

# TORMEAD

## **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

*This whole school policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage*

### **Introduction**

Tormead recognises its duties to actively eliminate discrimination against pupils with a disability by implementing strategies which will increase accessibility to the school's premises and education. Tormead welcomes girls with disabilities and specific learning difficulties and is committed to the continuing development of an 'enabling' environment and a non-discriminatory culture within the school community.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person with a disability as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. For the purpose of our accessibility plan, we recognise that it should refer not only to those with physical disabilities but could also include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities which meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

Our accessibility plan has been developed to improve access for current and future pupils with a disability to the education we provide. Access to the whole curriculum and written information, as well as physical access to our education and associated services, are addressed in the plan. We recognise our duty to provide auxiliary aids and services as part of the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Through this accessibility plan, the school seeks to:

- Care for all in our community, including pupils, staff and visitors with a disability
- Promote equality for both prospective pupils with a disability (including those with special educational needs)
- Promote more positive attitudes towards people with a disability in everyday life
- Continuously improve our access
- Implement reasonable alternative means of access should any of our current arrangements become less accessible

Staff needs are assessed prior to appointment in so far as equality legislation permits and pupils' needs prior to admission; visitors are offered help as required.

The plan is reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body, to include monitoring of progress on achieving action plan objectives. This policy is available to all members of staff to review and comment on.

The School's Senior Leadership Group (SLG) is responsible for the development of the School's plans in this area. Its responsibilities include:

- reviewing the School's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect girls and prospective girls who are disabled;
- making recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education in its many aspects to girls or prospective girls with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future;
- preparing the School's Accessibility Policy;
- preparing the School's Accessibility Plan;
- Reviewing its plans and policies as necessary
- 

The following areas have been considered in detail by the SLG with the results set out below:

### **Admissions**

Parents of all prospective girls are encouraged to give full details of the nature and effect of any disability affecting their daughter in order to enable the School to consider any adjustments it might need to make.

In assessing any girl or prospective girl the School may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the School will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. Some adjustments can and will be made, such as seating a girl with a known hearing or visual impairment at the front of the class during the entrance examinations.

Given the academically selective nature of the School, no adjustment will be made to the minimum overall academic standard required of all girls, but individual reports on SEND will be taken into account when assessing performance in the examinations.

## **Physical Layout of the School**

### Senior School

From September 2015, the completion of the redevelopment of the Senior School site means that to a great extent the buildings and grounds are physically accessible to disabled pupils. There are a small number of areas that are not fully compliant and these are addressed in the accessibility plan.

### Junior School

SLG has considered the Junior School and has identified the following problems:

- The Junior School has (in common with many other schools) a layout which covers a large area and consists of three separate buildings (one of which has three storeys). Whilst one building, Shackleton House, does have a lift the other two do not. Whilst generally in the Junior School pupils are based in their form group classroom, they do also need to access specialist rooms (such as Science, IT) to be able to take part in the breadth of education available. This means that they have to access those buildings that do not have lifts. It is not hard to conclude that any girl with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the Junior School offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to physical features of the School at prohibitive cost and subject to the granting of planning permission. It is the school's long-term aim to ensure that, like the Senior School, the Junior School is physically accessible for pupils with a disability.
- The School allocates funds annually towards its goal of improving accessibility for all. Over the years, the school has carried out considerable works that have significantly increased the school's accessibility and it will continue to work towards having a fully accessible school.

## **Curriculum and Extra-curricular Activities**

SLG has considered:

- The problems of physical access caused by the fixed classroom system.
- The difficulties of "access" to the education generally for specified types of disability: e.g. sight- or hearing-impaired, girls with dyslexia, etc. Girls with particular disabilities e.g. Marfan Syndrome, Diabetes or Cystic Fibrosis may not be able to access some of the physically challenging aspects of the curriculum such as PE and Games, or some extra-curricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. SLG considers it appropriate to provide for flexibility in the curriculum, to provide those girls affected with the ability (subject to their parents' consent) to 'opt out' of certain activities and lessons for which they would be physically unsuited.

