



Norfolk House School

Disability Access Plan 2026–2029

Norfolk House School and Nursery

Upper School, Muswell Avenue · Lower School and Nursery, Princes Avenue

This is the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It applies to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Plan period	September 2026 – August 2029
Approved	September 2026
Annual review	Each September (next review: September 2027)
Plan owner	Headteacher
Delivered with	SENCo; Business Manager; Deputy Head (Pastoral & Operations)
Monitored by	Bellevue Education governance
Replaces	Disability Access Plan 2023–2026

1. Why we have this plan

The Equality Act 2010 requires every school to have a written accessibility plan, to put it into practice and to keep it under review. The plan covers three years and sets out how the school will, over that time:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take part in the curriculum — including clubs, trips, sport and the wider life of the school;
- improve the physical environment, so that disabled pupils can make better use of the education and facilities the school offers;
- improve the way we give disabled pupils information that other pupils receive in writing — within a reasonable time, and in a way that takes account of their disability and any preferences they or their parents express.

This duty looks ahead. It is about making the school more accessible over time, whether or not a pupil with a particular disability is currently on roll or has applied. We plan now so that, when a family asks whether their child could join us or stay with us, we can give an accurate answer quickly and act without delay.

Alongside this plan, the school has a separate duty to make reasonable adjustments for individual disabled pupils, including providing auxiliary aids and services such as specialist equipment or support. That duty does not extend to changing the physical features of a building, which is why this plan pays particular attention to our premises. The school does not charge parents for reasonable adjustments.

In deciding what is reasonable, the school takes account of:

- the cost and practicality of an adjustment;
- the resources available to the school, and any external funding;
- health and safety;
- the interests of other pupils;
- any planning or conservation constraints on our buildings.

In drawing up and reviewing this plan, the school has regard to the need to allocate adequate resources to put it into practice.

2. What we mean by disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. “Long-term” means the effect has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months.

Depending on its effect, it can include:

- sensory impairments, such as hearing or visual impairment;
- long-term medical conditions, such as epilepsy, diabetes or severe allergies;
- mental health conditions;
- many special educational needs — for example autism, ADHD, dyslexia or developmental coordination disorder.

Some conditions, including cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis, count as a disability from the point of diagnosis.

So although the school has not recently had a pupil with a mobility impairment, it does teach disabled pupils, and much of this plan is about them. Not every pupil with SEN is disabled, and not every disabled pupil has SEN; where both apply, this plan works alongside the SEN Policy.

3. Our sites

Norfolk House occupies two period buildings in Muswell Hill. Their age and layout set limits on what can be changed.

Upper School — Muswell Avenue (Years 2–6)

- A Victorian building, completed in 1897, arranged over several floors.
- Access between floors is by staircase only. In 2012 the school assessed whether a lift or stairlift could be installed; neither was feasible because of the width and layout of the stairs.
- The main entrance has double doors. There is no ramp at present; a portable low-gradient ramp would be needed for step-free access to the entrance, and to the office, rear exit and dining hall.
- There is no accessible toilet on the ground floor, because there is not the space to create one. A shower is available on the top floor.

Lower School and Nursery — Princes Avenue (Nursery to Year 1)

- Built shortly after 1900. Access between floors is by staircase only.
- The front pathway was raised in August 2014 to make assisted access easier.
- Double doors and a ramp at the rear of the building give step-free access, including to a fire exit.
- There is an accessible toilet on the ground floor, in the Pre-Nursery room (‘Little Cadets’).

Because both buildings have upper floors reachable only by stairs, the most realistic way to include a pupil with limited mobility is to plan their day around ground-floor rooms and step-free routes. The access audit in this plan (action B1) is there so that we can do that at short notice.

4. Our previous (2023–2026) plan

The previous plan set out several premises and communication actions to be taken “as and when needed” — among them acquiring ramps for the Upper School, surveying internal door widths and investigating how classrooms could be adapted. No pupil needing these adjustments joined or applied during the period, so these actions were not triggered. Support for pupils with SEND continued through the school’s SEN procedures, including termly pupil progress meetings and Personal Support Plans.

