

Accessibility Plan

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

1. not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
2. to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
3. to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This document outlines how the academy meets its obligations and sets out actions to improve provisions for students with disability.

- a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- b) improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

This document will be made available on the academy website and in print (including large print) on request.

1.0 Background

De Warenne Academy is based across four buildings on a single site; the main building completed in 2013 to BB98 standards; a technology block built in 2002 and refurbished in 2013; the sports hall in excess of 50 years old and the bungalow (refurbished on 2013 but not currently in use). The age of sports block and construction method has limited the adaptations that can be made.

2.0 Approach and External Areas

2.1 External approach

The buildings are set back from Gardens Lane with a private roadway providing vehicle access to the main academy building, technology and sports blocks. There is a pedestrian footpath to one side of the vehicular route.

The pedestrian path is between 1.6m wide at its narrowest and opens up in front of the main school building, the surface finish is tarmac and is suitable for wheelchair use. Access to disabled parking does not require traffic to be crossed. There is also a drop kerb and appropriate tactile paving at the technology road crossings.

2.2 Car parking and drop-off

The academy has 3 main car parks with over 123 Spaces. There are 6 designated accessible bays in the car park closest to the main building. The route from the car park is gently sloping and surface is predominantly new tarmac. There is also a designated accessible parking bay next to the sports block.

There is a drop-off/loading lay-by at the closest point on the roadway to the academy, with a section of dropped kerb to allow easy access from the lay-by to the pedestrian path.

2.3 Other external areas

Play area surface to the rear of the building is block paving. There is seating in the play area and a raised planter.

2.4 External lighting

The lighting design around the site has been specifically designed to light the circulation routes and waiting areas to the appropriate lux levels. The lighting scheme has been designed to make these proposed public areas accessible, safe and secure during darkness hours.

3.0 Main Academy Building – Entrances

3.1 Main entrance for staff and visitors

The main entrance for visitors and staff is on the south side of the building. The entrance provides level access and has automatic outward opening doors with touch control operation. The clear opening width of the doors is 1590mm. The lobby has adequate space for wheelchair circulation in the inner lobby area where there is a low level reception window. The floor finish within the lobby area is entrance matting. The matting has a firm surface and is suitable for wheelchair use.

3.2 Main entrance for students

Students enter on the south side of the building. There is one double opening manual door.

There is an entrance mat across the width of the space, and the surface of the mat is flush with the surrounding floor surface. The entrance mat has a firm surface suitable for wheelchair access.

3.3 Northern play area entrance

There are two sets of double doors leading from the central area to the Northern play area. The doors have level thresholds and give a double opening width. There is entrance matting throughout whole of entrance area. The entrance matting has a firm surface suitable for wheelchair access.

3.4 Exits from circulation corridors, hall and classrooms.

All exit doors give a minimum of 800mm clear opening width through one leaf of the double doors. All the doors have level thresholds.

3.5 PE and Technology Entrances

Entrances to PE and DT are ramped with access through manual double doors.

4. Circulation

4.1 Horizontal circulation

The plan is designed to be straightforward and easily understood to aid orientation. There are three, two storey zones. The zones accommodate the classrooms and support spaces. Each wing has a central corridor with accommodation along each side. Travel distances between different

parts of the building are minimised by the plan arrangement. Corridor widths are adequate to allow free flow of people.

4.1.1 Corridors

All corridors in the main building are a minimum of 1.6m wide. There are narrow corridors to access the upstairs PE classrooms. The majority of floor finishes are carpet tiles which have a short, firm pile and are suitable for wheelchair use. There is a single ground floor corridor running the length of technology building.

4.1.2 Doors

Double doors across corridors have vision panels in line with guidance. All double doors give a minimum of 800mm clear opening width through one leaf. Single doors into rooms all give a minimum of 800mm clear opening width. Door furniture is stainless steel and contrasts visually with the doors. Doors to classrooms and WCs have a combination of pull handles, push plates and large lever handles. There are kick plates to all solid doors on push side of door. Door furniture in the sports block is in a traditional style, with push plates to the gym.

4.1.3 Finishes

Colour is used throughout the building to provide visual contrast and to aid orientation. Internal doors contrast in colour with the surrounding wall. Ironmongery contrasts with the door. Floor finish contrasts with the walls.

Floor surfaces are firm, flush, non-glossy and slip-resistant. Any junctions between different flooring materials are carefully detailed to avoid creating an obstacle to wheelchair users or a tripping hazard.

4.1.4 Signage

Signage complies with good practice guidance, it is simple and aids orientation around the building.

4.1.5 Acoustic design

Good acoustic design is employed to achieve an acoustic environment that is neither too reverberant nor too absorbent so that verbal communication can take place effectively.

