



Accessibility Policy

2019-2022

Accessibility Strategy	June 2016
Approved Strategy by Board	August 2016
Creation of policy	October 2019
Next review of policy	June 2022
Person responsible	Head Teacher

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HAMILTON COLLEGE

Hamilton College is a co-educational, non-denominational, Christian, independent, day school accepting children and young people aged from 2 to 18 years of age incorporating a Nursery, Junior and Senior School.

We have a strong and supportive ethos based on Christian values of

**GRACE • CONFIDENCE • WISDOM
INNOVATION • COMPASSION • REFLECTION**

Grace

We aim to be humble, generous, and polite. To give willingly without expecting anything in return. To be aware of the consequences of our actions. To trust and forgive, valuing friendship and service.

Confidence

We aim to be determined. To always do our best and celebrate achievements. To develop our communication skills so that we can express ourselves clearly and articulately. To work well independently and as part of a group.

Wisdom

We aim to make responsible decisions founded on sound knowledge, considered understanding, and informed evaluation. To be balanced, expressing our views assuredly, while respecting other beliefs and opinions.

Innovation

We aim to ask difficult questions and try new things. To dare to be different. To find joy in our learning, and to inspire others. To keep trying when things get tough and to work hard, actively seeking help when we need it.

Compassion

We aim to be caring, empathetic and respectful. To be a welcoming and supportive family which contributes to local, national and international communities. To be principled, honest, and fair.

Reflection

We aim to consider our strengths with self-awareness, while learning from our mistakes. To know ourselves, considering our relationship with God and with the wider world. To listen, think, and use our experiences to advise and support others.

At all times we aim to ensure that all of the children and young people in the school enjoy a holistic educational experience in a positive, safe and nurturing educational and social environment so that the learning needs of all pupils or prospective pupils can be met.

We are fully committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, nurtured, healthy achieving, active, respected, responsible and included (Getting it Right for Every Child, GIRFEC, 2009) and this is defined in our Child Protection and Wellbeing Policy.

We welcome pupils of all faiths or none, and we seek to be proactive in promoting inclusiveness and equality through our professional development and training of our staff who will positively promote awareness of equality issues to allow all pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes and achievements.

KEY PRINCIPLES

This Accessibility Strategy aims to improve access to the full provision of education and related services for pupils with disabilities, and 'prospective pupils', i.e. those who may in future attend Hamilton College and their families. A summary of education and associated services is attached as *Appendix A*.

The Strategy has been developed in line with Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice and the Scottish Government guidance: 'Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: Guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools.'

The following key principles underpin the development of this Accessibility

Successful learners

- Promote excellence in the learning and teaching for all pupils in Hamilton College including those with additional support needs and/or disabilities as a part of a life-long learning approach.
- Deliver a full, broad, balanced and coherent curriculum for pupils from 2 to 18 years set within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).
- To ensure all pupils are safe, supported and cared for through our approach to GIRFEC.
- Enable the pupils of Hamilton College to achieve their full potential and develop their skills, talents and imagination by participating in a range of creative activities.
- Undertake a rigorous process of quality assurance using national performance measures to deliver best value in all aspects of service delivery.

Confident individuals

- Encourage pupils to enjoy new experiences, build confidence, ascertain hidden talents through our wider-curricular experiences, promoting the greatest degree of independence, social competence and social communication.
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of all staff through involvement in a continuing programme of personal and professional development, support and training.

Effective contributors

- Have in place an assessment process to enable parents, professionals and the pupils themselves to make informed judgments regarding matters which may affect their life, now and in the future.
- Promote effective collaboration with other agencies, voluntary organisations and persons involved with the child or young person.
- Embrace the philosophy of inclusion by involving young people in making decisions and enhancing their ability to communicate about matters affecting the school and their learning.
- Provide alternative means of communication and access to information in different formats and languages.

