

Chetham's

Accessibility Plan 2024-2027

23/10/26

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Version: 23/10/26
Review: 31/07/27

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Accessibility Plan 2024-2027

Introduction

This plan reflects our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion practice and philosophy in relation to the *Equality Act* (2010). The policy also has regard to guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's *Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils* (2015). It records how we aim to:

- ensure the School's curriculum is as accessible as possible to diverse learners
- make the School site and buildings, facilities and services accessible for all students
- provide accessible information in a variety of formats
- provide accessible accommodation for boarders
- follow an inclusive and non-discriminatory behaviour policy
- ensure all students and, as appropriate their parents, have an awareness of reasonable adjustments from audition, through their career at Chets
- ensure that all staff receive equality, diversity and inclusion training.

Statement of Principles

The School follows the principles of the Social Model of Disability. By this we mean that we understand that people with impairments may be disabled by their environments. We are committed to removing the barriers to their participation in the School. In this document we refer to 'disabled people' using the terms 'people with disabilities' and 'students with SEND'. We do this to reflect the language of the legislation and policies which underpin this document.

This document is written for the **whole School community** including but not limited to: students; staff; volunteers; parents; carers; guardians and visitors.

EDI Aims

Access: Improve accessibility, reduce barriers and challenge perceptions for audiences, visitors, staff, parents, carers, and students.

People: Promoting a positive and harmonious working and creative environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and are valued for who they are, as they are.

Culture: Embrace and celebrate the richness of society striving to reflect it. Where inequality exists recognise and reduce it.

Rationale

This document meets the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010 to prepare an accessibility plan.

This Accessibility Plan, updated as of **October 2026**, covers the period from September 2024 – August 2027 and follows on from the previous plans that covered the period from September 2012 to August 2024.

In addition, the School, as an education provider must make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that students with special educational needs and / or disabilities are not discriminated against.

The Equality Act defines a person as 'disabled' if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'.

Under the *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice* (2015) and SEND reform of April 2026, 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes the four broad areas of need and support:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and / or physical needs.

Reasonable Adjustments

The School has an anticipatory duty to make 'reasonable adjustments', where typical provision might place any student at a 'substantial disadvantage'. The duty is specific to the child and the context. We do not discriminate against a disabled student because of something that is a consequence of their disability. We undertake to consider the individual requirements for every student to ensure that no students are treated less favourably.

What is a Reasonable Adjustment?

An example of a 'reasonable adjustment' might simply be arranging for a student who uses a wheelchair to have classes on the ground floor of the building, or ensuring that a teacher faces a hearing-impaired student to enable them to lip-read.

Aids and Services

The Equality Act also places a duty on the school to provide reasonable 'auxiliary aids or services' if their deployment will alleviate a 'substantial disadvantage' that the student may be facing because of a disability.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- changes to practices or procedures
- changes to physical features
- changes to academic assessment
- providing extra support and aids.

The School is not expected to change its premises but is expected to make long-term plans for improving access to its buildings through its planning duties.

Aids and services may already be provided for in a Child's Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan or similar plan of SEND if they are not, or the student does not have an EHC plan or similar, the school or Local Authority (LA) has a duty to provide them if deemed reasonable.

Examples of auxiliary aid or services which recently provided by Chetham's include:

- Providing an interpreter or note-taker
- producing documents in Braille
- Access Arrangements permitted by the JCQ in public examinations
- coloured paper
- additional support.

Our Commitment

Chetham's School of Music is committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents, guardians, carers, and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance, inclusion, and belonging. The **3 Sections** of the plan show how we intend to:

1. Improve students with disabilities' participation in the School's **curriculum** including:
    - teaching and learning
    - specialist aids and equipment
    - adaptive teaching to improve accessibility
    - leisure and cultural activities
    - School visits.

2. Improve students with disabilities' access to **information** including:
    - hand-outs
    - timetables
    - textbooks
    - School policies, details and events
    - How to request reasonable adjustments
    - Provision of various formats within a reasonable time frame.

3. Improve students with disabilities' access to School **physical spaces** including:
    - improvements to the physical environment of the School
    - physical aids to access teaching and boarding areas.

