

Red Balloon - Cambridge

Accessibility Planning to meet DDA requirements

3 year access plan – annually reviewable



Date of Plan: Sept 2020

Date for review: Sept 2023

NB We decided to write a new policy after two year implementation of the previous policy because we have opened an additional building accommodating up to 17 students.

Nature of the current school cohort:

We have one student with a hearing impairment. A number have mental health difficulties including heightened anxiety, depression and psychotic disorders.

None of our current staff has physical or sensory disabilities.

Nature of the school (to include available accommodation):

The school caters for up to 35 secondary age students who have either self excluded from school or have been referred because they have met extreme difficulty in relating to their mainstream peers. We now operate in two buildings. Accommodation at Herbert House is as per previous plans... There are five floors of available accommodation. There is ground floor access for wheelchair users, but the cost of making any further parts of the building directly accessible remain prohibitive. The second building is a five minute walk away in Central Cambridge. We share the building with a hairdressing company, but they have no shared access to our areas. The accommodation is a modern office block on two floors.

Audit of existing strengths and weaknesses:

Are all staff aware of their responsibilities under equalities legislation?

Yes - via policy documents and induction process.

Amongst the current student cohort do any disabilities impact upon:

- attendance – NO (apart from where they need to attend health appointments during school hours or vulnerabilities due to COVID in which case they are taught online);
- access to the curriculum – NO;
- access to areas of the centre – NO;
- access to any clubs, visits or activities – NO;
- their achievements – we do argue that academic progress is limited (particularly at KS3) by students’ low self esteem / self image as learners... and examination results are ongoingly adversely affected by students’ fears / mental health issues.

Have existing disabled students or staff been consulted re this plan; if they have how have their views been implemented?

Students are consulted through regular one-to-one discussions with the coordinator and counsellors about their needs, challenges and progress. As a result we have identified and provided the need for one to one sessions with key staff. We have requested appropriate access arrangements for public examinations.

In light of the above how can the centre:

Improve access for all to the physical environment?

Short term

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
Appoint health and safety officer with a key requirement to ensure access to all learning areas is secured.	Coordinator to oversee appointment.	October 2020.	Trustees have agreed funding for the position.	Any alterations to be made as identified By the health and safety officer.

Long term - we have been unable to access / identify necessary funding for this, hence will retain it as our long term aim.

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
Improve wheelchair access to rear of building.	Trustees	For ongoing review (see anticipated outcomes)..	Time; professional advice; major financial implications.	Ramps provided at rear of building, possible modifications to access points. Possible move – to be considered in greater detail 2022.

Improve access to all learning (including ‘out of school’) activities on offer?

Short term

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
All students have been affected by COVID... our aim is to ensure that they maintain access to high quality learning at all times.	ALL staff	Ongoing from Sept 2020.	Access to online learning.	All students maintaining access to their individual learning programmes via online learning if / as / when necessary.

Long term

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
1) Training of staff (if required) in response to needs of any new students.	All staff as required.	Ongoing as our school population is transient.	Training –budget; new teaching resources; information sharing with	Ongoing ability to meet the needs of all our students.

2)Provision of after school academic support to be available to students	All staff	Also ongoing.	other educational establishments. Staff time and funding / salary to support their input.	Any students who identify the need for additional support being able to access it.
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Improve access of all to learning or other information that may currently be provided solely in written form?

Short term

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
Ensure online technology available to all students to enable them to access their learning programmes in formats / styles appropriate to their needs.	Coordinator, deputy and IT manager.	Ongoing from Sept 2020.	Time , laptops, software - and funding to support that.	All students able to access their individual learning programme in the manner that best suits their preferred learning style(s).

Long term

Action	Who	When by	Resources required	Anticipated outcomes
Ensure staff are able to make best use of technological resources.	All staff.	Ongoing.	In house training by IT specialist.	Improved skills for working with students with a range of disabilities.

Document completed by:

JL Lechner (**coordinator**)

..... (**on behalf of trustees**)

Date: Sept 2020

Review of 3 year access plan as noted at the outset we chose to write a new plan after 2 years given our expansion... hence this is a review of progress over the previous two years.

Physical environment - learning walks were undertaken, but no immediate improvements identified. Consideration has been given to alternative premises and we are in the process of looking for options for the future.

Improving wheelchair access - simply not possible, partly due to structure of building but mainly because of prohibitive cost.

Learning activities – audit completed – did not identify any student having their learning restricted through disability / sensory impairment. The current plan has attempted to address issues raised during the pandemic and to enable us to develop a hybrid (in centre / online) model of working.

Access to learning resources – there has been a general RB audit of technology available to centres. For some staff that has improved their capacity and inclination to utilise a range of online resources... others remain more resistant, although all have the basic skills required. We have purchased Dragon Dictate (voice recognition software). Staff have undertaken training to provide them with a wide range of resources to respond to student need - this will be built upon as part of our response to COVID.

Review carried out by Jessica Lechner(coordinator) and Chris Lofts (deputy)... Sept 2020.