4.1.6 Means of escape

Safe, efficient egress depends upon a combination of management procedures and building design. Specific evacuation strategies have been devised for people who need assistance, and these strategies take into account the building design, the known needs of people working in a building, as well as the unknown needs of visitors. PEEP plans are put into place for users requiring them.

In circumstances where the lift cannot be used means of escape from first floor accommodation will be via the stairs. One wheelchair refuge space is provided at the top of each of the enclosed stairs in a half hour fire compartment.

4.2 Vertical circulation

4.2.1 Stairs

The main building has two storeys, and vertical circulation is provided via three staircases. The stairs at end of each wing are 1550mm wide. All handrails have a galvanised steel finish and are 900mm height above pitch line on flights. Handrails are continuous to flights and landings. The PE block has a single main stair case with an external fire exit. Hand rails contrast with the wall finish.

4.2.2. Lift

The building has one lift. The lift is located near to the main reception area and the central atrium. The lift car size meets guidance which will accommodate any type of wheelchair together with several people.

The controls both inside and outside the lift meet the guidance. The lift has a manoeuvring space outside the doors. There is audible and visual indication of lift arrival and location in the lift car.

5.0 Main Academy Building – Accommodation

5.1 Reception

The reception area is located immediately inside the visitor entrance and so is easily visible on arrival. There is adequate circulation space in front of the desk. The floor finish in this area is entrance matting as before. The reception desk is designed to be accessible for wheelchair users both as visitors and staff. On the staff side there is knee space below the desk.

There is sufficient space in the general administration and reception area behind the desk to accommodate a wheelchair turning circle.

5.2 Dining hall and central area

Tables and chairs are set out as required. The layout and type of furniture take account of the needs of students and staff with disabilities. The floor finish in this area is non-slip.

5.3 Assembly hall, including control room

The auditorium has tiered seating. Wheelchair users may sit anywhere at the front of the auditorium. The stage area is not raised.

5.4 Classrooms, laboratories, studios and stores

The accommodation is sized to meet or exceed recommended standards. There is level access into all the rooms. All rooms are designed to accommodate a wheelchair turning circle.

The floor finish is carpet in general teaching classrooms and offices, non-slip vinyl in practical classrooms, concrete in the construction workshops. The carpet has short firm pile. Finishes incorporate contrast to aid people with visual impairments.

Where there are sinks in classrooms lever type taps are available. The catering and science laboratories have height adjustable work stations (including sinks) for wheel chair users.

5.5 Office space

There is office space at both ground and first floor level, though the majority of the administrative offices are located at ground floor level. The offices vary in size. All accommodate a wheelchair turning circle – however in practice it is assumed that one of the larger offices would be used if wheelchair access were required. Management should ensure that fittings and furniture do not impede access.

5.7 Library

The library is located at first floor level. The layout of the fittings takes account of wheelchair access. The desk has section at an appropriate height for wheelchair users and has adequate clear space in front and behind to allow for wheelchair access.

5.8 Sanitary accommodation

The sanitary accommodation is located across the site, minimising travel distances. Each zone has easy access to an accessible toilet. There is a single WC/changing room facility adjacent to reception. There is no accessible toilet in the sports block, however there is one in the adjacent technology block.

The finishes in all the sanitary accommodation allow for contrast between the floor and walls and between fittings and walls. The finishes are non-shiny and the floors are slip-resistant. Taps in the standard sanitary accommodation are push type and are lever type in accessible toilets. Motion sensitive flushes are found in standard accommodation and large levers in accessible accommodation.

All accessible toilets have adequate turning areas for wheel chair users. Emergency alarms linked to reception are installed in all accessible toilets.

6.0 Bungalow

The bungalow is not currently in use but is equipped with a ramp access and an accessible toilet is available off the main teaching area.

7.0 Reasonable adjustments

The reasonable adjustment duty requires steps to be taken to avoid disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage. For students this duty is owed to existing students, applicants and, in limited circumstances, to disabled former students in relation to the following areas:

- deciding who is offered admission as a student
- the provision of education
- Access to any benefit, service or facility.

For employees and potential employees the duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, a disabled worker has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person. Schools cannot justify a failure to make a reasonable adjustment; where the duty arises.

8.0 How the academy plans to improve accessibility

Action

Assess all external changes in surface height.

Undertake a programme of paint refresh and/or the addition of new markings.

Make available large screens in ICT for partially sighted students to use.

Produce a scope for a tender to provide an accessible toilet and changing facility in the sports block.

Justification

To reduce trip hazards for partially sighted users allowing safe movement across the site.

Improve access to ICT for partially sighted students.

To allow wheelchair users and others access to a change and WC facility with in the sports block.

Timescale

Completed April 2018

Completed by April 2018

Quotes to be received before end of December 2018. Project evaluation to be carried out at that point.