

# GATEHOUSE SCHOOL



## **Gatehouse School Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan**

### **Aim**

The Gatehouse School Accessibility Policy sets out how we plan, manage and monitor the access to our school as a means to make Gatehouse as accessible as possible, to as many people as possible and at as many levels as possible. As accessibility extends across many areas, this policy is cross-referenced with other policies.

The overarching aim of the Accessibility Policy is to ensure that students, staff, parents and visitors feel recognised and valued with regard to any hidden or visible disability, and that they are able to access all areas of our school with ease and with regard for their needs.

Just as our Mission Statement demonstrates our commitment to inclusivity and for all of our pupils to be independent learners, we are also committed to staff, pupils and visitors feeling that they are equally independent and that they will not experience frustration or embarrassment as a result of poor design, poor planning, poor implementation or lack of consideration. It is our intent to ensure that our accessibility adaptations are easily seen, easily used, easily available, easily understood and easily accessible. Gatehouse School recognises that an accessible environment does not present barriers, and it is our commitment to be barrier free.

To reflect our Mission Statement which is at the heart of the ethos of Gatehouse School, we seek to ensure that our commitment to inclusivity extends to accessibility for all pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Gatehouse strives to treat all pupils, parents, staff, governors, visitors and other members of the school community with respect for disabilities and the need for additional or adapted access. Wherever possible, we will take reasonable and fair steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage. This Accessibility Policy seeks to make

specific the purpose of developing, implementing and maintaining accessibility standards for all in order to achieve accessibility for all persons with disabilities, with respect to services, facilities, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Definitions of Disability vary, but Gatehouse follows the criteria set out in the 2010 Equality Act: ‘a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Gatehouse extends this definition to include ‘hidden or emerging needs’, which may include, for example, gender identification/non identification, dietary needs and/or allergies, religious beliefs and/or individual needs, for example, menopause necessitating equipment to stay cool or recognition of the need to have an adapted day after a long illness.

All matters of accessibility are dealt with sensitively and with consideration for each individual. Gatehouse School is committed to providing a respectful, welcoming, accessible, and inclusive environment for all pupils, staff and visitors, with and without registered or identified disabilities, in a manner that is mindful and respectful to the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and in a manner which takes into account the person's disability and embodies the principles of integration and equal opportunity..

Gatehouse School is committed to a barrier free environment and to meeting the requirements of all existing legislation and current school policies and goals related to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to people with disabilities that might interfere with their ability to interact with and within Gatehouse School. Gatehouse seeks to ensure that anyone learning, working or experiencing our school is aware of their rights and responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment for persons with additional needs or disabilities.

## **Areas relating to Accessibility**

### **Physical Accessibility**

Gatehouse is accessible to wheelchair users.

We are a nut-free school in order to ensure that anyone with a nut allergy is safe. Future works are to include but are not restricted to: replacing the painting on stairs with permanent luminous strips to increase visibility, upgrade buses on a need-to basis for wheelchair

accessibility, install upgraded lighting to ensure all lighting is ‘flicker free’ to adjust for pupils and adults with epilepsy, Autism, visual stress and visual impairment,

### **Cognitive Accessibility:**

#### **(refer to Admissions, SEND/Inclusion Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy)**

- Ensure that inclusivity is reflected in the classroom and in our commitment to pupils and staff to enable them to learn, achieve and participate fully in school life.
- Using reasonable adjustments, adapt or add where necessary areas of accessibility related to classrooms, specialist teachers, external agencies, screeners, learning support, differentiated work, meetings with parents, referrals for assessments, adapted assemblies and assisted technology.
- Using reasonable adjustments, adapt or add where necessary areas of accessibility related to staff participation in school life: laptops, pen readers, report writing support and necessary software and hardware where applicable.

### **Ethical Accessibility**

- Working with our caterers, respecting and supporting ethical choices, for example veganism, vegetarianism and religious observance with abstinence from food

#### **Accessibility for the seven protected characteristics**

- Our commitment to accessibility is guided by the Equality Act 2010. Please see our Equal Opportunities Policy for an expanded statement with regard to using the Equality Act 2010 to guide us on ensuring that we are aware of and active in ensuring that the School protects against discriminating against the nine protected characteristics (age, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity and paternity, religion or belief, race, sex and sexual orientation), as it applies to accessibility.

