

# **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

*March 2026 – March 2029*

## **Ethos and aims**

Downside School ('the School') strives to be fully inclusive and welcoming, and therefore aims to ensure that every pupil can participate fully in the life of the School.

## **Legislation and guidance**

The School is committed to meeting legislative requirements, providing access and nurturing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness. This document meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils.

The School will not treat disabled pupils less favourably and will make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage, allocating adequate resources accordingly.

## **Definition of disability and scope of the plan**

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

The School's Academic & Curriculum Policy outlines our provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and how we ensure equal opportunities for all our pupils, increased access to the curriculum, physical access to the school and access to information particular to students with SEND. This Accessibility Plan provides an outline of how the School will manage this aspect of the SEND provision.

The School's Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum. This includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the School such as participation in co-curricular, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also includes entry into the school.
- 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. This includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education, and

- improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. This will include planning approaches by which the School will make written information (e.g. handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about school events) more accessible to pupils with SEND. The delivery of such information should be within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking into account the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

The School recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities; we also respect the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

### **Development, review and monitoring**

In developing and reviewing the plan, the following areas are considered:

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

The plan, and progress made in relation to it, is subject to annual review by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the governors' Estates and Operations Committee (EOC). It is then approved by governors at their Lent Term plenary.

### **Other relevant policies**

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Academic & Curriculum
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Admissions
- Pupil Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Equality and Diversity

## Improving access to the physical environment

It should be noted that Downside School is built on a sloping site, with changes of levels throughout. The vast majority of buildings on site are Grade II\* listed, which both limits the scope for physical changes and dramatically increases the associated cost and timescale.

Target	Action / Resource	Timescale	Responsibility	Comments	Achieved to Date
Ensure furniture, equipment and indoor arrangements do not disadvantage disabled pupils.	Review classroom and boarding house furniture and layout for mobility, sensory and medical needs	Ongoing, rolling review	HODs & HSMs		
Ensure suitability of lighting and colour schemes to reduce anxiety and sensory overload / promote wayfinding for visually impaired.	Keep neurodiverse pupils in mind when decorating rooms or upgrading lighting.	Ongoing	Estates Team	Use soft, calming neutral colours to reduce sensory overload. High-contrast combinations (e.g. black / yellow or dark blue / white) to help visually impaired.	Upgrade of lighting in refectory corridor  Repainting of main corridor and rooms in Smythe House
Ensure suitability of acoustic environment to enhance speech intelligibility and reduce sensory overload.	Review internal spaces to promote low background noise and minimal reverberation	Ongoing	HODs & HSMs	Use sound-absorbing materials / suspended ceilings / acoustic tiles / curtains / carpets / rubber pads etc on chair and table legs	

Ensure evacuation routes and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are current and reflect room layouts	Annual review of evacuation routes (normally part of fire risk assessment). PEEPs reviewed as required for individuals.	Ongoing	H&S Co-ord		
Ensure planned refurbishment and maintenance works consider accessibility	Review scope of planned works for opportunities to improve accessibility	Ongoing	Estates Team		
Ensure flooring, door furniture and fixtures meet accessibility needs	Review as part of any planned works	Ongoing	Estates Team	Carpets should be low pile, high density to aid wheelchair movement	Refurbishment of staff / disabled WC bottom of Smythe stairs
Investigate installation of portable hearing loops	Conduct survey to identify needs. Obtain estimates and establish scope / feasibility	March 2027	Bursar / Estates	Already in place in the Abbey Church	

### Improving access to the curriculum

Target	Action / Resource	Timescale	Responsibility	Comments	Achieved to Date
Ensure curriculum delivery does not inadvertently disadvantage	Curriculum access audit focussing on practical subjects, assessment	March 2027	Deputy Head (Academic)	Conducted through HODs	

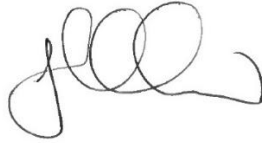
pupils with SEND	methods and off-site activities				
Ensure teaching staff are provided specific training as required to support pupils with a particular disability	As required for specific pupils: Head of SEN to recommend.	As required	Head of SEN	Ad hoc records to be kept	
Improve staff confidence and consistency in supporting disabled pupils	Deliver targeted CPD on specific needs (e.g. ADHD, ASD, dyslexia)	INSET September 2027	Deputy Head (Academic)	Good practice / strategies shared / discussed at staff meetings?	
Embed inclusive practice within curriculum planning and assessment	Review schemes of work to reflect inclusive teaching methods	September 2027	HODs	Incorporate any ISI inspection feedback (June 2026)	

### Improving access to information

Target	Action / Resource	Timescale	Responsibility	Comments	Achieved to Date
Ensure pupils with SEND can access key information	Provide information in alternative formats as required.	Ongoing	Head of SEN	Consider large print; audio via ICT; or provided orally	
Improve accessibility of classroom information	Train teachers to present information clearly e.g. by reading aloud, describing content and using ICT tools.	INSET September 2027		Promote consistent practice across departments	

**Downside School Policy Approval Record**

**Written by** Bursar  
**Reviewed by** Senior Leadership Team  
**Date** March 2026  
**Authorised by** Chair of the Board of Governing Body



**Date** March 2026

**Next Review** March 2027

**Circulation** Governors / all staff on Teams  
Parents on request

**Status** Complies with Equalities Act 2010