



Elstree School

*Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years
Foundation Stage*

Accessibility Policy

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Person responsible for Policy: Bursar

Responsible Governor: Rick Waller

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1. Introduction

Elstree School, incorporating our pre-preparatory department, aims to provide an education that will prepare the students, in all aspects, for their move to their selected senior or other school. Admission to the School is detailed in the Admissions Policy.

Elstree School wishes to be reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop all its pupils to the best of their potential, in line with the standards achieved by pupils' contemporaries, so that each pupil may have a complete and full school career and feel part of the well-rounded education to which the school aspires. The School wishes all its pupils to be able to participate in all aspects of school life throughout their time at school.

2. The Policy

It is Elstree School Policy to apply these criteria to all pupils regardless of any disabilities of which it is aware, conscious of its obligations to make such reasonable adjustments so as not to disadvantage any disabled pupil compared to any pupil without disability.

3. Prospective Parents

All prospective parents are asked to complete a questionnaire prior to a pupil's arrival at school. In assessing a pupil's application, the school may take such advice and require such assessment that it regards necessary to make sure that the school can develop the pupil to the best of the pupil's ability. This applies to specific learning difficulties as well as behavioural and physical difficulties.

4. The School

The heart of Elstree School is a Queen Anne / Georgian Manor House, once known as Woolhampton House, located in rural Berkshire. This, and many of the other school buildings, is old, listed and subject to extremely strict planning controls. For instance, the exterior and many of the internal features of the Main House are Grade II* listed, while the Old Coach House and Home Farmhouse are both Grade II listed. The fact that the school is situated on the hills above the Kennet Valley adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in an area where new building is severely restricted by the Planning Department of West Berkshire Council, imposes significant restrictions upon development and change.

Like many schools, Elstree School has a policy of fixed classrooms and other academic areas, pupils moving to the teachers rather than vice versa, in order to provide more efficient teaching by having specialist subject facilities in one place. Therefore pupils have to move from the Main House to classrooms and from classroom to classroom, often upstairs and/or up or down steps, without the benefits of lifts.

Similar problems exist within the Main House which, due to its age, has external and internal steps and stairs but no lifts.

Pupils with impaired mobility are likely to be disadvantaged compared with their peers in these circumstances and may be prohibited altogether from accessing most academic and extracurricular facilities provided by the school.

Not all these matters can be overcome in any substantial way without making considerable alterations, planning permissions and listed building consent to buildings within the school at significant cost. Elstree School is not well-endowed and has no financial backing from any source

other than pupil fees. Hence, budgetary constraints are considerable and even long-term plans for school development will only ameliorate the situation.

5. Policy Review

The School review of the Disabled and Accessibility Policy is conducted by the Senior Management Team (SMT) composed at least of the Headmaster, the Bursar, the Deputy Headmaster, the Director of Studies, the Housemaster, two Senior Masters and the Head of the Pre Prep. In keeping with its practices for all aspects of school life, the SMT may co-opt others whose expertise may be of value and is also advised by the school Health and Safety Committee.

The SMT's role with regard to the Disabled and Accessibility Policy includes:

- a. reviewing school policies, procedures and facilities which affect prospective disabled applicants to the school,
- b. recommending ways in which accessibility to Elstree School's education can be achieved by making reasonable changes to the academic and extracurricular structure of the school and its planning for the future,
- c. **annually** reviewing the school's Accessibility Policy.

6. Admissions

The SMT has reviewed the School's Admissions Policy and procedures (including access to scholarships and bursaries). It has introduced a form (to be treated as confidential if the applicant's parents or guardians require) giving the school details of the nature and effect of any known disability so as to enable it to consider any adjustments it might need to make.

7. Adjustments

The SMT will assess adjustments that can reasonably and practically be made by the School on a case by case basis. Each case will be treated individually and adjustments will be assessed as a result of the findings after staff assessments, discussions with parents and experience of the pupil within the school. Such adjustments may include the use of laptop computer by some SEN pupils and the use of voice projection equipment within the classroom. In particular, the awareness of all School staff is the key to assessing and implementing adjustments.