It will not be feasible to undertake some of the works listed in the Action Plan for physical accessibility during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The School carries out occasional Access Audits which focus on the physical layout of the campus which inform this Plan.

Monitoring

- The Plan will be monitored by the Leadership Group and Governing Body on an annual basis
- New Action Plans will be drawn up every three years
- The Plan will be scrutinised by ISI as part of their inspection cycle.

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Improving Curriculum Access

Aim	Activity	Lead Person	Resource implications	Success Criteria	Timescale	Criteria met / evidence – mid point and annual
Train teachers on further differentiating the curriculum	All academic teaching staff to have INSET X 3 times a year. Focus on students who have differentiated needs such a SEND, EAL or specific issues. Staff to make themselves aware of 'Plan on a Page' for each student with additional needs or different learning pattern. Music staff are offered training annually. Access to a wide range of resources, brief training video clips and tips for supporting various needs is available for all staff via	JH, NO, LF	CPD budget	All teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of all students' needs, thereby increasing access to the curriculum. Academic and instrumental staff will be fully aware of the information provided on 'Plan on a Page'. More members of staff are contacting Learning Support directly to discuss any student concerns.	Departmental INSET- as requested Each Music course (October, Feb and July) Annual training. Focus has moved towards adaptive teaching, away from differentiation. However, differing needs of students with SEND are	INSET in adaptive teaching for all teaching staff 9/ 2026

	the Learning Support section of the Staff Intranet. A One Page Profile is created for students who have a diagnosed need or are undergoing assessment for a diagnosed need. Access to a wide range of resources, brief training video clips and tips for supporting various needs is available for all staff via the Learning Support section of the Staff Intranet. This allows individual staff efficiently to explore strategies and gain knowledge about specific concerns.				met at individual levels in addition to high quality adaptive teaching.	
Exams	Provision of laptops for students unable to answer using handwriting.	PDC, LF		Students whose Access Arrangements signify the need for word processors have access to relevant technology.		

	Access Arrangements to be approved 'within our setting'.			Parent-sourced Educational Psychologist reports are not automatically accepted. The School will decide on its own primary evidence when considering compiling Access Arrangements.		
Ensure educational support covers extracurricular areas and activities	Liaise with House and PE to provide support for those in need of additional assistance. Update and circulate the list of students and the way to address the extra help they need. Head of Learning Support to deliver SEND / EAL training to House Staff biennially with the express intention of highlighting SEND / EAL needs of our students and how they can be helped and supported seamlessly from the classroom to the House throughout the day. This initiative will be developed further to include specific adjustments	JH, LF, IM	Head of Learning Support & Assistant Principal spend time annually updating the SEND info and the Students in need of assistance list. Training time.	Accessibility to extracurricular area and activities for all students. Students feel supported during and after working hours. In Houses, staff have a greater awareness of those students who require additional encouragement/support/understanding beyond the classroom setting. Students' access to School trips is fully inclusive. Staff can easily access the required information so that trips are as accessible as possible.	Annually-September. Lists updated and training provided according to new students or changes to circumstance.	

	which need to be made for individual students. All school trips & co-curricular will go through the process of planning by the group's leader, and checked by the EVC, to ensure that they are conducted in an inclusive environment with providers that comply with legislative requirements. Increasing access to all school activities for all SEN / disabled students. EV and concert planning takes into account Students' additional needs are identified for staff organising EVs and concerts.					

Organise music programme (instrumental tuition, workshops and practice) across all departments to ensure parity of provision/ opportunity.	Head of Learning Support to attend Music Management meeting to focus on ABRSM's access arrangements e.g. extra time for sight-reading. HoIDs will be asked to disseminate and to ask tutors to give consideration for the need to request Access Arrangements. This information should be shared with the Music Assistant who makes the ABRSM entries. Head of Learning Support should also be consulted by the instrumental tutor or the relevant HoID before the request is made to Music Department Administrator.	TR, LF	Director of Music, HoID and Outreach staff agenda time at Music Management meeting; HoID time in implementing any adaptations needed to ensure parity of provision; Learning Support staff time in provision in 1:1 lessons	Instrumental lessons, workshops and practice sessions accommodate the needs of individual students, thereby increasing access to the curriculum. All students who need Access Arrangements within the remit of Trinity / ABRSM will have the best and appropriate provision in place, will feel more comfortable in their exams and thus able to perform better.	On-going, covered in fortnightly music management meetings and ongoing communicati on	

