

Earlscliffe (Earlscliffe Ltd)

Policy: DISABILITY POLICY AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Member of SLT responsible: Head Teacher and Head of Estates & Facilities

Date of review: July 2025

Date of next review: June 2026

DISABILITY POLICY

It is our intention to remove, as far as we can, those barriers which make it hard for children and adults with a disability to take part in the day to day life of our school and benefit from the educational experiences and services we provide.

We aim to ensure that our school is a welcoming place that understands and responds effectively to children and adults with disabilities and we recognise the importance of a review and planning procedure associated with continuous development and improvement.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if he or she has a *‘physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’*

The Children and Families Act 2014 provides the statutory basis for the system for identifying children and young people (age 0-25) in England with special educational needs (SEN), assessing their needs and making provision for them.

The statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND): Code of practice, first published in 2014, sets out detailed information on the support available for children and young people aged 0 to 25 under the 2014 Act.

Reviewed and updated November 2025

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEND, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEND. The school is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled students.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Philosophy

We believe that the quality education for all children can be defined through developing a culture of inclusion and acceptance, in which all members of the school community are valued equally, treated with respect and provided with equal opportunities. This can be achieved by encouraging the development of inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies and supporting the development of inclusive values practices. Students, Parents and staff should work together with specialist support agencies and services to remove barriers, which restrict full access to education for all members of the school community. To achieve this, staff, students and parents must feel confident that inclusion is beneficial for the development of the child, and equal importance must be given to ensuring that no student's education is impaired.

Key Objectives

To reduce and where possible eliminate barriers to accessing the curriculum and participation in the school community for students and to prospective students who have a disability. Our aim is to create an environment whereby, so far as is reasonable and practical, each and every person (whether visiting or attending) can move freely around all the buildings and can experience all we have to offer.

Principles

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people

- They must not discriminate for a reason arising in consequence of a child or young person's disability
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers.
- This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.

Staff who have designated responsibilities for equality at the school will liaise closely with parents, staff and educational psychologists as necessary to ensure that the Personalised Plans for each child with special needs are relevant.

Training will be provided to teachers to enable them to teach and support disabled students and students with special educational needs. This training is on-going and will be reviewed and adapted to suit the current needs of students.

Key Principles

1. That teaching will set learning challenges that are suitable and demanding
2. That teaching will respond to the learning needs of those being taught
3. That barriers to learning will be identified and addressed positively and directly. This will involve the active participation of staff, students and also parents where necessary.

Success Criteria

- To make staff aware of the implications of catering for students with disabilities through CPD
- Establishing a culture in the school, where the school as a whole is aware of the range of factors which constitute 'disability'
- Offer a range of inset training and CPD opportunities for staff to learn about and implement strategies to ensure full participation of students with disabilities
- The needs of students with disabilities are taken into account in all planning – whether the lessons or other school activities or for future building plans and renovations
- The spiritual, moral and cultural development of students with disabilities is not compromised

Evaluation

- Identification of SEND during admissions interviews and, where required, a meeting with a member of the SEND team being arranged subsequent to the admissions interview
- Staff show awareness in schemes of work and lesson planning and act upon guidance provided by the SEND team
- Improvements are made to the fabric of buildings to cater for students and visitors with disabilities as and when circumstances dictate and finances allow
- The school takes measures to ensure that the written materials it produces are accessible in relation to particular individual needs
- So far as is reasonably possible, the curriculum is accessible to students with individual needs
- Accessibility implementation plans are drawn up and implemented for individual students with disability where and when necessary
- Factors affecting students with disabilities are seen to be as valuable in discussion as other factors

Other relevant legislation, regulations & guidance;

Children & Families Act (2014)

The Special Educational Needs & Disability Regulations (2014)

The SEND Code of Practice (revised April 2015)

Supporting students at school with medical conditions (2014)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Reasonable adjustments for disabled students (2012)

Disability Discrimination Order (2006)

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 & 3

DfES *“Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled students”*

Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) requires the school to have an accessibility plan that covers a three year period.

This plan covers the period December 2024 - November 2027. The plan will be kept under annual review during this period by the Head Teacher, Head of Estates & Facilities, School Nurse and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Officer (SENDCO).

The plan addresses three key areas:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum.
- Improving the physical environment of the school for the purposes of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits. Facilities or services provided/offered by the school.
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The School's Context

We are an independent school for children/young people who age from 14 to 19 years of age. The school currently has pupils with a variety of special educational needs. These include, but are not limited to: autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, hearing and visual impairments. There are also a number of pupils with medical conditions such as severe allergies and asthma. All pupils are fully integrated into school life and participate in the whole curriculum. The SENDCO and School Nurse provide relevant information on pupils, and liaise closely with school staff on identifying and supporting students' needs.

Information on arrangements for the admission of students with disabilities

The school welcomes all prospective students and staff with disabilities. We must feel reasonably sure that Earlscliffe will be able to educate and develop a prospective student to the best of his or her ability and potential so that there is every chance that the student will have a complete, happy, fulfilling and successful quality of education, and emerge as a confident, well-educated young adult ready to take on their role as global citizens. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the student's time at the school.

Arrangements for the admission of students with disabilities are dealt with by the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teachers, SENDCO, School Nurse and Head of Estates & Facilities to ensure that appropriate provision can be offered. Parents of prospective students are asked to provide essential information in respect of their children at the time of application. During the admissions process, 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 is diligent in its efforts to enhance the educational and cultural aspects of a student's development during and after their participation in the learning, social and leisure activities of the school.

The school's Admission Policy is available on the school's website.

The school will take into account:

Physical Environment:

Steps, stairways, exterior surfaces and paving, building entrances and exits, internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, floor-coverings, signs and furniture.

