



Accessibility Plan

The Walnuts School's governors and staff will have regard to the "Code of Practice for Schools" issued by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) concerning the DDA. The school will also follow the guidance issued by the DfES in 2006 entitled "Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings."

The Walnuts School will ensure that all staff and governors are aware of the implications of the DDA and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life.

Physical Environment: The main Walnuts School site is a purpose built, unique all age special school and children's home. Visitors comment on the peaceful, safe and caring learning environment created by a community of people who, through their different roles and responsibilities, create this positive, happy, learning atmosphere. The school has a number of features recommended for children and young people with ASD including opaque, pastel colours, withdrawal rooms, false ceilings and indirect, non-florescent lighting which throws light upwards to mimic natural light. The school is arranged on two levels with a lift to the first floor. Doors are wide to accommodate potential wheelchair users and disabled toilets are situated on the ground floor. The home is arranged on three levels with a lift to the first and second floor. Doorways are wide and disabled toilets/bathroom are available.

The Walnuts Lower School Department is situated in a building that was previously a mainstream first school. The Lower School Department is on one level with ramps leading to the main entrance to accommodate wheelchair users. Some modifications have been made to this building to try and replicate the ASD friendly environment of the main site. Each classroom has a withdrawal room, messy room and its own small outside play area as well as use of the larger playground and field; classrooms have been painted in calming colours. The building is currently shared with The Bridge Academy.

Access to the curriculum: Each class-team, led by the class teacher, provides a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum for the individual student and for the group. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) is taught in our two younger Groups - Pine and Cedar. In primary the National Curriculum (NC) is taught mainly through topics. The secondary department has a more community/skills based curriculum in order to prepare our young people for adult life.

Both the progress of the school and the progress of individual children within the school are monitored to ensure that we are helping all children achieve.

Children and young people at the school are also able to access the After School Club and Holiday Play Scheme.

Access to Information: Each student is a unique individual; however, the underlying difficulty for every Walnuts student lies in the area of communication. **It is our primary responsibility, therefore, to provide an environment where spoken language is clear and precise and, where appropriate, written communication, symbols and sometimes gestures are used to reinforce both expressive and receptive language. This takes place throughout the school in an atmosphere that is well organised, calm, and where everyone is clear about tasks and outcomes.**

Useful Resources and Websites

DfES (2006) - *Implementing the DDA in schools and early years settings*

Disability Rights Commission (2002) - *Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Part 4: Code of Practice for Schools*

Disability Rights Commission (2005) - *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales) {often referred to as the Code of Practice on the Disability Equality Duty}*

www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/childrenandfamilies/specialeducationalneeds

www.drc-gb.org/

www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/