

DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Queen's College acknowledges its duty towards pupils, staff, parents, Governors and members of the wider community who have a disability. Where pupils and prospective pupils are concerned, the College acknowledges its non-discrimination and planning duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

This document outlines the College's policy on Disability and Accessibility. It deals in general terms but does not enter into detail about specific disabilities; the number of possible disabilities precludes such detail consideration. Anyone who requires information about the College and specific disabilities should contact the Headmaster.

DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The College has established a Disability and Accessibility Policy Review Committee consisting of a Governor, the Bursar and co-opted additional member(s) whose particular expertise would be of assistance. The Committee's terms of reference are:

- to review the College's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect pupils and prospective pupils who have a disability;
- to make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education in its many aspects to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future;
- to prepare the College's Disability Policy;
- to prepare the College's Accessibility Plan;
- to review such plans and policies as necessary and at least every 3 years.
- to maintain a log of all reasonable adjustments carried out.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Queen's College operates a selective admission system based on the prospective pupil's ability to benefit from the education provided. Admission to the College depends upon the prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, where possible, improve the educational and general achievement for its pupils commensurate with the ethos of the College. The College must also feel 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 that pupil's peers. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the College.

Involvement in co-curricular activities form a central part of the College's educational system.

As part of the Registration procedure, the College asks parents to complete a form on which they disclose and give details of any disability, special educational need or medical condition related to their child. Any changes which arise during attendance at the College should be notified as they arise.

In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the College may take such advice and require such assessments as it deems appropriate. Subject to this, the College will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.

The College will decide in consultation with the parents whether it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments based upon the information given and advice received, to enable a prospective pupil to take up a place at the College and to satisfy the admissions criteria outlined above.

Where the College agrees to provide additional services, for example specialist teaching for dyslexia, parents will be charged for this service in accord with a published schedule.

The College policy recognises that it would not serve the best interests of a child to be accepted as a pupil if the College were not able to provide the education and/or support which the child needs. In the case of a pupil developing a disability while at the College, the College would take reasonable steps to continue to provide the necessary education to that pupil, within the legal and financial constraints under which it operates, recognising that it may be in the best interests of the pupil to move to a school which can better accommodate the specific disability.

The College has a responsibility to all of its pupils and must allocate its resources as equitably as possible so as to maintain and improve all of its facilities and equipment in order to meet its educational and pastoral standards. If necessary, part of those resources may be allocated towards making the College more accessible to pupils with disabilities. In particular when new buildings are erected or major structural alterations to existing buildings are planned, full consideration will be given to improving accessibility for disabled pupils, within the legal, building and financial constraints within which the College operates, recognising how such changes relate to the College facilities as a whole.

BACKGROUND TO ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The College consists of a large number of separate buildings located on a sloping site, all of which lies within a conservation area. The main building is a Grade 2* listed building on 7 levels. Because of the limited area available for buildings, it has been necessary to maximise use of the space by constructing buildings of 2 or more storeys. The main building dates from the 1850s, and the majority of the other buildings pre-date current accessibility requirements. None of the College's buildings is fitted with a lift. Since 1990, in new buildings and buildings which have undergone major refurbishment, extension or substantial alteration, every effort has been made to provide wheelchair access.

Education is provided in fixed classrooms for each subject, having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, often up steps or stairs into and within buildings.

Pre-Prep School Wheelchair access is available to most rooms but not to the playground area.

Junior School Wheelchair access is available to two classrooms and the assembly hall.

Senior School Individual subjects are taught in their own specific area and frequently in their own separate building. Of these, the Music School, Physics block and the Design and Technology building have full wheelchair access. The Art block and Science blocks have limited access, the latter only giving access to Chemistry laboratories. Of the remaining facilities, with the exception of one classroom—including all other classrooms, day-rooms and the dining room—the layout and structures of the facilities preclude access by wheelchair users.