### **Information Accessibility**

- Where possible, we promote web and computer accessibility for pupils and adults with cognitive difficulties, vision impairment or help those who are deaf or hard of hearing gain access to online content such as web pages, electronic documents and multimedia. Where necessary, we will work with the Local Education Authority to access specialist services to assist us.

- This policy and other policies are available on the school website, and in accordance with the stated commitment to accessibility, this and other policies can be viewed in print view, standard view and high visibility.
- Staff, parents and pupils have full access to all policies, staff handbook, code of conduct, line managers.

### **Accessibility Plan**

Under the Equality Act 2010, Gatehouse School has an Accessibility Plan linked to the Accessibility Policy.

The Accessibility Plan demonstrates how access is to be improved for any person with a visible or hidden disability, containing relevant and timely actions that relate to

- increasing and improving physical and curriculum access
- adapting the curriculum as necessary to ensure pupil/s with a disability are able to access the same learning as pupils without a disability. This will encompass teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school, such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school 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.
- Improving and maintaining access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This may include 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 pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats.
- Whole school training to recognise the need to continue raising awareness of equality issues for staff and governors to comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.
- Linked with policies, strategies and documents: - Behaviour Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Health & Safety Policy, SEND Policy, School Improvement Plan

### **Curriculum Accessibility**

Gatehouse School aims to offer the highest quality of teaching and learning and support all pupils in the pursuit of academic and personal excellence. We have high expectations of all of our pupils and we strive to ensure that each and every pupil can take part in the whole school curriculum. We value the diversity of our school community and appreciate the contribution that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can bring to school life. Gatehouse is committed to providing full curriculum access to pupils. Please refer to the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy for an expansion on curriculum access.

### **Admissions Accessibility**

Our Admissions Policy and criteria (available to view on our website) seeks to remove barriers to entry to our school for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. We strive to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school as our mission statement states: “Children of any race, colour, creed, background and intellect shall be accepted as students and work side by side without streaming or any kind of segregation, with the aim that each child shall get to know and love God, and develop their own uniqueness of personality to enable them to appreciate the world and the world to appreciate them.” We do not discriminate regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs providing that our Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. We welcome pupils with physical disabilities provided that our site can cope with them. For transparency, we advise parents of children with special educational needs or physical disabilities to discuss their child’s requirements with the Headteacher before commencing the registration process. Parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist’s report or a medical report to support their application. We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he/she becomes a pupil at the school.

### **Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process**

Gatehouse will ensure that job applicants are notified when they are individually selected to participate in the assessment or selection process, and that accommodation for disabilities are made available upon request with regard to the materials or processes to be used. When presenting offers of employment, we will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. We take a fully inclusive approach to our staff recruitment and aim to appoint the best person based on their skill set and qualifications and regardless of any disability they may have. We ensure all staff are provided with the

necessary support for their roles. We regularly review our staff's needs to ensure these are being met. Gatehouse will inform staff of all accessibility policies (and any updates to those policies) used to support employees with disabilities. This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable after commencing employment.

### **Return to Work Process**

Gatehouse is committed to a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related adaptations and support in order to return to work. Gatehouse is committed to providing a respectful, welcoming, accessible, and inclusive environment that ensures all persons within its community are aware of their rights and responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment with and for persons with disabilities.

Gatehouse School is committed to ensuring that all visitors receive the same value and quality to enable independence as much as possible, and proceed at their own pace as long as this does not present a safety risk. Gatehouse is also committed to respecting individual choice with regard to disclosure of disability or need, and will wait until an individual describes his or her situation rather than make assumptions as many types of disabilities have similar characteristics and assumptions may be wrong.

### **Weekly Monitoring**

Generally, matters relating to accessibility are discussed in the weekly Works Committee Meetings. Accessibility issues are also discussed by the Senior Leadership Team and with the Head and Bursar as issues arise. Accessibility is also addressed in the School's long term Development Plan.

