

Westfield Arts College

Accessibility Plan

2024 to 2027

Reviewed by committee	9/12/24	Policy type: Statutory
Adopted by Governing Body	9/12/24	Review cycle: 2 years
Date for next review	Autumn 2026	Signed by Chair: 

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1. Introduction

All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law (Equality Act 2010).

Accessibility Plans support current and future pupils with a disability.

The Equality Act says that 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.

Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:

- a) increase access to the curriculum
- b) improve the physical environment of the school
- c) make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways

This is our school Accessibility Plan.

2. Vision and aims

Our aim is for everyone at Westfield Arts College to feel part of the school community. We are committed to making our school as accessible as possible. We want our pupils to:

- be fully included in school life
- actively take part in high quality learning
- thrive and enjoy their learning
- develop the skills to go on and lead fulfilled lives as adults
- be empowered, confident and able to function as independently as possible

We want our pupils with a disability to access all elements of school life. This includes school clubs, activities and trips. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

3. Objectives

At Westfield Arts College all staff and governors will be aware of, and working in line with:

- this Accessibility Plan
- the wider disability provisions set out in the Equality Act
- the United Nations Conventions on the rights of:
 - a) the child
 - b) persons with disabilities

Our Governors will champion the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. They will be involved in developing and reviewing this Accessibility Plan.

Our staff will remove disadvantage faced by pupils with a disability by:

- adopting a 'can do' attitude
- having a flexible approach to teaching
- modifying the curriculum and environment

Person-centred systems will be in place to support the inclusion of pupils with a disability.

4. School context

Westfield Arts College is a 4-19 special school for pupils with a moderate learning difficulty and who are autistic, have physical or other additional and complex needs. All pupils have an Education Health and Care Plan. All pupils are considered to have special educational needs and disabilities.

We have 230 pupils on roll. We are part of the Chesil locality, with many pupils living in Weymouth and the surrounding areas, but we take pupils from across Dorset. We follow the National Curriculum which is heavily modified and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. We have an ambition of 'Broadening Horizons' providing our pupils with experiences which will enrich their lives. We place a strong emphasis on the wider curriculum, practical learning and independent living skills in preparation for adulthood.

The school building was built in the 1970's and has been extended several times. A modern building, The Gould Building, was constructed in 2007 and has 3 floors with lift access to all. The school buildings are well maintained and are in good condition.

A copy of our floorplan is available upon request from the School Office.

5. Pupil data

We ask for information about any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parents and carers. We also carefully observe our pupils' progress.

We use the information in their Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan to ensure that we have a good understanding of their disabilities and how to support them.

The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

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'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises

Our pupils have the following areas of need:

3% Physical need
4% Visual impairment
2% Hearing impairment
5% Epilepsy
12% Medical conditions that have a long-term impact e.g. asthma, diabetes, heart condition, hypermobility
12% Diagnosed intellectual or learning disability or Global Developmental Delay
25% Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
34% Autistic Spectrum Condition

6. Audit

To help us develop our Accessibility Plan, we undertook an environmental audit of Westfield Arts College. This told us that:

- Most areas of the school are physically accessible for everyone
- Some entrances and exits would benefit from automated door opening
- The site is on an incline and some surfaces are uneven and potentially dangerous
- Parking, particularly disabled parking, can be challenging with the increased number of vehicles at the beginning and end of the school day
- Inconsistent /unclear signage for toilets

7. Consultation

In developing our Accessibility Plan, we have consulted through surveys, annual reviews and other meetings with:

- our pupils
- parents and carers
- staff at the school, including the leadership team
- our Governing Body
- relevant specialist services

These consultations told us that:

- Parking, particularly disabled parking, can be challenging with the increased number of vehicles at the beginning and end of the school day
- Some entrances in the school are not independently accessible for wheelchair users
- Our lift is regularly serviced but sometimes breaks down. This is challenging for wheelchair users
- Fire evacuation can be challenging in the Gould Building
- Some written information that we share could be more accessible

8. Previous actions

Access to the curriculum

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability through the following means:

- Careful planning of class groups to ensure appropriate curriculum access and resources
- Careful consideration of accessibility to all subjects for all students

The physical environment

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for pupils with a disability by:

- Wheelchair users have equal or improved access to physical activity through installation of Green Gym with wheelchair accessible stations
- Pupils with physical difficulties have improved access to areas of the school through modification of pathways and kerbs, a ramp to the field, remodelling of the entrance foyer to include a lowered reception desk and step free access

Access to information

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we made information more accessible to pupils with a disability by:

- Making written information clear and concise, including website and social media
- Re-design of the school website for accessibility and font size options
- Purchase of IT software and training for staff to improve access for all pupils

9. Sources of advice and information

Our Accessibility Plan has been written following guidance from the Local Authority and considering the Dorset Local Authority Accessibility Strategy. We have also considered Equality Act 2010 legislation and related government advice.