Entry to and movement within all boarding houses currently requires negotiating stairs. Of the three on-site Senior School boarding houses, and the Junior School boarding house, only one has ground-floor bedrooms but access to washing facilities are up stairs. The College which is working to remove all ground floor bedrooms in its boarding houses on security grounds. Providing wheelchair access to any boarding house would require considerable structural alterations including provision of lifts.

Whilst it is the College's policy to provide disabled access to and within new buildings and, wherever possible, to existing buildings as part of a major refurbishment, a pupil with restricted mobility will be unable to access some or all of the educational and recreational facilities offered by the College and which are an essential part of engaging in education and social activities at Queen's.

While the College is not required to provide auxiliary aids and services or to make physical changes to its existing buildings, wherever practicable and in line with the Disability Policy, it will make reasonable adjustments to the timetable to allow children with restricted mobility to attend accessible parts of the College.

The College has a comprehensive policy on the treatment of Special Educational Needs. The College's Learning Support Department has an excellent reputation and can deal with a limited number of pupils whose dyslexia disability does not warrant attendance at a specialist school.

The College can cope with a number of other learning difficulties, and there is an established system to support a limited number of such pupils with additional tutoring. Where appropriate, the permitted level of assistance in examinations is provided to pupils with learning difficulties—dyslexia in particular.

Restrictions would be placed on pupils' degree of disability and the number of disabled pupils participating in subjects which by their very nature constitute a level of hazard. Such subjects include design and technology, science, art and games and PE.

The College has no special provision for pupils who have severely impaired hearing or sight.

IMPROVING THE EXTENT OF DISABLED PUPILS IN THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

The College will continue to strive to improve the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the College curriculum in each of the constituent Schools.

Where physical access to the site is difficult for a prospective pupil, the College recognises the need to be proactive in enabling such access, for example by placing a disabled pupil in a tutor group that is most convenient for physical access, holding classes which do not require specialist provision (such as science, art, DT, etc) in an easily accessible classroom, and prioritising in the construction of the timetable with regard to accessible rooms and set allocations.

IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

As budgets allow:

- The College will draw up and cost the provision of disabled access to all areas of the site to assist in the prioritisation of expenditure.
- The College will aim to make newly-constructed buildings fully accessible to disabled pupils.
- All conversions to existing areas of the College that sit outside the scope of the Acts will be considered with regard to disabled access and every reasonable effort made to improve access within the scope of the work.
- All new equipment purchased for teaching will be considered as to the suitability of its use by pupils with disabilities, and every reasonable effort made to purchase equipment that meets the needs of such pupils in a better way than the equipment it replaces.

IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION TO DISABLED PUPILS

As budgets allow:

- The College will arrange for documents to be provided to prospective parents who have a disability in a form that meets that need, if so requested and it is reasonable so to do.
- All College documents will be available in large print format .
- The College will continue to provide Inset for all teachers in order to support them in better communication with pupils with SEN or disabilities.
- The College will plan to invest in classroom technology to better facilitate communication to pupils with SEN or disabilities. This could include:
 - Provision of images and text in a large printed format.
 - Use of high quality audio/visual material.
 - Easy dissemination of printed handouts of appropriate clarity.

WELFARE

The College already has comprehensive policies and procedures in place for day and boarding pupils to cope with difficulties which might arise for specified types of disability such as bullying, non-integration, physical and mental welfare and health. These policies and guidelines are reviewed at least every 3 years.

CONCLUSION

Queen's College already makes considerable provision for disabled pupils. Its location and the physical constraints of the site considerably restrict wheelchair access to most of its buildings and to the Sports Field. Within these, financial and other constraints, it is the College's aim to improve wheelchair access around the site as an integral part of refurbishment programmes and new buildings will be designed with a view to improved accessibility for disabled children. Similarly, provision for pupils with impaired sight or hearing and other disabilities will be improved. The College prides itself on the professionalism of its dyslexia provision and will continue to accept dyslexic pupils up to the limit imposed by physical, personnel and financial resources. Similarly, where possible, the College will continue to cater for pupils with other learning difficulties.