Students with SEND are able to fully participate in Music Trips	Trip and visit organisers to liaise with trip leaders and the EVC to ensure that students with SEND can fully participate in all parts of the trip.	NS, NP, IM	Planning time for trips	Specifically identified students will feel comfortable on trips when out of the School routine.	At the Beginning of each trip or planning of co-curricular activity	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to remain significant parts of our future planning & current focus	Follow the separate EDI Action Plan that charts all areas of the organisation – this is a full detailed document Embed EDI awareness into all areas of school policy and practice.	NS, PB	Committee time – once every X 6 weeks, initially. Now, occasionally, as required. Reported to Governors at each meeting X 3 a year or when updated	Achieve our EDI aims – full plan on internal sharepoint EDI Action Plan 27.01.22.xlsx (sharepoint.com) Access: Improve accessibility, reduce barriers and challenge perceptions for audiences, visitors, students and staff. People: Promoting a positive and harmonious working and creative environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and are valued for who they are, as they are. Culture: Embrace and celebrate the richness of society striving to reflect it. Where inequality exists recognise and reduce it.	Ongoing: ADP appointed as Assistant Principal (Safeguarding and Inclusion)	

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Improving Availability and Delivery of Information

Aim	Activity	Lead Person	Resource implications	Success Criteria	Timescale	Criteria met / evidence – mid point and annual
Widen accessibility of written material, e.g. make available prospectus, newsletters and other information for students with SEND, their parents / carers. guardians and staff in alternative formats. This to include exploration of the needs of prospective students so that the best experience can be in place at audition, and thereafter, including a	Ensure there is provision of enhanced written information in various formats when required for particular purposes to suit individual needs (e.g. coloured versions for particular people with processing needs, enlarged versions for people with visual impairments). The updated website and STREAM to continue with updates to remain appropriate for impaired users.	AK, LF, Marketing	Training time for Learning Support dept. Time to review and update	Students will have full access to information in a suitable format for their needs. Students will be treated equitably with regards to their needs throughout the course and		

meeting with a member of the Learning Support team.	LF attends annual training for assessment re Access Arrangements in academic and music exams – e.g. extra-time for processing and liaises closely with the Exams Officer. Learning Support team member to outline a potential 'offer' of support following the audition. Learning Support team member will also explore any existing support provided by any Educational Health Care Plan.			during examinations. Prospective parents / students will feel that their needs have been heard, understood and that dialogue can take place as to how they can be met. This should provide reassurance and confidence at transition to a new educational setting.		

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Improving Physical Access

Area	Activity	Lead Person	Resource implications	Timescale	Success criteria	Criteria met / evidence – mid point and annual
School Entrance	Improve the access over the cobbles through the arch and round to the New School Building bridge by planing the cobbles.	Facilities and Site Manager	Budget in the region of £75,000.	9/24	A smooth pathway is available for use by wheelchair users and others with limited mobility.	Completed 9/24
College House including the Library/ Learning Support - Grade I listed	Physical access to the Library / Learning Support area is not possible for wheelchair users. Procedures are in place, prepared by the relevant Heads of Departments, to show how access to the resources provided by the Library and Learning Support Department can be achieved if students	LF, KM	None	N/A	All students can access the resources of the Library and Learning Support Department.	

