

Local Procedure/Protocol		
School/Home Name:	Westmorland School	
Local Procedure/Protocol Title:	Accessibility Policy and Plan	
Linked to Group Policy Title & Code:	OPSP01	
Date Reviewed:	September 2024	
Next Update Due:	September 2027	
Procedure/Protocol Lead (SCHOOL): Sue Asher – Head Teacher		
Procedure/Protocol Sponsor (GROUP):	Head of Health & Safety	

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE (ESG) STATEMENT

Witherslack Group is committed to responsible business practices in the areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, Governance, Ethics & Compliance. An ESG impact assessment has been completed on this procedure/protocol to ensure it can be implemented successfully without adverse implications on our Group goals.

To ensure that this procedure/protocol is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, please email the named policy lead.

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1. STATEMENT

1.1 This Policy outlines how Westmorland School intends to implement the Equalities Act (2010) and specifically comply with the Disability Equality Duty in its setting.

The Person with responsibility for this policy: Sue Asher – Head Teacher

Person with responsibility for monitoring the application of this policy: Head of Group Health and Safety

2. MAIN ELEMENTS

- 2.1 The law on Disability Discrimination is different from the rest of the Equalities Act. The rest of the Act requires all children to be treated equally. In relation to disability, schools may, and often must, treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils in order to put them on a level footing by making reasonable adjustments.
 - a) To provide disabled children with equal opportunities which may require more favourable treatment.
 - b) To make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage.
 - c) To increase access to education for children with disabilities.
 - d) To comply with the Disability Equality Duty.

3. WHAT THE ESTABLISHMENT WILL DO

3.1

- a) We have an inclusive vision for Westmorland School, clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all.
- b) Have in place a DDA Plan/Accessibility Plan and ensure that this is understood and accepted by staff, parents and children **see Appendix 1**.
- c) Foster a sensitive approach that protects the dignity of children with disabilities particularly, but not only, in relation to meeting medical and personal care needs.
- d) Ensure that all staff are engaged in, and have knowledge of the process.
- e) Have strong leadership that sets out clear direction, promotes positive outcomes for children with disabilities, deploys the resources of Westmorland School to support staff in identifying and removing barriers, keeps progress under review and enables Westmorland School to be more effective in making reasonable adjustment.

4. REFERENCES

4.1 <u>Disability Discrimination Act 2005</u>

The Equality Act 2010

The Equalities Act 2010 and Schools - DfE Advice May 2014

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Children and Families Act 2014 SEND Code of Practice 2015

5. ASSOCIATED FORMS

None

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1

Westmorland School Disability Action Plan

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Disability Discrimination (Accessibility) Policy

(Helping people to enjoy and achieve)

In response to:

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.
The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 applied to education sector 2002.
Equality Act 2010

Definition of Disability

The law states that a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Unfortunately, this definition can sometimes pose more questions that it gives answers. By way of clarification, "substantial" means neither minor nor trivial, and "long term" is at least 12 months. "Ability to carry out normal day to day activities" constitutes a wide variety of functions, from the use of physical coordination to seeing, speaking and having manual dexterity. In many cases, the decision as to whether a person is disabled or not will be straightforward. However, it is important the above definition is always used.

Obligation for Westmorland School

There are two types of obligation. First Westmorland School will be under an obligation to make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure that the disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage as compared to non-disabled pupils. Reasonableness is one of the hardest legal concepts to define, as its application will vary in every individual case. As regards whether or not an adjustment is reasonable, a school can consider:

- What improvement will the adjustment produce how much will the adjustment aid a disabled child?
- # How easy is it to make the adjustment how long will it take and what are the consequences?
- What financial costs will be incurred this could be compared to the total funds available to the schools.
- How much disruption will there be in making the adjustment will it affect others in a negative way?
- What resources are available does the school have specific funding for the adjustment, for instance?

Secondly, in addition to making reasonable adjustments, the school must ensure no disabled pupil is treated less favourably than those who are not disabled unless that treatment can be justified. Less favourable treatment would depend upon the facts of any given case. However, if the school treats the disabled pupil less favourably than another pupil, it does not automatically mean that they have been discriminated against. What is important is that the "less favourable treatment" must be not be on the grounds of the disability. If it is, a school may have breached the requirements of the law unless that treatment can be justified. A case for justification can be made out by reference to a range of circumstances, including health and safety concerns, a need for substantial extra costs for protecting the rights and freedoms of others.