Responsible Citizens

- Foster individual and collective excellence through the creation of a caring and welcoming ethos.
- Ensure children and young people, where possible, can become active citizens and contribute to the local and school community.
- Manage the finances and resources of the school efficiently and effectively to ensure maximum accessibility

LEGISLATION

Accessibility Strategies were introduced as a result of legislation contained within the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records) (Scotland) Act, 2002, which placed a duty on Local Authorities in Scotland and those responsible for Independent and Grant Aided Schools to adopt a proactive and consistent approach to strategic planning to address three distinct elements of planned improvements for disabled children:

The purpose of the policy is, over time (each 3-year period) to:

- increase disabled pupils' participation, as far as is possible, in a full and coherent curriculum similar to their non-disabled peers.
- improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school. In addition, consideration should be given to ensure access to the school buildings and outdoor facilities provided for both pupils and adults using the campus.
- improve communication with and access to information with disabled pupils within a reasonable timescale; and in ways which are determined by taking account of their additional support needs and/or disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their families/carers/advocates. Information is to be available in a number of different formats.

The two key duties of this legislation are:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably; and
- to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

In addition, schools have duties under the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004, and as amended in 2009).

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and strengthens discrimination law. In Scotland it applies to schools managed by education authorities, independent schools and schools receiving grants under section 73(c) or (d) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- harassment and;
- victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic than they treat or would treat other people.

It is unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way it provides education for pupils,
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The relevant protected characteristics in this regard are:

- *Disability*
- *Gender reassignment*
- *Pregnancy and maternity*
- *Race*
- *Religion or belief*
- *Sex or*
- *Sexual orientation*
- *Age*
- *Marriage/civil partnership*

Best practice in monitoring and evaluation is that schools keep a written record to show that they have actively considered the equality implications and asked themselves relevant questions when making decisions.

As part of the strategy which this policy stems from, Hamilton College conducted an evaluation of this Accessibility Strategy and of the revised school [Admissions Policy](#) and Procedures.

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 considers a person to have a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities

Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Disabilities such as dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder and speech and language impairments are all likely to be disabilities under the Act. It is also important to recognize that a diagnosis is not always required for someone to meet the definition of disability.

The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

The overriding principle of equality legislation is one of equal treatment. However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that a disabled person may and often must be treated more favourably than a person who is not disabled. Schools therefore may have to make changes to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what is offered to the same extent that a person without that disability can.

The more complex provisions that apply in the case of disability are:

Direct discrimination

A school must not treat a disabled pupil less favourably simply because that pupil is disabled, for example, by having an admission bar on blind applicants.

There cannot be justification for direct discrimination in any circumstances. This means is that if a school discriminates against a person purely because of his/ her disability (even if they are trying to achieve a legitimate aim), then it would be unlawful discrimination, as there can be no justification for their actions.

Indirect discrimination

A school must not do something which applies to all pupils, but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only, for example, having a rule that all pupils must demonstrate physical fitness levels before being admitted to the school, unless they can show that it is done for a legitimate reason, and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Discrimination arising from disability

A school must not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability, for example, by not allowing a disabled pupil with crutches outside at break time, because it would take too long for him/her to get out and back to the classroom. Like indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability can potentially be justified.

Reasonable adjustments and when they have to be made

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies only to disabled people. For schools, the duty is summarised as follows:

- Where something a school does places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils.

However, schools in Scotland are not subject to the requirement of reasonable adjustment duty concerned with making alterations to physical features of the school building or environment because this is already considered as part of the Accessibility Strategy planning duties.

Auxiliary aids and services

The duty to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment duty is a change for all schools from September 2012. Many disabled children will also have an additional support need (ASN) and may need auxiliary aids which are necessary as part of their ASN provision.

Schools have to consider whether to provide auxiliary aids as a reasonable adjustment for disabled children. This will particularly be the case where a disabled child does not have a Co-ordinated Support Plan. Schools require to take account of the requirements of the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 and as revised in 2009. Recording the process and in considering the general quality duties, decisions should be measured and proportionate to the issue under consideration and the individual case.

THE PLANNING GROUP

The responsible body is the “Proprietor” i.e. Christian Schools (Scotland) Ltd. In practice, any persons acting on behalf of the responsible body, including employees of the school, are liable for their own discriminatory actions, and the responsible body is also liable unless it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the individual from doing the discriminatory act.

The Principal (Head Teacher) of Hamilton College developed an Accessibility Strategy in 2016, by chairing a Strategic Planning Group and establishing 3 sub-planning groups involving staff, parents, Governors and key stakeholders involved with the school.

The sub planning group ceased to exist after the strategy was implemented. This has now been replaced with a group who oversee and audit the policy. See Appendix B for names.

