



SOMERHILL

# **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN**

**Owner: Bursar**

**Reviewed: September 2023**

**Next review due: September 2024**



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## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Somerhill acknowledges its duty towards both pupils, staff, parents, Governors and members of the wider community who have a disability. Where pupils or prospective pupils are concerned, Somerhill acknowledges its non-discrimination and planning duty under the **Equality Act 2010 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years as updated in April 2015**.

1. Somerhill is organised as three sections. Somerhill Pre-Preparatory is a co-educational school for children aged 3-7, Derwent Lodge Preparatory is for girls aged 7-11, and Yardley Court Preparatory for boys aged 7-13.
2. The School asks all parents to complete the Registration Form and to disclose whether their child has a disability, special educational need or medical condition. The parents will then receive a request for further detailed information about their child if required.
3. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the schools may ask parents for any reports, assessments or advice from educational psychologists or medical experts as it deems appropriate.
4. From these discussions and reports, the school will undertake an audit in order to assess whether the obligation for the child to fully access the curriculum can be met. Considerations are likely to include, but are not limited to: Whether the adjustment will remove the substantial disadvantage; the cost of the proposed adjustment; the capacity of departments involved; the resources available internally or externally (such as health and education services); the practicability of making the adjustment; the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; Health and safety requirements and interests of other pupils who may be admitted to the school.
5. The school will have a consultation meeting with parents/guardians following this process to define the reasonable adjustments the school is committed to provide, discuss any additional services, and make arrangements for review meetings to monitor progress. At this stage, it may be that the school decides it cannot meet the needs of the prospective pupil.

The School will review annually their SEN and disability policies in the light of pupil admissions with specific reference to the admissions policy.

The School will assess any possible changes to the structure of the building in the light of pupil admissions although it is not obliged to carry out any alterations that require change to the fabric of the building as confirmed by the Equality Act 2010.

Somerhill will undertake a fire safety risk assessment on all new and significantly altered buildings and revisit risk assessments every three years or earlier depending on current legal regulation. Accordingly, Somerhill will update the Schools' fire evacuation plan.



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Somerhill will conform to building regulations at the time of all newly constructed buildings.

## **Layout and Facilities**

The School is based in a Grade 1 Jacobean Mansion set in 160 acres of Grade II listed parkland which are situated in the “green belt”. As a result both buildings and grounds are subject to the most rigorous assessment for any requests for planning permission. The structure, age and listing of the Mansion dictate that it is not possible to provide lift access to the upper floors. There are two distinct areas to the main building which are the Mansion (1611) and the Victorian extension (1874). In addition there are three “new-build” buildings which are the Bickmore Hall (2002) which is a multi-purpose building mainly used for sport, the Dining Hall/Swimming Pool complex (2009), and The Music Building(2015).

## **Somerhill Pre- Preparatory (SPP)**

### **The Pre-School and Reception**

The Pre-School is based on the ground floor around the Stable Courtyard. There are toilets adjacent to the SPP4 classroom, a set of toilets between SPP5 and SPP6 classroom, and there are toilets in the SPP8 classroom. In addition there are pupil toilets in the courtyard and staff toilets next to the SPP resources/SEN room.

### **Year One and Year Two**

These classes are based in The Lodge, which have access to the toilets in the Stable Courtyard, SPP 13, 14, 15 and 16 and the first 3 Grainstore classrooms which have access to the toilets on the first and second floors where these classrooms are situated.

## **Prep Sections**

The prep sections across all year groups inhabit the remaining floors of the Mansion, for the majority of their teaching. There is an even split of both male and female toilets including some unisex toilets at the bottom of the “Julian Staircase”.

## **Disabled toilets**

There are disabled facilities in the Mansion, the Bickmore Hall, the Dining Hall, the Swimming Pool and the Music Building.

## **Specialist Teaching Areas**

The Science Laboratories, which were refurbished and an extra laboratory added in 2014, are situated at lower ground floor level in the Victorian extension to the Mansion. The ICT suite, Art and D.T. rooms are based on the second floor of the Mansion. Music is taught in the Music Building which was completed in 2015.

## **Dining Areas**

The whole school shares the same dining facilities which are based in the Dining Hall within the Walled Garden. Toilet facilities for boys, girls, pre-prep children and a disabled toilet are on the same level as the Dining Hall.



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## **Swimming Pool**

The swimming pool is indoor within the Walled Garden and is accessible to all pupils. Toilets, and a disabled toilet/changing room, are located in the swimming pool changing room areas on the lower ground floor.

## **The Bickmore Hall**

This is a multi-purpose hall, used mainly for sport, which was completed in May 2002. There is lift access from the entrance to the Hall itself and there are disabled toilet facilities available.

## **Accessibility Plan**

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum
- Equal Opportunities
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs (Learning Support)
- Behaviour and Discipline
- School Development/Strategic Plans

## **Improving Access to the Physical Environment**

Since 2002 we have ensured access to new school buildings through regulatory compliance in their construction. In addition, we are conscious of the need to review and improve accessibility to all of our teaching and non-teaching areas within the constraints of the restrictions of a Grade I listed building and its curtilage.

The school will continue to take account of the needs of pupils, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises. Particular attention will be given to improving access, acoustic and lighting schemes, and facilities and fittings.



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## Action Plan:

Location	Problem	Possible Action	Comments/Plan
All Buildings	Allocate disabled car parking space adjacent to the Mansion, Dining Hall/Swimming Pool Building and Bickmore Hall	Provide spaces in car parks close to individual buildings	<b>Immediate Action</b> – ensure that disabled visitors to school events have allocated parking spaces. If parent or guardian of a pupil needs a disabled parking space, then allocate a space close to the building
Mansion	Wheelchair access not ideal	Install new ramps. This will still only allow limited access due to the Mansion being on numerous levels. No lifts are able to be installed due to historical significance and Grade I listing of the Mansion	<b>Immediate Action</b> - use existing ramp. <b>Medium term action</b> - replace existing ramp with a purpose-built ramp for access to Mansion <b>Long term action</b> – ensure all entrances have appropriate purpose-built ramps
General Access (pathways)	Maintenance of existing pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure maintenance program in place</li> <li>• Identify paths for re-surfacing</li> </ul>	<b>Immediate Action</b> – nil <b>Medium term action</b> – budget plan to include improvements to paths in consideration of wheelchair use
General Access (signage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of existingsignage</li> <li>• Identification of new signage required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure maintenance program in place for both external and internal signage</li> <li>• Review effectiveness of signage and possible location of new signage to improve access and safety</li> </ul>	New signage replacement project completed in 2018 and revised in 2021 following the rebranding  <b>Ongoing</b> - continue with program for maintenance and identification of new signage



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School Trip Locations	Venues suitable for school trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure vehicular and pedestrian access is appropriate</li><li>• Ensure venues conform to Equality Act 2010 provisions</li></ul>	<b>On-going</b>
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## **Improving the Curriculum Access**

The school makes itself aware of the services available through its LA for converting written information into alternative formats.

### Target/Completed Tasks

- At the beginning of the academic year all staff will be advised of the particular needs of any new and existing children which will affect curriculum access.
- Continue to ensure that SEN delivery forms an integral part of curriculum delivery as required.
- Research potential provision for delivery of information in large print, symbols, on audio tape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information.
- Continue to ensure that information is presented to pupils in ways which are user-friendly for those with disabilities, e.g., by reading aloud, overhead projections (including those on interactive whiteboards), describing diagrams, and using ICT to produce written information in written formats.
- Continue to ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities as needs arise.