What areas of school life do the disability discrimination obligations cover?

The law covers all activities and facilities provided to pupils. This includes the provision of teaching, examinations, learning resources, catering facilities, access to buildings and leisure facilities. It is also important to note that it covers both admission and exclusion of pupils, not merely those pupils who are currently on the school roll – such is the pervasive influence of the legislation.

Westmorland School Response:

Westmorland School supports inclusion and believes that:

- Every human being has an entitlement to personal, social and intellectual development, and must be given an opportunity to achieve his/her potential in learning.
- Every human being is unique in terms of characteristics, interests, abilities, motivation and learning needs.
- Educational systems should be designed to take into account these wide diversities.
- Those with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities should have access to high quality and appropriate education.

Pupils at the school are equally valued and present a rich and diverse range of strengths and needs which is reflected in our aims and the school vision. Pupils at the school are entitled to receive, with a suitable peer group, a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, in the least restrictive environment we can provide. The curriculum and education of the pupils aims to remove barriers to learning and has a focus on outcomes which enable individual progress. A range of flexible responses are available to meet such needs and to accommodate the diversity of the pupils' needs. All children and their parents are entitled to be treated with respect and are actively encouraged to make their views known at regular intervals so that they can be taken into account. All arrangements are made to protect and enhance the dignity of those involved.

Co-ordination

Links are made between the different SEN and disability duties and Employment and Goods and Services as shown through curriculum plans, the School Improvement Plan, the Equal Opportunities Policy, Professional Development plans, Admissions and Exclusion procedures, Health and Safety, Access Plans and other related policies in school.

The school promotes accessibility to a variety of extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum. All our SEN pupils have detailed IEPs and targets which address these aspects.

The SIP details improvements to ensure compliance with the DDA and clear priorities are set and allocated resources and funding (see current SIP). Lead responsibility is allocated and timescales and outcomes are specified. Improvements cover the physical environment, increased access to curriculum developments and have consideration for the needs of the pupils and staff.

WESTMORLAND SCHOOL ACCESS STATEMENT

Description and Purpose

Westmorland School is a very successful day school for up to 56 pupils with Autism and emotional, social and behavioral difficulties in the 5-11 yr age range, some of whom have associated learning difficulties. Following our requested material change we are due to expand onto a second campus 'Wood Campus', which will then extend our age range from 5-16 years and take our pupil number up to 80.

Westmorland School is registered with the DfE to provide for children with Autistic Spectrum, emotional and behavioural difficulties. As an Independent fee paying school we design our delivery to meet the educational needs of our registration. All our pupils are statemented and accepted into the school following a strict assessment and admission process involving:

- Referral from LA to be assessed against admission criteria.
- An interview for assessment by senior staff to assess individual needs and the school's ability to meet those needs.
- Post interview review during which the decision is taken whether to offer a place.
- Post admission review, held after 12 weeks, to assess the school's ability it meet the pupils individual needs and to confirm the placement.

Westmorland School, by nature of its clientele, is a robust a volatile environment. Pupils do from time to time require physical management by staff to avoid the pupil causing injury to themselves and others, since this makes the school a high risk environment it is unsuitable on health and safety grounds for pupils who have significant disabilities all the LAs recognize this limitation and pupils with significant physical disabilities are not referred to the school as a result due to the vulnerability and volatility of pupils as outlined above. Westmorland School has to have a rigorous assessment process for teaching, care and Support Staff recruitment, all teaching and care staff who are in constant contact with pupils are required to undertake an externally accredited course of behaviour management part of which includes physical restraint.

To comply with this staff must by physically able. This fact alone means that none of the staff are or could be physically disabled. Whilst support staff are not required to meet the performance criteria above, due to the high risk environment and contact with pupils they must be capable of avoiding harm to themselves from incidents and capable of quickly accessing assistance from other staff to resolve incidents should they occur in their presence.

Since the publication of the DDA in 1995 the school has addressed the likelihood of persons with significant disabilities visiting or using the premises; the table on the following page sets out this information.

Where indicated Nil, the school will not have disabled people in these categories on the premises due to the information detailed above.