Conversely, due to the nature of the majority of the School buildings, as outlined above, some adjustments that may be considered by the SMT may not be possible on the grounds of impracticality or finance. For instance, lifts from the ground floor to the upper floors for access to the dormitories for a pupil with restricted mobility would not be possible not only on financial grounds but also due to planning restrictions on a Grade II* listed building. It is noted that the dormitories are located on three different levels within the main house, each of which would have to have lift access. In addition, severely hearing impaired pupils may potentially be at risk in the dormitories as the fire alarm system does not incorporate a visual alarm. This adjustment would be precluded through cost implications of having to rewire a complete new fire alarm system throughout the dormitories. If the School takes on a pupil or staff member with a specific disability a full access assessment will be completed.

8. Three Year Plan

Proposed developments in physical access to education and associated services:

2017-2018	Action/Date	Re-assess
Increase parking spaces for those with reduced mobility in the sports hall car park and refreshed the line-marking in that area.	August 2018	complete
Reinstate demarcation of steps within the boarding house.	Aug. 2017	Aug. 2018
Remove steps outside music department and widen access to music corridor.	July 2018	complete
2018-2019	Action/Date	Re-assess
Consider the feasibility of purchasing a portable or fixed induction loop for the main hall sound system.	By Sept. 2019	Under review
Upgrade of all outdoor signage to aid partially sighted persons.	By July 2019	Under review
Consider installing a permanent ramps in addition to steps by New Classroom Block.	By Sept. 2019	Under review
2019-2020	Action/Date	Re-assess
Replacement of door from Long Room to terrace to make easier access for all persons in an emergency.	By June 2019	Under review
Consider installation of visual and audible intercom to the school to allow assistance to be summoned.	By Sept. 2019	Under review

Making written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:

2017-2018	Action/Date	Re-assess
Purchase of visual aids in the event of visually impaired student/s.	July 2018	
Consider purchase one of more 'C-pens' which will enable SEND pupils to access written information more easily.	June 2018	
2018-2019	Action/Date	Re-assess
Installation of software for Mind Mapping across the school (Y6-8)	Sept. 2018	
Increase the range and quantity of audio books available to pupils in the school library.	December 2017	
2019-2020	Action/Date	Re-assess
Purchase one of more 'C-pens' which will enable SEND pupils to access written information more easily.	June 2018	
Providing training to staff on different teaching techniques to enable pupils to access learning	Sept. 2019	
Purchase of adjustable work benches in the DT Workshops	Aug 2019	

The extent to which disabled pupils (including those with learning difficulties) can participate in the whole curriculum:

2017-2018	Action/Date	Re-assess
Use of coloured paper (cream) throughout the school for lessons and during exams for children with specific learning difficulties.	Sept. 2017	
Provide 2 salaried members of the Learning Development Department.	Sept 2017	
Consider the provision of touch typing access to children with physical and learning disabilities.	Sept. 2018	

2018-2019	Action/Date	Re-assess
Update access arrangements inc. live speaker(s) for any oral examinations including MFL.	Sept. 2018	
Provide whole teaching staff inset training for hearing impaired children.	Sept. 2018	
Consider sound system – boom, radio microphones – to help in larger classrooms for those who might have impaired hearing.	Sept. 2018	
Investigate a speech recognition programme more widely available throughout the school (dragon speak).	Sept. 2018	
2019-2020	Action/Date	Re-assess
Continue to research ICT programmes for SEN teaching. As more technology is used throughout the school ensure details of programmes and Apps for iPads are circulated to all teaching staff to increase knowledge and usage.	August 2020	
Touch typing to be included throughout the school from Year 7. Continue to research and provide programmes for use at home, allow time in school day for pupils to use the touch typing programmes. Continue extracurricular club.	August 2020	
As technology advances to be aware of new voice activated software. There are many iPads, Chromebooks and laptops throughout the school and the availability of voice-activated programmes has increased. Staff and pupils require training to fully use the facility.	August 2020	

9. Physical Lay-Out of the School and its Facilities

The SMT has considered these areas and identified the following problems:

A. Main House (Grade II* listed inside and out)

- The Front Door access is up / down steps which are listed. It is likely that the listed status would prevent the construction of a ramp. Such a ramp would interfere with vehicular traffic
- The Masters' Door access is up / down one step but this could be overcome with a ramp
- McMullen Hall Corridor Door access is up / down one step and a portable ramp is stored nearby.
- Boot Room Door access is up / down one step but this could be overcome with a ramp
- Dining Room fire exits down one step and a portable ramp is stored nearby.
- Fire exits from the cellars could be problematical for mobility impaired pupils
- Width of doors into lavatories
- Dormitories are all located on three differing levels on upper floors. No lifts are in place or are possible.
- No visual fire alarm for severely hearing impaired boarders
- All Fire Escapes from the upper floors of the Main Building are stairs and therefore inaccessible to mobility restricted pupils.
- Doors into some dormitories may preclude access for mobility restricted pupils
- The width of some passageways, particularly the main passage with the notice boards and the area at the bottom of the Back Stairs, would cause problems for mobility restricted pupils.
- Bathroom and lavatory areas have steps and narrow door access
- All showers have either steps up or down for access