AUDIT AND REVIEW

Hamilton College is a selective Independent School where impact on learners' achievement is a key focus in providing a range of learning and teaching approaches.

At present, we have a number of pupils with disabilities including some with hearing and visual impairments. We also recognise that pupils can suffer physical and mental health issues, family stress and bereavement, for example, at various times during their lives. We also have pupils for whom English is an additional language and we take pride in the inclusive nature of our provision and celebrate the different religions and cultures in the school.

This policy is audited annually and progress documented in the Action Plan at the back of the document.

Admissions Policy

Our Admissions Policy sets out the key requirements for entry to the school and identifies that reasonable adjustments will be put in place to ensure pupils with disabilities are not disadvantaged or discriminated against and are given additional support where required. The Admissions Policy has been thoroughly reviewed in January 2020.

In keeping with the legislation, although we promote a Christian ethos, we accept pupils of different faiths and pupils from families who have no faith.

In our commitment to wider access, The Board of Governors operate a bursary scheme to give help to pupils from all backgrounds to access education and care in Hamilton College.

We have an assessment process for entry to the school and reasonable adjustments are made to ensure children or young people with disabilities or their families are not disadvantaged or discriminated against in any way.

THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan for 2019 - 2022 has stemmed from the strategy document (2016 - 2019), (Staff Handbook) and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis. National performance measures e.g. How Good is our School (HGIOS 4) and How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC) are used to shape this policy. The policy also takes account of pertinent legislation.

The Plan sets out the timescale for the action plan and focuses on a manageable and meaningful number of key priorities and outcomes.

How the priorities were determined?

The priorities for inclusion in the Action Plan take account of the School Improvement Plan priorities, Self-evaluation through HGIOS 4, HMle and external evaluations.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was completed and reviewed in the strategy document that shape these priorities. In this way we will demonstrate our commitment to ensuring Hamilton College will reduce any potential barriers to learning, enhance equality in all that we do and ensure that the policy and practice in the school is non-discriminatory to people with disabilities and protected characteristics.

The Action Plan

Improvement in access to the curriculum	Issue	Action	Person responsible	Timescale	Success Criteria	Method of Evaluation
1.1	Ensure appropriate deployment of PSL staff.	Review needs of students and assign PSL staff to meet needs of student and using the staff expertise	Head of MS and Head of Junior School	Ongoing and as appropriate adjustments will be made	Increased access to the curriculum. Needs of all students met in line with student support plans Student progress	Day to day basis Lesson observations. Parental feedback.
1.2	Ensure quality teaching, through CPD (including Scaffolding, deployment of PSL in the classroom) for all to improve disabled students' access.	Deliver regular staff training during mandatory staff CPD time.	Head of US	Regular programme of CPD is delivered throughout academic year	Increased access to the curriculum Needs of all students met in line with student support plans Student progress	SLT during lesson observations. Parental feedback
1.3	Appropriate use of specialised equipment to benefit individual students and staff.	Identified specialised equipment will be purchased and used where a need is identified by Physiotherapy, Occupational Health, Educational Psychologist	PSL and HoDs	Ongoing. As appropriate adjustments will be made on a case by case basis	Increased access to the curriculum Needs of all students met in line with student support plans	Student Progress Staff feedback

1.4	The ongoing requirement to recognise individualised needs when delivering behaviour sanctions	The ongoing requirement to recognise individualised needs when administering punishments	All staff	Ongoing. As and when appropriate for student need.	Increased understanding of student needs	Student Progress Staff feedback Parental feedback
1.5	Transition - ensure all information regarding student disabilities is shared and adjustments in place prior to transition events.	Information sharing between year groups throughout the school Information sought from feeder schools on pupils ASN needs Review of transition/New Pupil Process	SLT and PS staff	Ongoing	Increased understanding of student needs Increased access to the curriculum. Needs of all students met. Information rich and accurate support plans	Student Progress Staff feedback Parental feedback Admissions feedback