Likelihood of persons with significant disabilities visiting or using the premises:

	Significant physical disabilities	Possible disability through injury	Frequency (from 2016)	Location requiring access
Pupils	0	0	0	
Teachers	0	1	Once	Moved classroom downstairs
Pastoral Staff	0	0	0	
Support Staff	0	0	0	
Tradesmen	0	0	0	
Inspectors	0	0	0	
Visitors / Parents	1	0	Twice	Ground Floor Hall
Visitors / LAs, Children's Services	2	0	Twice	Ground Floor Hall

Westmorland School has determined that it is able to meet the requirements of visitors with disabilities by ensuring access to the following accommodation:

Head Teacher's office Wood and Moorland Campus sites
Conference room Wood and Moorland Campus sites
Vocational classrooms once completed on Wood campus
Animal assisted learning areas on Wood campus
Downstairs Classrooms on Wood and Moorland Campus sites
Disabled toilet
Bears Hall

Teaching accommodations are located on both sites, these are only accessed by pupils and members of staff who due to recruitment criteria who do not have significant physical disabilities. School inspectors who also need to access these areas are unlikely to have such disabilities in view of their LA's referral policy.

It is considered unreasonable to make modifications to this accommodation to meet the level of risk associated with the possibility of such an occurrence, supported by the fact that during the past three years the school has not been visited by any inspectors with disabilities.

Due to the requirements of Safeguarding Policy & Practice, it is policy for all schools within the Witherslack Group to require all visitors to announce their arrival at reception and where appropriate to be accompanied at all times by a member of staff when on the school premises.

Staff or pupils who incur a significant injury remain off site due to health and safety risks.

Westmorland School – Disability Action Plan 2024-2027

1. Policy Strategy and Procedures

Westmorland School recognises its obligations to ensure fair treatment for children with disabilities and endeavours to ensure that all policies are inclusive of children with disabilities.

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved and Evidence	Action	Frequency
1.1 Westmorland School Policies are inclusive of children who have a disability for both Wood and Moorland Campus areas	Achieved School policies are inclusive in regard to DDA.	School Management Be aware of disability when reviewing policies.	On-going
Admissions Policy	Achieved As above	Implementation and review	Annual – due regard at each admission
Assessment Policy	Achieved As above – clear procedures in place for exam concessions	Implementation and review	Annual
Disclosure	Achieved See Safeguarding Audit by Lincolnshire	Implementation and review	Annual

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved and Evidence	Action	Frequency
1.2 Proposals in the school plan make reference to disability	Achieved see Group Disability Discrimination Policy and Inclusions Policy and Access Statement (DDA)		Annual
1.3 Disability issues are a standing item on the agenda of management team responsible for equality and diversity.	Achieved Discussed and reviewed at each meeting	Team will ensure that disability issues are raised when appropriate at departmental meetings and will arrange for departmental input into the annual School review	Annual

2. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

General good practice in teaching and assessment will, in the most part, ensure that children with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved and Evidence	Action	Frequency
2.1 Teaching Staff are aware of inclusive teaching strategies on both Campus areas.	Achieved Awareness of disability issues and inclusive teaching is part of lesson observation and training of teaching process.	Ensure it forms part of lesson observation and staff training schedule	Annual
2.2 Teaching staff act on recommendations from Referral Forms	Achieved Pen pictures disseminated and discussed. SSEN available to all staff	Ongoing ICEPs every 12 weeks shared with pupil and carers	Ongoing

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved and Evidence	Action	Frequency
2.3 Arrangements to ensure accessibility are in place with work placement providers	Achieved Work placements involve discussion with individual member of staff and young person with employer to ensure full understanding of needs of YP and demands of the workplace	Continued good relationships kept with employers	Ongoing
2.4 Fieldwork, Forest school, Land based studies, Animal assisted learning and fieldwork, including Duke of Edinburgh award courses are all designed to be accessible for all YP	Achieved Camps, Curriculum and Leisure trips all have current Risk Assessments and considered with pupil's own RA.	Departments to ensure good practice remains in place.	Each trip organised
2.5 Staff are aware of ways to make reasonable adjustments to assessment without compromising academic standards	Achieved TAs and Teachers clear in strategies for individual pupil's targets of how to access help.	Involvement of Ed Psych/ SALT/ SENCO to ensure appropriate support and exam concessions in place	As necessary
2.6 Marking Criteria are clear and relevant to the core course requirements	Achieved Marking criteria are available for scrutiny.	Continue regular inspection of work of pupils and the marking and feedback given	Each term
2.7 Pupils' sensory needs are carefully considered.	Ongoing use of ear defenders in learning environments. Soundproofing panels in classrooms, and new windows in place	Continue to assess individuals' sensory needs on admission. And assess whole school areas that are too noisy for learning	Each Term

