The Westminster
Specialist College

2025/26

Accessibility Policy and Plan

Approved by Board of Governors on:	**8/7/2025**
Signed by Chair of Governors:	**P Coldicott**
Head of College:	**O Flowers**
Lead Personnel:	**B Taylor**
Date of Review:	**8/7/2026**

1. Introduction and Aims

As a specialist SEN college, The Westminster Specialist College prepares young people with learning disabilities and/or autism for adulthood and employment, including through DFN Project SEARCH. Our commitment to accessibility includes educational, environmental and employment settings, and extends to the inclusive partnerships we develop with host employers.

At The Westminster Specialist College, we believe in providing every opportunity to develop a student's full potential. All our students, staff and visitors should feel valued, cared for, listened to and encouraged to challenge themselves to be the best they can. It is our aim to reduce and eliminate barriers to the curriculum, fuller aspects of college life and the College environment for students and prospective students, staff, parents and visitors with or without a disability.

2. Background

Legal Background

The Equality Act 2010 (as amended) and the Public Sector Equality Duty require education providers to make reasonable adjustments and to anticipate the needs of disabled learners. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice place a duty on us to prepare learners with special educational needs for adulthood, including employment, independent living, and participation in society. We also ensure compliance with health and safety and safeguarding legislation when supporting learners on external placements such as those delivered via DFN Project SEARCH.

The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination against disabled individuals unlawful in respect to their access to education.

The Act makes it unlawful for the College to discriminate against a learner with a disability. Discrimination can take place in two ways; treating a learner less favourably for a reason relating to its disability and/or failing to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled learners are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The Act applies to all activities/facilities provided for learners and is anticipatory. It covers education and associated services such as:

- Preparation for entry into the College
- The curriculum and teaching and learning
- Classroom organization and timetabling
- Groupings of learners
- Study that may take place out of hours
- Enrichment activities to supplement the curriculum, including visits
- College policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes and interactions with peers
- Assessment and exam arrangements (where applicable)
- College behaviour and exclusion policies and procedures
- College arrangements for working with other agencies
- Preparation of learners for transition to the next phase of education/employment.

This list is not definitive. Staff at The Westminster Specialist College are experienced and motivated to provide quality education for all our learners. Continuing Professional Development plays a role in ensuring that all staff gain ongoing knowledge and expertise relating to disability issues and their duty to provide reasonable adjustments.

The physical environment of the College and host employers as part of DFN Project Search enables those with a physical disability to access all areas of the learning campus/workplace.

The Westminster Specialist College's curriculum is developed to enable those with a disability to access all areas. Further developments will be highlighted in the accessibility action plan. All College policies, practices and procedures are developed, reviewed and evaluated with regard to the special needs of the learners and other stakeholders.

Information about The Westminster Specialist College is provided in a written format in the College's prospectus, newsletters and learner reports. Information is also available from the College's website. Work continues to provide this information in alternative formats.

The College's Improvement Plan is a working document in which we strive to meet the needs of our present and future stakeholders. Relevant sections will be included in the accessibility action plan.

3. Our Duty

It is our duty to make sure that:

- We do not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- We will plan to increase access to education for disabled students.
- We do not discriminate against anyone.
- We do not allow any form of harassment of people with a disability
- We will promote positive attitudes towards anyone living with a disability
- We will remove barriers which may discourage disabled people from playing a full part in the life of our College
- We will encourage full participation by everyone in our College activities.
- We support our learners to self-advocate and promote their strengths

4. Definition of Disability

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a "substantial" and "long-term" negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

5. Principles

- Compliance with the above-mentioned legislation is consistent with the College's aims values and Equality Policy
- Our admissions policy does not discriminate against a disabled student.
- We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled student by excluding him or her from the College for a reason related to the student's impairment.
- When recruiting staff, disabled people will not be discriminated against.
- We recognise and value parents' and carers' knowledge of their child's disability and seek partnership and consultation.
- We provide all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students. Our curriculum endorses the following key principles
    - setting suitable learning challenges
    - responding to students' diverse learning needs
    - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students

- by ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures for identifying and monitoring teaching and supporting students young people and adults with disabilities

6. Purpose and Direction of the College's Plan

The plan also addresses transition to employment, including partnership working with DFN Project SEARCH host employers to ensure accessible internships and inclusive recruitment practices.

The Westminster Specialist College's Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) aims to demonstrate how we intend to meet our duty to promote disability equality for disabled students, staff, parents, visitors and host employers.

7. Information from Student Data and College Audit

Information about the needs of disabled people will be gathered through:

- Student admission information – i.e. college application form
- Parental questionnaire
- Student questionnaire
- SMS Data – in the college's case – Arbor
- SEN reviews/EHCPs
- Recruitment process
- Staff and Governors questionnaire
- Discussion with relevant medical professionals and other outside support agencies

Achievements of disabled people will be gathered through:

- Data analysis (progress made and value added scores)
- Celebration of achievement via social media (i.e. Facebook, Linked In)
- Case Study material
- Incentives and rewards from the host employer

Information is gathered as part of the College's self-evaluation process and Assessment for Learning Strategies and is used to inform future plans and schemes.