Physical Aids:

ICT equipment, concept keyboards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for students with poor hand/eye skills, such as robust scientific glassware and special pens and pencils.

Information:

Timetables, textbooks, handouts and information about school events e.g. language, large text, illuminated text, Braille, audiotape, lip speaking and sign language.

Advice:

Advice will be provided to staff to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, disabled students have access to all practical, expressive and physical activities. Advice will be provided to staff on suitable classroom layouts to accommodate the needs of disabled students.

Details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by students/staff with disabilities

The main building is accessible by ramp to the designated accommodation and bathroom facilities that have been created. This also gives access to the dining room. Upon enrollment of a disabled student, School House and Flowergate will have ramps installed to allow access to ground floor classrooms and facilities.

A boy requiring wheelchair access would reside at 47 Earls Avenue Boarding House with a ground floor room. There is ramped access to the front door. In case a girl is recruited, 47 EA would become a girls house.

The school will hire a specifically adapted minibus for trips attended by students with physical disabilities.

At Earlscliffe, we will:

- Continually review the environment of the school, the way we plan, prepare and deliver curriculum and the information we provide for students so that we can improve the access for both individuals and groups;
- Work to provide an atmosphere where all students people feel safe and valued;
- Promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people with a disability. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises the person rather than the disability.
- Examine those parts of our active and extra-curricular activities which may have limited access for students with a disability and see if it is possible to provide learning experiences which promote similar development of knowledge and understanding.

Accessibility Plan

December 2024 - November 2027

AIM: To increase the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's Curriculum.			
Actions	Timescale	Lead	Success Criteria
To employ data gathered from CAT4 scores to inform the differentiated statements which details learning support and target needs.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)	Staff will be using the learning support to differentiate and support their planning. Identify all pupils that might show discrepancy between performance and CATS.
To use end of term assessments to monitor progress and identify children.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)/Curriculum Area Managers/SEND Team	Pupils will be making progress.
Teachers have a system to communicate any concerns to SENDCO.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)/SEND Team	Learning needs identified early and given targeted intervention. All pupils make progress.
Assessments carried out by SENDCO to further pinpoint children who need 1:1 intervention.	Ongoing	SEND Team	Progress tracked/ targeted support shows improvement.
SEND Team meetings with applicants post-admissions interview	Ongoing	SEND and Admissions Teams	Measure those enrolling with SEND who attended a post-admissions interview meeting
	Ongoing	SEND Team	

Continue to recommend and use external specialists such as SLT, OT, counsellors and EPs.	Ongoing	SEND Team	High quality professionals available to identify SpLDs.
Use of the Specialist Teaching Learning Service to support students where appropriate, this includes Hearing Impairment Specialists.	Ongoing	SEND Team/Deputy Head (Academic)	Learning needs identified and pupils attaining in line with peers.
Movement breaks for students with attentional or sensory needs and rest breaks - in class and examination for identified children, especially students with ASD/ADHD.	Ongoing	SEND Team	Positive outcome to audit by SEND Team and Curriculum Area Managers of students improved ability to sustain focus
Examination allowance - assessments may be taken on a laptop if this is a student's normal way of working. 25% if agreed using JCQ guidelines/ additional time/ rest breaks and other 'reasonable adjustments' made to ensure barriers are removed for students with SEND.	Ongoing	Examinations Officer/SEND Team	Analysis by SEND Team of applications for allowance and those granted.
Continuing Professional Development activities will be arranged for staff as appropriate. Training staff to support pupils with SEND in the classroom and how to differentiate effectively.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic) and SENDCO	Positive outcome to audit of CPD activities

To continue improving ways in which information about SEND is shared amongst the teaching staff to enable more effective support for SEND children / Staff to be made aware of the resources within the School that are available to them should they feel that a student requires additional assistance.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)/SENDCO/Curriculum Area Managers	Staff have easy access to all students' learning needs and how best to support so that barriers are removed and students' achieve.
SENDCO to summarise all external reports with recommendations and shared to relevant staff.	Ongoing	SENDCO	Reports received by and acted upon by relevant staff.
SENDCO to support work with Curriculum Area Managers to support children with SpLDs	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)	Evidence of impact of support upon student attainment.

AIM: To improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

Actions	Timescale	Lead	Success Criteria
Physical audits of the school will continue to be carried out with any disabled staff and pupils in mind, to improve access. See details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by students/staff with disabilities.	Ongoing	Head of Estates & Facilities	Improved access for all community members.

AIM: To improve the provision to disabled pupils of information which is already in written form.

Actions	Timescale	Lead	Success Criteria
Review information to parents/carers to ensure it is accessible.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic); Head of Admissions and Marketing	All parents receive information in a form that they can access.
The admissions process enables students and their parents to communicate any learning needs/disability a student may have.	Ongoing	Head of Admissions and Marketing	Positive feedback from those interviewed and the parents thereof
The design and production of literature and information packs: we will ensure that such publications can be produced in an alternative format when requested or required.	Ongoing	Head of Admissions and Marketing	Accessible to all members of the community.
Students with an identified SpLD who wish to enrol at the School to provide reports prior to admission to ensure that the school can meet needs or if any adjustment of provision is	Ongoing	Head of Admissions and Marketing	Ensure that we can meet the needs of the student.

needed.			
Review provision for any new children or staff who may be visually or hearing impaired.	Ongoing	SEND Team	Ensure that we can meet the needs of the student. Any learning need is well resourced and supported.
Teachers to maximise the teaching material available in electronic format so that it can be produced in alternative formats.	Ongoing	Deputy Head (Academic)	Any learning need is well resourced and supported.
Provision of written materials in different formats such as coloured paper, enlarged versions, texts on iPads/laptops which can be read aloud.	Ongoing	SEND Team	