### **Resources**

The School allocates an annual Capital Expenditure Budget which enables ongoing development relating to accessibility. Where previously unidentified needs are identified which require immediate attention there is usually sufficient flexibility in budgets to prioritise these necessary works.

Regular review of these areas and success monitoring of measures takes place by:

- Internal “Works Committee” weekly meetings
- Senior Leadership Team weekly meetings
- Regular meetings between the Head and Bursar
- SENCO meets regularly with parents of children identified as having a disability
- Input at the SLT meetings from the SENCO

Gatehouse School's action plan below relates to the following standards on special educational needs and disability:

<p>Description of previous targets:</p>
<p><b>Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;</b>          Progress was made with the installation of passenger lifts.</p>
<p><b>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 or offered by the school.</b>          Progress was made making new accessible IT facilities available to pupils. Height adjustable furniture has also been provided.</p>
<p><b>Improve the delivery to SEND/disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.</b>          There are now interactive video screens in every classroom.</p>
<p><b>Improve general lighting in corridors and stairwells.</b>          Action: All stairwells have automatic lighting in all new areas of the building.</p>
<p><b>Install better outdoor lighting to outdoor areas (after completion of building works)</b>          Action: Automatic lights in the playground, pedestrian walkway, at the side of the bus park and outside of New House.</p>
<p>Action: investigate fire safety implications and instruct survey to determine best location and selection of appropriate contractor.          Action: Evac Chair added to Year 3 landing to access the Wallbank Hall and all other areas of the school, including the playground in a fire drill.</p>
<p>Action: Music room steps to be painted with yellow edges          Action: Contrast in step edging has improved Health and Safety</p>



### Accessibility Plan -access to the curriculum

Target	Who	When	Outcome	Completed
Learning aids to be produced	Senco SEN teacher SEN TAs	as needed	Resources made as required, eg dyslexia friendly	in line with current pupil needs
Intervention training for support staff	SENCO	Ongoing- alternate Wednesday mornings	Increased knowledge for staff	bi-weekly
LSA/teacher meetings	SEN teacher	termly	Pupils ongoing needs reviewed	termly
Training teachers on differentiation	SENCO	as required	Teachers more able to meet the needs of pupils	on-going

### Accessibility Plan- Medical awareness

Target	Who	When	Outcome	Completed
Staff training to meet the medical needs of pupils	School Nurse	when required and at least annually.	Staff trained to deal with medical needs, eg epi pen for allergy, seizures, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes	Staff awareness training in line with pupil needs
Paediatric first aid training	Outside agency	on demand	To have all of the early years staff trained and at least one	Target met and on-going annually

			member of staff in each year group trained in paediatric first aid.	
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### Accessibility Plan- Access to the physical environment

Target	Who	When	Outcome	Completed
Ensure each area of the school has wheelchair access, where feasible. Investigate undercroft adaptation possibility.	governors	future plans by June 2025	The undercroft environment is adapted to the needs of any pupils in wheelchairs if feasible.	
Emergency systems to have flashing alarms	governors	future plans by June 2025	Visual alarms for hearing impaired	
Sound insulation to dining hall	headteacher	future plans by June 2025	Reduce noise level	
Improve lighting and floor contrast colours in the Music Room .	governors	future plans by June 2025	Visual contrast will improve accessibility for children with sight impairment.	
Gender neutral toilet for pupils	governors	by 2023	To give accessibility for pupils wishing to be non specific with their gender identity	Gender Neutral toilet block is now available and in use. September 2022

## Accessibility Plan- Access to information

Target	Who	When	Outcome	Completed
Ensure that information is available in relevant formats: braille and pictorial information	SENCO SEN teacher	as needed	pupils have access to information in a format that meets their needs	on-going
Signage available in different formats	SENCO	as needed	Pupils able to navigate the school regardless of disability	on-going
Parents are informed of events	PA to Head	weekly in Friday update	Parents have advance notice for any adaptation requests to be made	on-going

	Previous Governors Review	Spring 2024
	Next Governors Review	Spring 2025