



# **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

## **with 3 year Plan**

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Taken from: **Welsh Government : Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils – Guidance 2018.**

### Single Page Summary

The Welsh Government has adopted the Social Model of Disability which recognises that people with impairments are disabled by the barriers created by society, and that the guiding principles of policy should be:

- to remove these barriers and create an enabling society, and
- to promote the rights and full inclusion of disabled people.

These barriers include people's attitudes to disability, as well as physical and organisational barriers. This guidance is meant to help schools and local authorities identify and address the barriers which can prevent disabled children and young people having equal access to education, and ensure they have the same opportunities as their peers to develop and achieve their potential.

Improving access to education for disabled children means considering:

- the curriculum and how it is taught;
- the accessibility of school buildings and their surroundings, school activities including school trips and transport; and
- information and activities provided by schools and how easy it is for disabled pupils and/or their disabled parents to understand.

These are known as the 'three planning duties' and are a statutory requirement of Schedule 10 to 'the Act.

At least every three years, each local authority must prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility strategy which identifies how strategic actions will improve accessibility to education for disabled pupils against each of the three planning duties.

At least every three years, the responsible body for a school must prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility plan which identifies how specific improvements will improve accessibility to education against the three planning duties for existing and prospective disabled pupils.

In preparing accessibility strategies and plans, full and effective consultation must be undertaken to identify appropriate improvements. The consultation must normally ensure that the views of disabled pupils and their parents/carers and appropriate professionals are taken into account.

Reasonable adjustments to cater for future disabled pupils must be embedded in accessibility strategies and plans – there is a need to plan ahead and continuously improve irrespective of whether or not disabled pupils currently attend the schools concerned.

# ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

## 1. Introduction

This is a whole-School Accessibility Policy.

It confirms Myddelton's aim, under the Equality Act 2010, of giving fair access in education to disabled persons. The Policy is available to interested parties on the website.

'Disabled persons' includes children, young people and adults, as pupils, employees, governors, parents and carers and other members of the wider community who might use the School's premises and who may have a broad spectrum of impairments including:

- a. Medical conditions such as: cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, multiple sclerosis and mental health conditions,
- b. Mobility difficulties or hearing or sight impairment,
- c. People with learning difficulties,
- d. Those with mental health and well-being difficulties.

Separately but in addition: some members of our community and visitors may require special or protected dietary provisions. This needs to be drawn to the attention of the School at the earliest time. The School is 'a nut free' school and the Newsletter regularly remind us all of this.

## 2. Admissions to the School

The School's Admissions Policy confirms:

- We do not discriminate regarding admission.
- We welcome pupils with special educational needs providing our Staff can offer them the educational support they need and deserve to thrive in the Myddelton College educational environment.
- We welcome pupils who have physical disabilities provided they decide, following discussions, that our site can be made accessible to them.

Admission ultimately depends upon all prospective pupils exhibiting the potential to cope with mainstream education. This includes an extended National Curriculum in all parts of the College. Myddelton College 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 adult with a good prospect of a satisfying life.

We ask and advise parents of children who have special educational needs or physical disabilities, and the children / young people as well, to discuss their requirements with us so that we can endeavour to make adequate provision for him/her/them.

Where possible parents should provide a copy of an Educational Psychologist's report or a medical report to provide the detail and advice which will aid and support discussion. We will discuss fully with parents and the child / young person the adjustments that can reasonably be made should he/she/they become a pupil in the school.

## 3. Application of the Admissions Policy

In applying its Admissions' Policy, Myddelton depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if reasonably possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos and aims of the School.

The School applies these criteria to all its pupils and potential pupils' admissions and places, 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 make a full and detailed disclosure of any disabilities in respect of a prospective pupil at the time of application, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties, to allow a fair, honest and transparent assessment, and to inform any risk assessments which may be needed. Parents are responsible for declaring disabilities of any kind.

On the admission of a pupil with a disability, or in the case of a pupil already in the College found to have a disability, a letter will be sent from the College to the parents setting out:

the disability;

its effect on the pupil;

the measures and adjustments agreed with the parents, and to be implemented by the school, so as not to place the pupil at a substantial disadvantage.

The parents will be required to sign and return a duplicate of letter to indicate their acceptance.

Parents who do not disclose their child's disability openly and honestly may be asked to remove their child if reasonable adjustments cannot then be made. In assessing such a pupil or prospective pupil, the School may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards to be appropriate. The School will always be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

#### **4. Access to Myddelton College's Estate and Buildings**

One of the obvious problems which Myddelton has, in common with other such schools, is the lay-out, designs and heights of its buildings, access points, terraces and corridors with steps. Some buildings have several storeys and are without lifts.