8. Views of Those Consulted During the Development of the Plan:

To ensure Westminster is a welcoming environment for everybody, we believe it is important to consult all stakeholders. Where adjustments need to be made, we have consulted those who have an understanding of different disabilities and the barriers they present. Those consulted in the development of our AAP include:

- Students
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors
- Partnerships with external agencies and employers

9. The Main Priorities in the College's Plan

- Increasing the extent to which the College curriculum enables full participation for all groups of students
- Continuing to develop the physical environment of the College to increase the extent to which students, young people and adults can take advantage of education and wider life of College including trips and clubs
- Improve the accessibility of written information to students, young people and adults

Making reasonable adjustments

We aim to remove any barriers that we find are making life more difficult for people with disabilities. These barriers may be lessened by making 'reasonable adjustments' to

(a) the physical environment:

- Structured and supportive break time and lunchtime activities
- Ensuring all adjustments to current buildings are compliant
- Denote hazards for the visually impaired
- Flexibility of seating arrangements to suit need
- Availability of specialist equipment for students when required

(b) curriculum:

At The Westminster Specialist College, we recognise that in order for our students to achieve their potential, all staff at The Westminster Specialist College should endeavour to employ current pedagogic styles and ideas. We work with agencies and training centres to establish best practice and curriculum development in order to ensure that the Curriculum is accessible and relevant to all. The Westminster Specialist College delivers a Curriculum based on feedback from students, parents, staff and Governors. This ensures that all students access a relevant program at the appropriate level of learning. Whilst doing this we ensure that, through cross-curricular links, students are support to develop their own learning and map subject knowledge in order to deepen their knowledge and application of higher level thinking and independent skills.

Our curriculum includes structured employment preparation pathways, including supported internships through DFN Project SEARCH. We ensure these placements are inclusive and accessible through proactive planning with host employers and job coaches.

We recognise that our students have personal needs which are central to their learning and for some present additional challenges to their success. Daily provision must be responsive to these needs and curriculum balance and design be reviewed on an on-going basis to enable the holistic needs of students to be met.

Examples include:

- facilitating the accurate identification and assessment of individuals

- supporting students so their health and well-being needs can be met, and they can access the curriculum.
- supporting postural management and encouraging the development, refinement or maintenance of skills in independent mobility
- helping students to manage personal care
- promoting relaxation and support to help students manage stress and anxiety
- supporting students to overcome sensory barriers to learning including visual and auditory impairment
- use of technology to aid pastoral and academic success
- promoting independence and learning through use of specialist aids and equipment

(c) Communication

Some of our students have an identified speech, language and communication difficulty. This means that they are not always able to communicate their needs, wants or preferences to those around them. Communication between home and College is also important so parents are able to know developments within the College or the latest news. At The Westminster Specialist College, we support communication with students, staff and parents using a variety of different media. These include:

- Use of interactive whiteboards
- Use of ICT resources by students
- Visual timetables for some students
- Appropriate visual labelling and signage
- Visual support to access website information
- Updates and latest news using our social media sites
- Informal discussions with parents
- Telephone messages and conversations with parents
- Most information is available electronically and can be converted to other appropriate formats
- Governor meetings
- Social media

11. Monitoring and Impact Assessments

We include feedback from host employers, job coaches, and interns in our impact assessments, and use this to improve accessibility in external employment settings as well as within the college.

The Governing Board will review the Action Plan annually during the Summer Term. We will measure the impact of any changes or initiatives on the quality of College life in its widest sense.

The action plan will be evaluated and updated annually.

Accessing the College's plan

- The plan will be available on the College website and hard copies produced on request at the College office.

The Westminster Specialist College Accessibility Action Plan – July 2025

Physical Environment

Action	Outcome	Monitoring	Evaluation Completed	Completion Date
Review and update Accessibility Policy	To have relevant and purposeful policy	Principapal and Vice Principal, Governors	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	July 2025
Ensure that the working environment for students accessing host employers is accessible for all students	Interns can access a range of rotations at the host employers	Vice Principal Project Search Staff Host Employer Business Liaison	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	Ongoing
Ensure the college on site provision is accessible for all including any visits that may take place	All students can access onsite college provision, both for their well-being and curriculum activities	Principal/Vice Principal	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	September 2025

Curriculum

Action	Outcome	Monitoring	Evaluation Completed	Completion Date
Revise curriculum framework	Curriculum policy will be updated to reflect changes to curriculum framework	Vice Principal	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	July 2025
Embed a person centred approach to curriculum delivery	Supported internships are fully accessible to all learners with disabilities	Vice Principal, DFN Lead, Employers	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	Ongoing
Ensure DFN Project SEARCH internships are inclusive and accessible	Supported internships are fully accessible to all learners with disabilities	Vice Principal, DFN Lead, Employers	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	July 2025

Availability of Information

Action	Outcome	Monitoring	Evaluation Completed	Completion Date
Review and update the College website	Ensure that new accessibility functions are integrated into update of site	Vice Principal	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	October 2025

Ensure that all documentation sent home is accessible for all Conduct review on students where English is an Additional Language	Parents/carers will be able to understand written communication that is sent home.	Vice Principal	To be reviewed termly by SLT and employers	September 2025

Access Audit

Feature	Description	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete actions by
Number of floors	Stairs are to be kept clean, tidy and free from obstruction at all times	Ensure regular checks for clear access and lift function if applicable	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Corridor access	Corridors are wide with access for wheelchairs and standing frames	Ensure no obstructions and regular monitoring	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Parking bays	Disabled parking bays marked	Ensure spaces are clearly marked and monitored	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Entrances	Are accessible both from the front and back of the college building	Monitor access points and maintain automatic door systems	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing

Toilets	There are designated toilets with disabled access and alarms	Regular maintenance checks and alarm testing	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Reception area	Accessible to wheelchair users	Ensure reception remains uncluttered and accessible	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Internal signage	Accessible signs in place	Add symbols where necessary, maintain visual clarity	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing
Emergency escape routes	Fire evacuation plan in place. Identified students have personal emergency evacuation plans Fire exits are clear at all times	Termly checks of evacuation plans and PEEPs	Vice Principal / Site Team	Ongoing