	Operations Manager to obtain for emergency use in school.	Operations Manager	Sep 2022	Completed
If a visually impaired student were to join the school, investigate alternative forms of written materials for.	Learning Support Team to investigate Application form. This has not been needed yet although visual stress is accommodated via support from OT	Learning Support Team	When required	When required but strategy being researched
Provision for hearing impaired pupils and staff.	Hearing impaired pupils are identified and receive regular visits from 'Wiltshire Qualified Teacher for Deaf' to ensure pupils are able to learn / have procedures in place in case of Fire Alarms.	Co-Heads of Boarding Registrar HoLS	On-going	On-going
<b>Quality of Education Provided</b>				
Expand touch typing programme to assist students with hand writing or poor co-ordination.	IT dyslexia packages. Packages reviewed 2020 and touch typing recommended package checked by OT Enhanced investment in hardware	Learning Support Team HoDs	On-going	On-going Additional 40 laptops purchased 2021
Ensure all pupils have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.	Established clear screening method for new pupils  Tracking of pupils' progress to identify areas of concern  Annual Reviews	HoLS	On-going	On-going
Materials to monitor students with difficulties writing at speed / accessing the curriculum / accessing examinations	Head of Learning Support (HoLS) to undertake ongoing access arrangement testing. Learning Walks	HoLS	On-going	On-going
Review reporting and assessment procedures	New AR system to be introduced. INSET to be provided. Increased provision of summative data into parental reporting.	SLT	November 2023	Complete To be reviewed July 2025 and again in July 2026.

Staff needing to find information about pupils in many different locations and on different documentation.	Review and implement change into the assessment, recording and reporting system, making best use of CIS.	SENDCo and Data manager	August 2024	On-going
Review work in practical subjects (e.g. Creative arts and physical education) to ensure students with difficulties are properly catered for.	Director of Studies will consider review accessibility to content within the lessons Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will audit and augment LSA support in practical subjects.	SLT and OT	Ongoing	In action
Monitor provision for students with disabilities on all residential visits including day, week or overseas trips. SLT to keep up to date with current regulations and to check website 'learning outside the classroom / OEAP'; information on specific students including nut allergy sufferers, asthmatics and diabetes to be disseminated by Head of Pastoral Care/Medical Administrator to trip organizers and leaders; if necessary, trip leaders to receive EpiPen training / diabetes / epilepsy.	Blanket medical form which enables students to go on all educational trips throughout the year. Specific medical forms for trips abroad. Medical training for staff. Medical / specific needs as identified in Risk Assessments. Ensure inclusivity, if appropriate, of all residential visits for pupils. Appoint a Head of OE to manage and inform RAs. OT to be consulted about any issues such as access / mobility difficulties, sensory overwhelm, so adaptations or equipment can be put in place	Head of Pastoral Care	From September 2022 and ongoing	OE appointment made. Meds/FA training ongoing
HoLS to ensure students with learning difficulties (e.g. dyspraxics, dyslexics) receive extra time to complete longer projects where appropriate	Learning Support Team to review procedures and ensure appropriate action is implemented. Appropriate testing systems in place to ensure accurate Access Arrangements	Learning Support Team	ongoing	AA in place on a year-by-year basis, 2026.
Review strategies on use of IT to facilitate students with organization or memory problems	Teachers to ensure students have access to appropriate IT system and software to support their needs. Audit ICT provision across the school Introduction of Clicker 8 and Creation of Prep ICT room	SLT	On-going	Will always be on-going  Completed
Review Screening procedures ensure all students are appropriately placed.	HoLs to screen paperwork and advise Registrar.	HoLs	Ongoing as standard practice	Completed
<b>Staff Training</b>				
Develop staff CPD programme to ensure all staff and teaching assistants are able to identify and teach pupils with learning difficulties	Introduction of Educare CPD package for all staff and Therapists advice for teachers available onsite daily. Therapists feed into INSET for all staff yearly.  Alternative use of CPD provision (Educare, National College etc) providing different training packages each year.  Training provided at INSET to support pupils with SEN / de-escalation techniques / mental health.	SLT and SENDCo	On-going	Educare introduced Sept 2020. Replaced with National College 2022/23 using Educare.



	Pastoral Team regularly update whole staff via email and links to support. SENDCo to identify appropriate CPD for new and identified staff members (either BDA level 2 or 3 or ELKLAN courses).		Autumn 2025	
Dyscalculia course and training Further BDA training. Additional Champions	Peer class observations for teachers.	HoLS		On-going with new staff as appropriate and updated with existing staff.