In addition, the system of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid grounds of having all the facilities for that subject in one place, can cause significant problems. This typically requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, and often up steep stairs in buildings without lifts.

The boarding Houses and associated facilities pose similar problems. Even though Myddelton will work hard to risk assess and overcome impediments to access, it can be seen that a pupil with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these problems, or may be prohibited altogether from easy or free access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the School offers. These matters cannot be remedied safely and easily by reasonable adjustments because major alterations would be needed to the physical features of the School at what would be a prohibitive cost.

#### **5. Health and Safety Points**

- Pupils with certain disabilities will be at greater risk of accident or injury and boarding pupils may be particularly vulnerable at night.
- Myddelton College will undertake a specific risk assessment for all disabled pupils entering the school and will determine in each case, with the input of the young person and the parents, what particular actions or procedures may be necessary to avoid or reduce risk. Pupils may also need a 'buddy'.

It may be appropriate to install a non-standard fire alarm in some circumstances.

Reduced Curriculum - depending on individual circumstances, the full range of academic and non-academic activities may not safely or reasonably be available to pupils with disabilities. An assessment will be made as part of the admissions' process. Where reasonable and practicable, other options will be offered.

Participation - in sports, CCF, College clubs and other activities - risk assessments will be necessary for each pupil per sport/activity.

Assessment and Exams - where it is appropriate to make adjustments regarding assessment and exams, the College will take advice from the Examinations' Boards and will adopt the procedures of the Exam Boards for its internal examinations.

#### School Trips -

- Trips are already subject to scrutiny at the planning stage. Risk assessments will be appropriate for pupils with disabilities.
- It may be appropriate to invite parents to go on the trip or to have another adult 'buddy' present.
- Thought will be given to activities/venues which are more suitable for disabled pupils although choices made should not in any way disadvantage the majority of pupils.

#### School Database -

- Access to pupil information by the teaching staff is particularly important where pupils have disabilities or other health problems which make them vulnerable or can put them at risk in particular situations.
- The database enables information to be held which is relevant to the needs of pupils. The database incorporates information concerning medical/health issues; particular risks or concerns arising from a disability; and learning difficulties.

### **6. School's Legal Duties**

The School is aware of two sets of duties: the non-discrimination duties and the planning duties, under which it is unlawful:

- a. to treat a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably for a reason related to his/her/their disability than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification for so doing;
- b. to fail to make reasonable adjustments to admissions' arrangements and in relation to education and associated services to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled pupils, without justification for so doing.

In making such reasonable adjustments, schools do not have:

- a. to provide auxiliary aids (ie: a special piece of equipment such as a hearing loop) or services (i.e. arranging additional support such as a designated classroom assistant).
- b. to make physical alterations to buildings – such as the installation of lifts.

To determine which reasonable adjustments should be made, the school should identify what could possibly be done and then apply 'a reasonableness test' by taking the following factors into account:

- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards;
- the financial resources available;
- the cost of taking a particular step;
- the extent to which is practicable to do so;
- health and safety requirements;
- the interests of other pupils.

The issue of reasonable adjustments is obviously a vital area of the legislation and each case will depend on its own facts. The best means of illustrating the action which schools should consider are by way of examples, many of which are available in the Code of Practice for Schools drawn up by the Disability Rights Commission (a key document whose internet reference is: [www.drc-gb.org/drc/documents/schoolscop2.doc](http://www.drc-gb.org/drc/documents/schoolscop2.doc)).

However, Myddelton College stresses its resolve to support fair access to all its pupils and prospective pupils, and of course its staff and prospective staff who might be similarly affected, and its willingness to do all it reasonably can to support access for all where possible.

## **7. Policy Review**

Myddelton College has a duty to monitor actively its Accessibility Plan on a three-year cycle. To fulfil this, the School will identify pupils, parents and staff whose experiences will be of assistance:

- to increase the extent to which disabled pupils, including those with special educational needs, and staff can participate in the School's curriculum; this will include staff deployment, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training,
- to improve the provision to disabled pupils and staff of information which is already in writing for pupils and staff who are not disabled,
- to improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils and adults, to include visitors, are able to take advantage of the services, occasions and opportunities offered by the school,

(for example, easier access to buildings including steps, stairways, exterior surfaces and paving, building entrances and exits (including those for emergency use), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture).

(It also means the installation of physical aids to access education which includes ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for pupils with poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens.

## **8. Planning Duties**

To fulfil the School's planning duties, each SMT member and teachers/tutors/boarding staff should try to anticipate problems before they arise, to avoid placing disabled pupils, staff and adults at a substantial disadvantage when their cases come to be considered.

