Disability & Accessibility Policy

Policy for the Admission of Disabled Pupils

Admission to the school depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if possible to improve, the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos to which the schools aspires. The school must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded child.

The school's policy is to apply these criteria to 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.

The school asks parents to complete a medical form 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

One of the obvious problems which the school has (in common with many other schools) is its lay-out which covers a large area and consists of several separate buildings of several stories and without lifts, which have grown up since the school was founded. Another is the system, again common to many schools, of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. The boarding facilities pose similar problems in a greater degree. It is not hard to conclude that any pupil with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the school offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to physical features of the school at prohibitive cost. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position.

Section 1 to 3 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils’ Educational Records) Act requires St Hugh’s to prepare and implement accessibility strategies to improve over time access to education for pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities. By definition, a person is disabled if ‘he or she has a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities’. An accessibility strategy, therefore, must cover improvements for a broad range of pupils, and prospective pupils, and should focus on the following aspects of education for pupils with disabilities.

Increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the curriculum;

Improving the physical environment of the school to make it more accessible;

Improving communication of school information to disabled pupils (and their parents) and, in particular, providing information to such pupils in appropriate alternative forms.

At present, laptops and learn pads are provided for use in class. Scribes can be arranged to assist some pupils sit exams, and additional classroom assistance has been organised for many pupils for a number of hours weekly. The Learning Support department keeps abreast of developments in other areas, and makes appropriate arrangements, such as additional ICT access, for individual pupils. Adjustments are made where appropriate to enable disabled pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities as fully as possible.

A full audit of physical accessibility to buildings on all school sites was undertaken by the Headmaster. It is not possible to take into account all degrees of disability, and consequently the criterion adopted was accessibility to as great an extent as possible for a wheel-chair bound pupil. We believe that the introduction of ramps in various places provides access for a wheel-chair bound pupil to all buildings.

Information is conveyed to pupils through daily or weekly newssheets, pinned on notice-boards and/or read out during registration or in class. Other information about Extra-curricular activities is displayed on notice-boards in corridors. It is already the case that pupils with disabilities have their needs thoroughly assessed, and there is good communication between staff in the Learning Support department and class or subject teachers regarding alternative means of presenting information, communicating or dealing with homework or examinations. Any pupil with a communication disability would have arranged for him or her an appropriate level of individual assistance, following discussion with parents and specialist advisors. Such special arrangements are re-assessed regularly.

St. Hugh’s has agreed that priority each year for improving access should be given to benefiting current pupils with disabilities, and any to whom a place has been offered and where parents have accepted. Thereafter, the scope of improvements to the physical environment will be determined by whether any could be easily incorporated into planned maintenance and development, by potential use, and by affordability. On the curricular side, we have to put in place plans to maximise access to as full a curriculum as possible for pupils with disabilities.

We believe St. Hugh’s is pro-active in assisting pupils with disabilities, at every stage

In examining priorities for ensuring that all pupils have as wide an access to a full curriculum as possible, St. Hugh’s feels that the over-riding concern is the formation of a strategy to accommodate, on a permanent basis, a wheelchair-bound pupil. St. Hugh’s has to be able to facilitate such a pupil’s participation, at every stage, in as much of school life, curricular and extra-curricular, as possible. The school currently has no pupil in this position. It is important also to consider the situation of families where a parent has a disability. Attendance at parents’ meetings for a wheelchair-bound parent is currently possible at St. Hugh’s. The school is happy to supply school report information in a different appropriate format to the usual written report, if necessary.

Since 2002 the school has

* Improved lighting (including security lighting) around the school.
* Installed classroom blinds.
* Removed various steps / created ramps where practical.
* Provided one to one support during Games and PE sessions when appropriate.
* Reallocated teaching rooms when necessary to cope with a child unable to get upstairs.
* Expanded our ICT provision and encouraged the use of laptops where appropriate .
* Purchased specific equipment for a visually impaired girl to allow her to participate in hockey, netball and rounders.
* Ensured the website is compatible for visually impaired people.
* Installed a disabled toilet in the main classroom block.
* Ensured the new changing room facilities and pavilion provided sufficient facilities for disabled people.
* Created a new access to the Sports Hall with access to disabled changing facilities.
* Built an all-weather pitch with a path access from the main campus

During the past five years several children with recognised disabilities have attended St. Hugh’s. We have endeavoured to respond to their needs as appropriate.

During the next three years the school will continue to provide 1:1 support for pupils who need such support. We aim to encourage open and frank dialogue to support parents in reaching decisions as to the suitability of St. Hugh’s for their child and we will continue to endeavour to make it possible for children with disabilities to attend St. Hugh’s and to be integrated as much as possible. Greater detail is contained within our SENDA policy.

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| Staff Responsible | Headmaster |
| Last reviewed | Autumn 2016 |
| Date of next review | Autumn 2017 |