3. Information Flow

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved and Evidence	Action	Frequency
3.1 Staff aware of action to take if YP discloses a disability	Achieved Clear guidance on disclosure and staff training and clear procedures of support and communication. All diagnosed disabilities are discussed at interview to ensure needs can be met.	Ensure all updated/ relevant information is passed on to appropriate staff	As required
3.2 staff aware of what to do if YP asks for confidentiality to be preserved.	Achieved All staff undergo Safeguarding Training and this is part of all staff's induction to the school.	Regular updates of Safeguarding training.	Annual
3.3 Mechanisms in place to gather information about the YP's perspective	Achieved Pupil survey conducted annually. Anti- bullying Forum. Pupil Voice. Bullying survey. Parental survey. Stakeholder survey.	All surveys analysed and report disseminated to SLT and action plan written and followed.	Annually

4. Staff awareness / Information for staff

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved	Action	Frequency
4.1 Mentor introduces themselves to new staff and gives them relevant disability information.	Achieved Part of induction training. Mentor to ensure all new staff are informed on disability procedures within the school	Complete induction process with all new staff	As required

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved	Action	Frequency
4.2 School staff handbook publicise disability support	Achieved Addressed in handbook	School CPD person to review & update as necessary.	Annual
4.3 Information about disability is available on the school web site	Partially Achieved All SEN 'labels' mentioned but not the restrictions we have regarding the site and mobility in some areas due to the listed building regulations. However, this would be discussed with individuals at the time of referral as it would be dealt with on an individual need's basis.	To discuss with SLT/Group about increasing information on website	Ongoing
4.4 Staff attend relevant disability related courses / meetings.	Achieved Part of CPD record and all training needs part of all staff's PM targets	CPD Officer and line managers	Ongoing
4.5 Disability sessions within the school at least every 3 years	Achieved Part of CPD record and all training needs part of all staff's PM targets	Part of INSET programme	3 years
4.6 Staff aware of their role in conducting assessments to determine reasonable adjustments	Achieved Baseline assessments Specialist assessment CELF/WIAT/ WISK/MALT/ WORD Independent living skills audit	At entry of new pupil and during induction period and ongoing	Ongoing

5. Admissions

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
5.1 Managers are aware of Admissions Policy for children who have a disability	Achieved Involved in admissions process and procedures	Regular review and discussion	Referrals meeting weekly
5.2 Admissions administrators are aware of disability legislation and how it relates to school	Achieved All staff on reading policy list and all involved in August INSET and regular updates.	Take part in INSET CPD Officer and line managers	Annual

6. Information for Young People (YP)

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
6.1 Posters displayed on key notice boards	Achieved Notice boards regularly updated and reviewed	Ensure timetables and other vital information are accessible and in appropriate format	Annual (Sept)
6.2 SEN booklets are available at key locations	Partially Achieved Booklets available in staff workrooms and information on network. Children have access to information through websites Information displayed in house areas and adults available for consultation	Clarify areas of information required	Ongoing

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
6.3 Handbooks have disability related information	Partially achieved Pupil handbooks – implicit rather than stated categorically	Update handbook as appropriate.	Annual
6.4 School website has disability related information.	Achieved	Update school pages as necessary.	Annual

7. Opportunities for Young people to Disclose

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
7.1 Opportunities for children and prospective children to disclose.	Achieved See outcomes from Safeguarding Audits	Ensure regular review of procedures referred to in audit	Ongoing

8. Complaints Procedure

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
8.1 easily accessible (i.e. on web, in, or referenced in, children's handbook)	Achieved Clear reference to complaints procedure – part of surveys to children and stakeholders	Update handbooks and website as necessary. Follow up any questions raised on surveys	Annual