The School will consider:

- the training of willing staff to administer medicines to pupils in particular circumstances;
- the introduction of an equal opportunities policy covering disability;
- the amendment of admissions' forms/entrance applications to request details of any reasonable adjustments a pupil may require in relation to the entrance examination, open day or entry to the school;
- the creation of special early admissions' meetings with parents of disabled prospective pupils to discuss any special arrangements for exams;
- the inclusion of disability awareness within staff training programmes;
- the creation of a list of common disabilities, identifying in each case the range of potential adjustments required depending upon the severity of the disability.
- the allocation of a contingency budget for addressing accessibility issues on an annual basis and in response to conditions which may change within the year.

This three-year accessibility plan has been drawn up following discussions with four pupils currently in Myddelton College who have disabilities, their parents and staff who have helped to accommodate the provisions of current risk assessments.

**I = Immediate, intention to complete within a term**

**S = Soon, perhaps a term to a year**

**F = Future plan, requiring feasibility study and budget – intend within 3 years**

<p><b>The curriculum and how it is taught:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Senior leaders to inform school staff and pupils in assemblies about the nature of disability and inclusion. <b>I</b></li> <li>2. Personal social health education should have a single module at the start of each academic year on disability and inclusion. <b>I</b></li> <li>3. Purchase of class furniture (tables and chairs) of appropriate sizes for disabled pupils. <b>S</b></li> <li>4. Locate in North Wales specialist providers for hearing impairment equipment and sight improvement equipment for use by the school; research and purchase appropriate classroom teaching IT equipment and resources for use by teachers. <b>F</b></li> <li>5. Introduce inset for teachers about how to support effectively and successfully disabled students in classrooms without drawing inappropriate attention to pupils' disabilities. <b>I</b></li> <li>6. Introduce inset with teachers about how to differentiate teaching to support disabled students' needs - for example providing WebCam and recordings of verbal explanations and instructions for homework. <b>S</b></li> <li>7. Allow disabled students to reduce the total number of subjects studied, arrive minutes late for lesson and leave lessons early to avoid congested corridors. <b>S</b></li> <li>8. Ask teachers and their classes to move teaching to easily accessible classrooms when a disabled student is a member of a class. <b>I</b></li> <li>9. Provide daily voluntary catch up sessions, with a member of staff, after teaching day finishes. <b>I</b></li> <li>10. Formalise a buddy system for disabled pupils to help carry personal belongings and hold fire doors open when passing through the school. <b>I</b></li> <li>11. Provides specialist advice about teaching and supporting those with specific learning difficulties <b>S</b></li> <li>12. Provide a specially reserved additional space within the classroom corridor for those with disabilities to keep their personal possessions and to undertake private study. <b>F</b></li> <li>13. Create special circumstances for examinations and other assessments. <b>I</b></li> </ol>	
<p><b>The accessibility of school buildings and their surroundings, school activities including school trips and transport:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permanent ramps to allow access to: reception, school dining hall, the Great Hall, the sports hall and library. <b>F</b></li> <li>2. Convert school entrance toilet to disabled toilet, creation of a disabled toilet with changing facility in sports' hall, creation of boarding accommodation - with integral toilet and shower, on the ground floor of each boarding House for disabled boarders. <b>F</b></li> <li>3. Creation of concrete path to boarding Houses' front doors to allow easy wheelchair and disabled access. <b>F</b></li> <li>4. Redesign school entrance doors (2 to become 1) with push pad opening. <b>F</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>S</b></p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Improve or redevelop disabled access to the Prep School through Prep School playground.</li> <li>6. Increase the amount of reserved disabled car parking.</li> <li>7. Purchase a school minibus with physical disability provision.</li> <li>8. Improve access for disabled pupils into the servery of the dining hall, to include water distribution points. Reduce the height of a dining hall table to an appropriate height for disabled person.</li> <li>9. Review the fire escape routes and muster points to allow disabled pupils and buddies to leave the school premises safely and quickly.</li> </ol>	<p>S F F  S</p>
<p><b>Information and activities provided by schools and how easy it is for disabled pupils and/or their disabled parents to understand.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compile a new booklet for disabled students and their families which introduces the opportunities and options available in school which can be specially adapted with relative ease to allow disabled pupils to enjoy them</li> <li>2. Provide appropriate and adapted versions of school documents to allow those with disabilities to reading braille or receive recordings.</li> <li>3. Make timely special arrangements for disabled children and adults to attend and/or participate in school events easily by providing specialist information well in advance, with advice about how to receive the support required for arrival and departure, and full inclusion in any event.</li> <li>4. Provide a named person on the staff, with full contact details, to allow one-to-one exchange and question answering.</li> <li>5. Develop an appropriate format for writing informed and appropriately detailed risk assessments for disabled persons and their buddies/carers.</li> <li>6. Improve signage to publicise disability supports.</li> </ol>	<p>I  S  S  I  S  S</p>