B. The Classrooms and Access Thereto (including the Ancient Classrooms, Old Classrooms, the New Classrooms, the Cooper Classrooms, the Art Room, the Music School, the Sunley Rooms, the Science Centre, the Design Technology (DT) School and the three blocks at Home Farm):

- Access to the Ancient Classrooms is via steps but this could be overcome by ramps for main access and fire exits.
- Access to the DT Classroom is via steps but this could be overcome with a ramp
- Access to the Ancient Classrooms and DT area is restricted by steps through the arch on the corner of the McMullen Hall and these could not be overcome with ramps. Alternatively, access could be from the Lodge entrance but this is impractical for pupil safety reasons (vehicle access area). The only accessible route for mobility impaired pupils would be from the McMullen Hall Corridor.
- The Art Room and the Music School are accessed up steps from the Boot Room area but a ramp in this area might be possible if pupil safety can be assured. The fire exit from the Art Room is via steps and these could not be overcome with a ramp due to interference with vehicles and space limitations.
- The Learning Support Department is located in The Sunley Rooms. This area is accessible down steep steps and would not be accessible to mobility impaired pupils.
- The only access to the Old Classrooms, the New Classrooms and The Sunley Rooms is through the Back Garden which contains five sets of steps (three flights of eight steps, one of seven and one of five). These are ornamental stone steps that form part of the listing of the Main House. Ramps cannot be constructed without major reconstruction work to the gardens as there is insufficient space as currently laid out.
- Access from the back garden into the Old and New Classrooms and the Science School is via steps up and down. Space restrictions are such that ramps would be extremely difficult to construct, particularly to the Science School where major reconstruction would be required. There is a ramp into the Cooper Classroom block together with a lift to the upper floors.
- The Cooper Classrooms can be accessed from the rear down a sloping path.
- The Science Centre contains two laboratories and two classrooms for teaching along with changing facilities for pupils in years 3 and 4. This building is accessible by steps in the front but from a slope in the rear so would be accessible for anyone who is mobility impaired. There is a shower and lavatory with disabled access.
- There are no visual fire alarms in any of the academic areas, apart from the Cooper Classrooms, so severely hearing impaired pupils could be at risk.
- The Home Farm Classrooms are accessed in three buildings by steps or a steep ramp which is out of specification for mobility impaired ramp access. The upstairs classrooms would not be accessible and the fire escape is only accessed down stairs and into another room.

C. Sport and Recreation

The level of use of the School's sporting facilities will depend largely upon the type and degree of the disability.

- Sports Hall. Clear access through all doors. Lift to balcony. Disabled toilets and showers in both boys' and girls' changing rooms
- Swimming Pool. Poor access to the swimming pool area with steep steps and no alternative route. Steps up to the pool area itself. There is no ramp and there is insufficient space for such an adjustment. Sight and hearing impaired children have access but Staff in charge of safety and the conduct of swimming will have to ensure that they are aware of special requirements such as hand signals etc.
- Squash Court. Poor access through swimming pool gate.
- Playing Fields. Easy access to all areas along tarmac paths or across grass. For personal safety, sight impaired children could need assistance.
- Adventure Playground. Good access down back drive or over grass. Play area supervised when in use.
- All Weather Pitch by Sports Hall. Easy access via tarmac paths and wide gates
- All Weather Pitch in Budgett's Field. Easy access via tarmac paths and wide gates.

- Cricket Nets. Easy access over grass. Use by visually impaired pupils would need careful supervision.

10. Welfare

The majority of the welfare aspects of this policy are covered in the detail above. However, the School is acutely aware that some pupils may suffer from various medical conditions that could impinge on their ability to partake in School activities. All such cases are dealt with on a case by case basis following discussions with all interested parties, particularly the parents.