	cannot physically access the area. The Learning Support team or the Librarian will arrange for lessons / resources to be made available to the student in an accessible venue (if necessary) via the Academic Manager.					
Millgate and Nicholls Building (Millgate House and Victoria House and Dining Room)	Work has commenced to significantly upgrade the boarding accommodation in the Millgate Building and other non-boarding areas in the Millgate and Nicholls Buildings, including the installation of a platform lift to the lower floors of Victoria House. This work is taking account of disabled access including fully accessible bedrooms for students with SEND in Millgate House and for all people with SEND to the other non-boarding areas.	Joint Principals, Facilities and Site Manager	Planning permission has been granted for Phase 3 of the refurbishment project. The overall budget the works was £3 million, of which the accessibility areas are a part. A platform lift has been installed to allow access from the Yard level to the foyer outside Whiteley Hall. The work to Millgate House is being funded by the School from its reserves and donations. The other work will be funded	4 years to include fundraising and construction work.	All areas of the Millgate and Nicholls Buildings will be accessible to staff, students and visitors with SEND (where appropriate). `Wheelchair users and staff will feel more confident about safe evacuations.	Phases 1 & 2 of the development work in Millgate have been completed. Phase 3-5 works are dependent on funding being available. Two new suites with full adaptations in MH Lift in Nicholls Building – Victoria House is accessible.

	Further Refuge Points (in addition to those already in place in the new build) have been identified and have appropriate signage in place. Evacuation chairs for all wheelchair accessible areas to be in place by March 2023. Key staff will be trained and cascading of this training will be in progress. Lift platforms e.g. to Music Tech are in frequent use and this is a normal way of working. Any problems immediately identified.		from future donations.		Staff will feel more confident about the evacuation process of wheelchair users or anyone with a mobility problem or an injury sustained by an incident.	Evacc Chairs purchased for all buildings.
Drama classrooms and studio	Physical access is not currently possible for wheelchair users and very difficult for those with mobility issues. Estates budgets remain under consideration with a view to making access possible as follows: • ideally, two stair lifts or lifts would need to be installed to allow access:	Joint Principals, Facilities and Site Manager	Considerable budget implications.	No dates have been set for this work.	Accessibility of Drama activities for all students.	

	from the yard to the lower level; and, once inside the Drama Studio, from the floor space to the staging area • ideally, three ramps would need to be installed to allow access to: the Drama Studio; once inside, to get to the floor space; and, once inside the Classroom, to gain access to the rehearsal space • alternatively, lessons to be taught in another suitable space by converting an accessible classroom into a 'black box' space with lighting and sound equipment, suitable for practical performance. Until these major changes can be made, if necessary the classes would be taught in an alternative location such as the Waterhouse Building or a G Room.					

Outside areas	Lighting on the playground to be improved. This work has started and is scheduled for completion in 2024.	MA	Estimated at £8,000 and to be funded from the School's annual maintenance budget. The work is being carried out by the School's maintenance team.	Academic year 2024/25	The lighting on the playground area will improve the safety of all, including those with visual impairments.	Completed 12/2025
General	Installation of high contrast steps and accessible (high contrast) signage across the School site in appropriate areas.	MA	Listed Building Stone steps are not permitted to have luminous strips.			
Organise classrooms to promote the participation and independence of all students	Implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases, performance / practice rooms and examination halls – e.g. students with ADHD to have optimum seating to avoid classroom distraction. Further feedback to be gained via observations from our TAs who will observe specific needs in	LF	Learning Support staff to review layouts in addition to existing support provision; and to review Access Arrangements e.g. quiet exam room options; domestic staff to move classroom furniture / fittings as appropriate. LF to ask academic / instrumental staff to alert Learning Support if they are experiencing any	September 2023/25	Lessons accommodate the needs of individual students thereby increasing access to the curriculum. Students feel more comfortable in class.	

	the classroom and report back to LF.		students who find their current environment challenging e.g. this could be in response to 'geography' of the room or light sensitivity etc. Continue to provide 'Timeout' cards which allow a student to leave to go to a pre-planned and agreed prescribed place – e.g. House Office, Medical, Learning Support, Library.			
Medical	Access to the Medical Centre is not possible for wheelchair users.	Nurse on Duty	Nurse and GP will decamp to student's room or an alternative accessible room within the House in order to address any medical support or provide consultation.	Implemented October 2022	Students will feel comfortable about the arrangement	
Audition Process Information Sharing	Application and Carer forms describe needs.				When parents and carers feel comfortable sharing all SEND information; and identify whether a	

					diagnosis has been made or simply suspected.	