10. Other policies

Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- Special educational needs and disability policy and SEN information report
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions policy

- Equality information and equality objectives

It can also be read alongside the following school documents:

- Safeguarding policy
- Curriculum policy
- Staff development policy
- Health and safety policy (including off-site safety)
- Therapeutic Behaviour policy
- School development plan

11. Implementation and monitoring

Our Accessibility Plan shows how we will continue to improve accessibility at Westfield Arts College for pupils with a disability (and for staff and visitors to the school) over the next 3 years. It may be used to inform other school planning documents.

We will work in partnership with the Dorset Council in implementing the Accessibility Plan. Where necessary, environmental works will be guided by relevant buildings regulations.

Sufficient resources will be allocated to implement this Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly and updated as required. It will be monitored through SLT and Governing Body meetings.

This Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years and will be updated in October 2027. Once updated, we will advise our parents/ carers of this via our usual communications and on our website.

The Westfield Arts College complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

12. Accessibility Action Plan

Increasing access to the curriculum

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improving the school environment to create classroom spaces that are appropriate for the individual needs of learners		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Classroom adaptations and modifications (Nothe, Preston, Oasis, Lodmoor, Wyke, Moreton) Installation of doorway and fobbed areas for safety (corridor to Science room)		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Classroom environments will meet the needs of pupils.		
When will this work be done?	Summer 2023 – classroom extensions, refurbishment of Radio Station into classroom Summer 2024 – quiet room in Primary classroom, fobbed doorway installed in main corridor. Adaptations in Wyke and Moreton classes.		
Approximate cost	Funded by Dorset Council		
Responsible person(s)	Head Teacher, SBM, Dorset Council	Date complete	August 2024

Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improved access to sensory regulation resources		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Focus on resources and activity for sensory regulation to support improved focus to learning Construction of a new Sensory Classroom (through Dorset Council) Installation of swings on playground through LAG funding		
How can we tell if this is successful?	The increased sensory needs of pupils will be met successfully through the purchase of resources, planning of timetable and spaces and the installation of a new sensory classroom		
When will this work be done?	August 2025		
Approximate cost	£110,000 for sensory classroom (funded by Dorset Council) £5000 on sensory resources to support regulation £5000 LAG funding to install new playground swings		
Responsible person(s)	SBM, Sensory lead, Leader of Therapeutic Behaviour	Date complete	

Outcome 3			
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What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improved access to the curriculum through resources and IT		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Review subscriptions to digital resources to ensure they are suitable for pupils groups Use appropriate AI resources to support learning e.g. Immersive reader on MS Word Purchase of an all-terrain wheelchair		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Pupils will have the resource to access the curriculum at the level they require. Pupils will use AI and IT resources to support their learning. Wheelchair users will have access to an all-terrain wheelchair		
When will this work be done?	July 25, but this is ongoing and will take place through the year		
Approximate cost	£1000 for resources £2500 all-terrain wheelchair		
Responsible person(s)	ICT lead teacher, SBM, IT technician	Date complete	

Improving the physical environment

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	All level main entrances to school buildings are independently accessible for wheelchair users		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Identify entrance doors requiring door openers Work with pupils who use wheelchairs to plan works Install door openers		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Wheelchair users will have independent access to doorways		
When will this work be done?	By Summer 2026		
Approximate cost	£ SBM research costing and invite quotes. Will be reliant on a site survey		
Responsible person(s)	SBM	Date complete	

Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improve opportunities for sensory regulation through installation of a swing and other equipment		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Bid for LAG funding of £5000 to secure funding for installing a swing		
How can we tell if this is successful?	More pupils will have access to swings for sensory regulation and play-based activity		
When will this work be done?	Summer 25		
Approximate cost	£5000		
Responsible person(s)	Leader of Therapeutic Behaviour, SBM	Date complete	

Making information more accessible

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	To review and develop the school newsletter to be accessible to more parent carers		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Redesign the school newsletter using clear and concise language and layout, publishing as a pdf and emailed to parent carers		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Parent carers report that they are well informed of school events		
When will this work be done?	Autumn 2024		
Approximate cost	Administration time		
Responsible person(s)	School office	Date complete	

Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Training for staff to understand and use IT software to support accessibility of information		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Training in reading strategies and IT resources to support access Training and discussion in using AI resources meaningfully to support pupils in access to their learning		
How can we tell if this is successful?	IT and AI resources are more commonly used across the school. Staff share new resources and ideas routinely so that we understand and effectively use new technologies.		
When will this work be done?	July 2025, development through the year		
Approximate cost	Staff meeting and training time		
Responsible person(s)	ICT lead teacher, Leader of Learning	Date complete	

Outcome 3			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Improving signage around the school site e.g. toilets		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Involve Student Voice group in agreeing the most appropriate signage for all our toilets around the school		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Signage across the school will be consistent and suitable for pupils and staff		
When will this work be done?	By July 2025		
Approximate cost	Dependent on signage (£500 estimate)		
Responsible person(s)	Student Voice lead with Site Managers	Date complete	