11. Extra-Curricular Activities

The ability of disabled children to make use of the extra-curricular facilities and opportunities offered at Elstree will depend on the type and degree of their disability:

- Main House – Ground Floor. Activities in the McMullen Hall such as table tennis offer ready access. Snooker / tables are not at wheelchair height. Computer room available to all but sight impaired children may have problems without specialist additions such as keyboards and printers etc.
- Main House – First Floor. Access to Drawing Room for Bridge Club and other hobbies is currently not possible for wheelchairs (see details above). Other disabilities not precluded.
- Archery. Access not a problem but this activity may not be appropriate for sight impaired children.
- Water Sports. See Swimming Pool above.
- Classroom Based Activities. Access is poor (see details above).
- Outdoor Activities. The majority of the areas within Park past the gates on the back drive will not be accessible to wheelchairs due to the condition of the ground which is let to the local farmer. Park is accessible. To the right of the back drive there are no restrictions (see Adventure Playground above). Canoeing on Lower Lake would be easily accessible.
- Art Activities. See Art School above.
- Music Activities. See Music School above.
- Design and Technology Activities. See DT school above.
- Bicycle Activities. The bike shed is accessible but activity would depend upon disability and ability to ride.
- Outside Activities (walks, kite flying etc.). Readily available as on the main school grounds. The nature of the activity would dictate availability to the disabled.

12. After School Clubs and Holiday Sports Camps

These activities tend to be sport orientated and the facilities used are those that are available during the school term. The points above would be relevant and each child's requirements would have to be assessed prior to an activity taking place. If possible, some adjustments such as a change in location may be possible to enable children with disabilities to take part. However, any such adjustment should not jeopardise the success or safety of the activity taking place.

13. Academic Accessibility

The School makes every effort to implement reasonable changes to its whole school curriculum in order to accommodate pupils with disability as long as such adjustments do not impact on the learning and progress of other pupils.

- In cases of hearing difficulties, teachers will adopt appropriate behaviour when dealing with the child. Depending upon the severity of the condition, this may involve looking directly at the child whilst speaking using a microphone linked to the child's existing hearing aid, sitting the child near or at the front of the class or closing doors and windows to eliminate extraneous noise.
- Where a child is visually impaired, teachers are aware of the need of the child to wear glasses, to sit near the front of the class, to have photocopies / book / general resources made available in large print.
- Parents of children with behavioural and emotional special needs that are deemed to be too severe for entry to the school, will be advised by the Headmaster at the interview stage of the enrolment process (see Admissions Policy).

Communication between parents and School staff is such that the School is generally aware, before a child enters the School, of any problems that may potentially impede a child's progress or which may hinder the progress of other children.

14. Learning Difficulties and Disabilities LDD

For children with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD), Learning Support is on hand to guide teaching staff and to support the child's learning on a 1:1 basis. Children are screened on entry, no matter what their age, for signs of dyslexia or dyspraxia or any other mild learning difficulty. If they require learning support, their parents are advised and lessons can be arranged. Children who have Learning Support are withdrawn from lessons at convenient times and are taught by a team of staff all of whom have Special Needs qualifications (see Admissions Policy for additional detail).

On occasions, support may be brought in from outside. This may be in the form of a specialist in the particular disability coming to advise teaching staff on strategies for dealing with a certain child's problem, or it may mean that a specialist visits the school on occasions to help the child in situ.

15. Parental Involvement

At all stages, parents are involved in their child's learning. They are informed of any special needs their child may have and, if they are already aware of a problem, their advice is sought and they are kept in constant touch concerning their child's progress.

16. Equal Opportunities

All pupils have equal opportunities across the curriculum and sporting provision. Lessons are differentiated to allow for differing disabilities. Games are differentiated to allow for differing levels of ability and extra-curricular activities take into account the fact that every pupil is different and some have specific learning needs. No child is excluded from an activity on the basis of a disability.

17. Awareness and Observance of the Policy

The Committee has considered the existing machinery in the school for ensuring awareness and observance of the policy:

- The Policy is reviewed annually by the SMT.
- The Admissions Policy is to be reviewed annually, concurrently with the review of this Policy
- A copy of this Policy is in the Policy File on the school intranet.
- Its existence is raised at Staff Meetings with changes being communicated to staff as required
- The monitoring of this Policy is the responsibility of the SMT
- The Governors are fully apprised of the existence of this Policy and of any changes that are made to its content. They are also kept informed of its monitoring.

- Parents are aware at all times that staff follow this Policy and that their child is not being discriminated against on the basis of a disability.