The main lesson is that an action written as “when needed” cannot be checked or evaluated, and leaves the school starting from nothing if a need does arise. This plan therefore separates two things:

- planned actions, with dates, that the school will carry out regardless of who is on roll (section 6); and
- the steps the school will take, and how quickly, when a particular need arises (section 5).

Several of the 2023 actions — including the door-width survey and the Upper School ramps — are carried forward as planned actions, so that the preparation is done in advance.

5. When a specific need arises

When the school learns that a prospective or current pupil has a disability that affects their access to the school, it takes the following steps. The same approach applies, adapted as necessary, to parents and carers who need adjustments in order to take part in school life.

1. Within 10 school days, the SENCo arranges a meeting with the parents — and the pupil, where appropriate — together with the Headteacher or Head of Lower School.
2. The school uses its site access audit (B1) to identify which rooms, routes and facilities the pupil can use, and whether lessons can be moved to ground-floor rooms.
3. Any portable ramp is ordered from the specification already on file (B2), aiming to have it in place within two weeks.
4. A personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) is agreed before the pupil starts or, for a current pupil, within five school days.
5. Specialist equipment, auxiliary aids and services — such as seating, playground equipment, ICT or adult support — are identified and sourced.
6. With parental consent, the school seeks advice from outside professionals, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists or the local sensory support service.
7. Staff working with the pupil are briefed, and training is arranged where needs are complex.
8. The arrangements are reviewed within half a term, and then at least termly.

The school keeps a written record of what was considered at each stage, including any adjustment judged not to be reasonable and the reasons why.

6. Action plan 2026–2029

Dates show the latest point by which each action should be complete. The final column is filled in at each annual review.

Action	Lead	By when	Resources	Success criteria	Progress and evaluation (date and initials)
A. Taking part in the curriculum and wider school life					
Use termly pupil progress meetings to identify pupils with SEND or disabilities, record the adjustments in place for each, and check their impact.	SENCo; Director of Studies	Each term, from Autumn 2026	Staff time	Every pupil on the SEN register has recorded adjustments, reviewed each term.	
Train all teaching and support staff in adaptive teaching for disabled pupils — including autism, ADHD, sensory impairment and physical disability — through one INSET session a year and new-staff induction.	SENCo	First session by December 2026; then annually	CPD budget	Attendance recorded; staff report greater confidence in the annual staff survey.	
Put access arrangements in place for internal assessments and 11+ preparation (for example extra time, rest breaks, a reader or scribe, or assistive technology), and share them with parents.	SENCo; Director of Studies	Before each assessment window; for Years 5 and 6 by October each year	Staff time	Every eligible pupil has arrangements in place before the assessment.	
Make sure every educational visit and club considers the needs of disabled pupils at the planning stage, including checking venue accessibility in advance and recording adjustments on the risk assessment.	Educational Visits Coordinator; visit leaders	Every visit, from Autumn 2026	Within visit budgets	Annual sample of visit risk assessments shows adjustments considered; no pupil left out through lack of planning.	
Review PE, games and fixtures so that disabled pupils can take part, through adapted activities or alternative roles.	Director of Sport	By July 2027	Staff time; small equipment budget	Adapted options written into PE planning.	
Switch on the accessibility features already built into pupils' Chromebooks (screen reader, magnification, dictation) and give staff a short guide to using them.	Director of Studies; IT support	By March 2027	Nil — built in	Features available on all pupil devices; staff guide issued.	
Ask pupils with SEND or disabilities each year what gets in the way of their learning and school life, and use their answers in the annual review.	SENCo	Each summer term	Staff time	Pupils' views summarised in the annual review.	