Improving Access to the Physical Environment of the School		Issue	Action	Person responsible	Timescale	Success Criteria	Method of Evaluation
2.1	No desk that is adjustable for a wheelchair	Wheelchair accessible desk in the study room opposite SLT offices	CEO	In place	Desk installed for future use	Access to study room with desk for any pupil who is injured	
2.2	Handrail at dining hall doors are loose	Fix or replace handrail	Facilities managers	In place	Handrail is steady and fit for purpose	Handrail secured and checked by staff on duty	
						Fire exit has hand rail to support less able walkers	
2.3	No access to JS classes from J4 - J7 for a wheelchair unless through assembly hall	Install a ramp at the end of the infant corridor down the stairs to the red carpet area	Facilities Manager	By June 2022	Ramp is installed Access to classrooms is easier	Pupils and guests in wheelchairs can access all JS classes without going through the hall	
2.4	Handrail from assembly hall, up the 3-4 stairs to Multi-use toilet would assist disabled visitors	Add a handrail on the wall, at front exit of assembly hall, leading up to multi-use toilet	Facilities Manager	In place	Handrail installed	Less mobile visitors would access toilet(s) more easily	
2.5	PVSAR - Notified on 16 Dec 19 that buses that transport children to and from school need to be fit for	Work with bus company to look at a solution Use taxi's where this impacts a pupil with ASN (none at	CEO	Regulations delayed. Supplier confirms at 5/21 that compliance in place.	Solution sought to new legislation. Re-assess in June 2022	We comply with new legislation	

ASN. Our supplier does not conform to this.

present but needs reviewed daily)
Risk assess current model
Have a long term solution in place by August 2020 - now August 2023

Improving Communication Access to school information and ICT	Issue	Action	Person responsible	Timescale	Success Criteria	Method of Evaluation
3.1	New website and parent app improves communication with the school	New website launch that is fully accessible across platforms New Parent App used to ensure information is all in one place for parents	Marketing Manager and ICT Manager	In place	New website installed New parent app launched	Student Feedback Staff feedback Parental feedback
3.2	Prospectus and other literature not easily available in different languages	Create list of services that can convert parental documentation into different languages and braille	Marketing manager	In place Read aloud programme available	List of apps or services created to use as and when required	Staff feedback Parental feedback
3.3	Greater access to ICT provision	1:1 Device programme O365 and in built tools	Head of US and ICT Manager	In place	Pupils in J6 - S6 have a 1:1 device	Student Progress Staff feedback Parental feedback
3.4	Pupils printing from own device	Pupils able to print from own devices and 1:1 devices	ICT Manager	In place	Pupils can print from any device	Student Feedback Staff feedback

Appendix A - Education and Associated Services

The following are examples of what would be considered within the broad definition of education and associated services. Most of these examples will carry duties under the Equality Act 2010:

- preparation for entry to the school,
- the curriculum, teaching and learning,
- classroom organisation,
- timetabling,
- grouping of pupils,
- homework,
- access to school facilities,
- activities to supplement the curriculum (such as a drama group visiting the school),
- school sports,
- school policies,
- breaks and lunchtimes,
- the serving of school meals,
- interaction with peers, assessment and exam arrangements,
- school discipline and sanctions,
- exclusion procedures,
- school clubs and activities,
- school trips,
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies, and preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.

Appendix B - Audit and Review Group

- Heather Stark (Head of Upper School & Interim Director of Education)
- Marion Cunningham (Governor)
- Jenny Paterson (Head of Junior School & Nursery)
- Stuart Ross (Head of Middle School)
- Kenny Gibson (Facilities Manager)
- Katie Morton (Chief Executive)
- Phil Macfarlane (IT Manager)
- Elaine McCulloch (Pupil Support Learning)
- Barry McGinness (Marketing Manager)

HAMILTON COLLEGE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Education (Disability, Strategies & Pupil Records) (Scotland) Act 2002

SECTION A: GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Our policy as Hamilton College Board of Governors is to improve access to the full provision of education and related services for pupils with disabilities, and 'prospective pupils' i.e. those who may in future attend Hamilton College and their families.

The allocation of tasks and duties for accessibility matters and the particular arrangements which we will make to implement this policy are as set out within this document.

This policy will be brought to the attention of, and/or issued to, all members of staff.

We intend to achieve continuing improvement in our accessibility arrangements. To that end, we shall review this policy and the way in which it operates on an ongoing basis. The policy shall be subject also to a formal annual review.

The above Statements may be downloaded under Whole School Health Policies.

Signed: 

Marion Cunningham, (Board of Governors)

Date: - 13 / 07 / 21

Signed: 

Richard A Charman, (Headteacher)

Date: - 28/07/21