9. Physical Environment – facilities and equipment.

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency
9.1 Web site is accessible	Partially Achieved. Website is easy to find. The website does not offer browser alternatives for visually impaired users, or a basic version of the website.	Investigate possibility of making website universally accessible with Group	As appropriate
9.2 Key documents are available in alternative format on request	Partially achieved Key documents are generally available in MSWord and can therefore be produced in alternative format on request.	Documents can be read to others. Publications to clearly display information on how to obtain alternative formats	As necessary
9.3 All materials follow clear print guidelines	Achieved Staffs to ensure all documents and handbooks conform to the Clear Print Guidelines.	Admin and IT staff to support	As appropriate
9.4 During refit / redecoration consider the needs of disabled children	Achieved Disability access considered during all refurbishments however due to nature of building adjustments to fabric of building only made on ground floor which is accessible to physically disabled visitors. Needs of children taken into account when choosing colour schemes via Therapy Team	Disability access issues always considered when refurbishments planned	As appropriate
9.5 Individual orientation to labs, school IT labs, libraries etc available if necessary.	Achieved The special needs of young people are considered in all areas of the school	Children who require accompanying to areas of school are assigned a designated member of staff	Annual
9.6 Arrangements in place for YP requiring	Achieved	School Safety Officer –to arrange as necessary in	Each term

Activity	Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not-Achieved	Action	Frequency	
emergency evacuation – in buildings, on placements, study abroad and field trips	Regular fire practices take place at least every half term.	consultation with Senior Management.		
9.7 Alternative arrangements made if location of an activity is not accessible	Achieved All activities are accessible to all pupils	The needs of all children are taken into account when activities are planned, if necessary alternative activities are planned	When necessary.	
9.8 Arrangements in place to support visual impairments around school site	Achieved: Ongoing addition of yellow strips to steps, raised surfaces and walkways. Some just visual and others with additional grip/change in texture.	Continue to assess areas that need this adding and maintain marked areas.	ongoing	

1) Please identify any school plans and projects with implications for children who have a disability.

Moorland campus— New POD and sensory garden to have wheelchair access added, dining room will be redesigned for pupils with sensory needs.

Wood Campus – Wheelchair accessibility to made available to the Forest school and areas for Horticulture

2) Identify any barriers to improving provision:

Moor Campus - Main staircases which gives access to Upper classrooms, therapy room and Staff Room is very problematic for access. A Lift is impractical due to the old design of the building. Also many room doors are not wide enough and would need significant structural alteration to achieve this if at all possible as it's an old Victorian building.

Wood Campus- Main building Upstairs classrooms, Library area and IT suite and Staff room are very problematic for access. A lift would have been impractical to add due to the size of the building but it was also felt that there were enough alternative accessible learning areas that could be accessed.

3) Identify other current issues not identified by the checklist:

None

4) Do you have any case studies which provide lessons for the future or examples of good practice in your School that you would like to share with other schools?

BEARS building was designed to allow disability access on Moor campus and the vast majority of Wood campus areas are already accessible by design.

Westmorland School

DISABILITY ACCESS PLAN

Existing Facilities	Wheelchair Access	<u>Ambulant</u>	Blind or Partially Sighted	Deaf or hard of hearing	<u>Timescale</u>
Parking space at front of Moorland Campus highlighted and clear signage erected. Parking space at front of Wood Campus allocated, highlighted and clear signage erected. Access ramp into school from parking space. Access to POD (Wood campus) for sensory integration sessions. Access to POD (Wood campus) for STEM learning. Parking space Intercom system connected to office.		Handrails does not need to be fitted to side of ramp as incline is very minimal	Ongoing work to maintain yellow strips for changes in levels or raised walkways or obstructions		Ongoing Easter 2025 Easter 2025
Core Area Conference room, Head teacher's room and classrooms, on same level and accessible. Door widths in BEARS (Wood Campus) and Wood Campus areas meet requirements for access. Disabled toilet in BEARS upgraded	Bears building has full wheelchair access CATS building, only access through main door and into dining area. Other areas not accessible due to		Lighting in CATS changed to LED giving good light with low glare.	 Induction Loop system to be investigated in Head Teachers Office/Conference room via Group Property Summer 2025 Summer 2026 	Lighting Completed Summer 2020 Induction Loop to be fitted if agreed and approved

Door widths in Moor campus	door and stairway			
reception allow access and	restriction			
doors into hall allow access				
All visitors accompanied once				
on site, therefore can be				
directed to accessible areas				
Dining areas on both Campus				
sites to meet YP's sensory			 Easter 2025 	
needs.				
 Visitors signed in to accessible 				
room by person accompanying				
them				
Lift to rear of BEARS updated				
or removed			• Easter 2026	
Reception and visitors room			 Induction loop system 	Under discussion
			in reception	
Door width meets				
requirements for access for				
both campus sites.				