## **Welfare**

SLG has considered:

- The difficulties which might arise for specified types of disability such as bullying, non-integration, physical and mental welfare and health and safety.
- It is considered that the caring and inclusive ethos and values of the school, combined with

the current strong system of pastoral support (e.g. Academic and Peer Mentors, Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Assistant Head – Wellbeing, School Health Care Lead, Counsellor etc.) will mitigate against such difficulties. This will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

**Awareness and Observance of the Policy**

Tormead is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective. In addition to the provision of specialist support for girls with disabilities and specific learning difficulties, it is committed to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to discuss their current work practices in the light of SEND requirements.

**Date of Last Review:** 16 March 2020

**By Resolution of the Governing Body:**

MRS R HARRIS  
Chair of Governors

MRS C FOORD  
Headmistress

7 April 2020



**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**  
**Improving the physical environment (2020-2023)**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Short Term</b>	An annual assessment will be carried out of any measures that might be taken to improve disabled access to the site to assist the prioritisation of expenditure in its development and maintenance plan	SLG	Annually	Processes and procedures are in accordance with regulatory requirements
	Ensure that all disabled people can be safely evacuated in the event of fire, including through the uses of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans	Bursar / Estates & Facilities Manager	Ongoing	
	Minibuses were replaced April 2019 and one minibus has been modified for disabled access was added	Bursar / Estates & Facilities Manager	Complete	
	Planning approval received for change of use of 15 Hillier. Disabled access has been considered in the development of the plans	HM / Bursar / Estates & Facilities Manager	Ongoing – within next 36 months	
<b>Medium Term</b>	Junior School - interim improvements pending long term redevelopment	HM / Bursar	3 years	
<b>Long Term</b>	Junior School - review of building requirements continuing.	HM / Bursar	Ongoing (5 yr plan)	Long term plan and funding
	Ensure that all new buildings comply with relevant equality legislation	HM / Bursar	As required	

**Increase the extent to which girls with a disability can participate in school curriculum (2020-2023)**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Short Term</b>	<p>Annually check that the needs of new and existing girls are met and ensure that staff involved with the girls have information of their needs</p> <p>Ensure that School Healthcare Lead is aware of any special needs and receives training as needed,</p> <p>Have meetings with parents and girls as needed to ensure all needs are supported as reasonable and practicable</p> <p>Liaise with outside Health and Support agencies as needed and ensure that access to specialist help is available where reasonable and practicable</p> <p>Ensure inclusivity on all visits and extra-curricular activities whenever reasonable and practicable</p> <p>Consider the implications of delivering the curriculum to those with specific disabilities</p> <p>Be aware that media files, large print or Braille documents may be required to respond to need</p> <p>Development of learning through Virtual Learning environment (Google Drive) and mobile device use</p>	<p>SLG/MHOB/SHL/ HOY</p> <p>SHL/ HoY</p> <p>HoY/ SHL</p> <p>HoY and Visit leader</p> <p>SLG/HoLS</p> <p>SLG/IT dept</p> <p>SLG/IT/HoLS</p> <p>SLG</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
<b>Medium Term</b>	<p>Continue development of the provision and use of digital mobile technology to aid learning which facilities communication with girls with disabilities providing clear images, large text, high quality audio/visual material</p>	<p>SLG/IT dept</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<b>Long Term</b>				

### Improve the delivery of information to girls with a disability (2020-2023)

	Task	Lead	Time Frame	Comment
<b>Short Term</b>	Arrange for documents including the prospectus to be provided to prospective parents of girls who have a disability in forms that meet that need, if so requested and it is reasonable to do so. E.g. large font or on audiotape for visual impairment. To be actioned within 10 days if requested.	SLG/ MHOB/ MOBR	Ongoing	
	Ensure that staff provide relevant School documents for girls who have a disability in forms that meet that need, if so requested and it is reasonable to do so. E.g. large font or on audiotape for visual impairment	All staff	Ongoing	
	Provision of INSET for staff in order to support girls with Special Learning Needs or Disabilities as appropriate and necessary	SLG	Ongoing	
	Be prepared to translate documents into Braille should need arise	SLG	Ongoing	
<b>Medium Term</b>	Review of signage to ensure it meets the needs of current staff and girls	Estates & Facilities Manager	Ongoing	
	Use ipads and apps to improve communication with girls with Special Learning Needs or Disabilities	SLH/ IT dept	Ongoing	
<b>Long Term</b>				