Action	Lead	By when	Resources	Success criteria	Progress and evaluation (date and initials)
Agree an individual healthcare plan for each pupil with a long-term medical condition before they start or within two weeks of diagnosis, covering trips and off-site activities, in line with the school's medical conditions and allergy arrangements.	Lead First Aider; SENCo	Ongoing; plans reviewed annually	Staff time; training as required	Every relevant pupil has a current plan, reviewed at least annually.	
B. The physical environment					
Carry out an access audit of both sites: measure internal door widths (including the fire door into Reception), map step-free routes, and identify ground-floor rooms that could be used for a pupil with limited mobility. Record the results on the site plans.	Business Manager; site staff; SENCo	By December 2026	Staff time	Written audit on file for each site, and used to answer enquiries.	
Obtain a specification and quote for portable low-gradient ramps for the Upper School main entrance and the route to the office, rear exit and dining hall, so that they can be ordered and in place within two weeks of a need arising.	Business Manager	By February 2027	Approx. £200 per ramp (indicative)	Quote on file; supplier and lead time confirmed.	
Write a standard personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) procedure for anyone with limited mobility or a sensory impairment — pupils, staff, parents and visitors — covering the upper floors of both buildings, and test it in a drill.	Deputy Head (Pastoral & Operations)	By December 2026; reviewed annually	Staff time	Procedure included in the Fire Safety Policy and tested in a drill.	
Review classrooms for lighting, glare, noise and display clutter, and identify a calm, quiet space at each site for pupils who need one.	SENCo; Head of Lower School	By July 2027	Minimal (for example blinds)	A calm space identified at each site; display guidance issued to staff.	
Add contrasting edges to stair nosings and second handrails where the staircases allow, and check that signage is clear.	Business Manager	By July 2028	To be quoted	Work completed, or reasons it is not feasible recorded.	
Build accessibility into any refurbishment or building work during 2026–29 from the design stage — for example door widths, handrails, colour contrast and toilet provision — and reconsider lift or stairlift options if major works are planned.	Headteacher; Bellevue estates	Ongoing, as projects arise	Within project budgets	Accessibility considered and recorded in each project brief.	

Action	Lead	By when	Resources	Success criteria	Progress and evaluation (date and initials)
C. Information					
Provide written information for pupils — worksheets, timetables, homework and signs — in an accessible format when needed (for example enlarged print, coloured paper or overlays, symbols, visual timetables or audio), within five school days, taking account of the pupil's and parents' preferences.	SENCo; class teachers	Process in place by December 2026	Minimal	Requests met within five school days.	
Ask parents at admission, and each year on the data collection sheet, whether they need school information in another format, and record their preference on the MIS.	Business Manager; school office	From the September 2027 data collection	Minimal	Preferences recorded and acted on.	
Check the school website against the WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standard — including colour contrast, headings, image descriptions, and whether policy PDFs can be read by screen readers — and fix any problems found.	Headteacher; Bellevue marketing	By March 2027; rechecked annually	Low	Check completed; fixes logged.	
Review admissions and parent-facing documents each year to make sure their wording does not unintentionally disadvantage disabled pupils or parents.	Headteacher; SLT	Each summer term	Staff time	Review completed and minuted.	

7. Monitoring and review

- The Headteacher and SENCo review progress against this plan with the senior leadership team each term.
- A full review takes place each September. Its findings — completed actions, any that have slipped, and any new ones — are reported to Bellevue Education governance.
- When reviewing the plan, the school takes account of the views of disabled pupils and their parents (action A7), any new guidance, and any changes to the premises.
- The plan is revised whenever a significant change, such as building work or the admission of a pupil with new access needs, makes that necessary.

8. Related policies

This plan should be read with the school’s SEN Policy, Admissions Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, First Aid Policy, Fire Safety and Prevention Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Curriculum Policy and Complaints Procedure.

9. Getting a copy, and raising a concern

This plan is published on the school website. A copy is available free of charge on request, in large print or another format if needed — please contact the school office or the SENCo at senco@norfolkhouseschool.org.

If you have a concern about access, or about how the school has responded to a disability, please speak to the SENCo or the Headteacher first. If it is not resolved, you can use the school’s Complaints Procedure. Parents also have the right to bring a claim of disability discrimination against a school to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).