Accessibility Plan

1. Rationale and Aim

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to strategically increase access to students in the three areas required under Schedule 10 of the Equalities Act 2010:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

2. Policy

In England and Wales the construction of new buildings and the refurbishment of existing property is governed by the Building Regulations. Approved Document M of the Building Regulations provides guidance on access and facilities for disabled people on non-domestic buildings and dwellings. If a building is built in accordance with Part M characteristics, which still comply, it will not have to be altered. Characteristics, such as door handles, not covered by Approved Document M may need altering to improve accessibility. Where an area of access is not covered by Part M then it defers to British Standard - BS8300: 2001 (Amended 2004): Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of Practice.

3. Plan

Objective	Action	Resources	Timescale
Increasing curriculum participation	Samuel Whitbread has invested heavily in a developing literacy among those for whom this is a barrier to their learning. We have purchased market leading software to support with reading and have developed more handwriting programmes	Staffing and support groups Lexia Purchased. Training for students and staff	From September 2022 Ongoing
Improving the physical environment	Samuel Whitbread has expanded its Additional Resourced Provision to a 21 space setting with additional space in the 6th form. In order to do this the school has secured funding from the Local Authority to remodel the Learning Support area to make it more accessible and more suited to the needs of those with ASD, particularly for those at KS3	Significant building works to the LS department area.	By Summer 2023

	The outside space is now being improved by the students and staff.		
Improving the delivery of accessible information	Ensuring that information is available in a variety of formats. Working with our design and publication team to ensure that the website is accessible and any output is also presented in an accessible format. Provision Maps has been purchased to improve accessible information for staff and parents	Work with Publications team to ensure accessibility Use of design team - in-house	Throughout the year Autumn term Ongoing

4. Links with other Policies

This plan is to be read in conjunction with the Equalities Policy, SEND Policy and HR documents.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated through ongoing self-evaluation and analysis of the outcomes of students.

6. Implementation and Review

This will be implemented by the members of staff in the academies. The Assistant Principal (SEND and Inclusion) is responsible for policy implementation. This policy will be made known to all staff, parent/carers, students and Trustees via academy websites. This policy will be reviewed by the SWA Governors every three years.

7. Author and Date

Thomas Rowell, November 2016
Updated Autumn 2019
Updated TAR – October 2022
Updated JAS – March 2026

Date ratified by Governors – March 2026
To be reviewed February 2029

8. Appendix

Site accessibility works undertaken

The Samuel Whitbread Academy is comprised of 5 individual buildings known as Block 1, 3, 4, 6 and 20 ranging from the 1970s construction to new build. In 2004 through to 2006 a redevelopment of the site was completed. Project was undertaken to construct a new two story building (block 3) to house the PE, science, IT and languages departments as part of a PFI agreement. Additional refurbishment works were completed in blocks 6 and 4. Block 1 was fully redesigned and included a front elevation extension. Block 20 was broadly left alone as this was only constructed in 2003 as part of a separate project under the council. The site is accessed off Shefford Road via the car park where approximately 170 individual car parking bays are provided. Immediately in front of Blocks 1, 3 and 4 there are a number of drop off zones for coaches. Pupils can alight directly onto the pavement. There are also a number of dropped kerbs to allow for wheelchair access. Similarly pupils can be dropped off to the rear of Block 6.

8.1.1. Block 3.

This 2 storey building (GF-1F) was constructed in 2004 / 2005 and contains the school's main reception. The following departments are situated in Block 3;

- Science (GF)
- PE & Sports Hall (GF)
- Language Classrooms (1F)
- IT/Business Studies (1F)

All visitors must report to the reception before accessing the school.
The building provides a good level of access with a semi-automatic main entrance door. The reception contains a low counter section and there is adequate space to manoeuvre.
Broad hard flooring in the corridors offers a good level of horizontal circulation and all classroom doors comply to Part M with a minimum opening clearance of 750mm.
There are 4 separate staircases to provide access/egress to/from the First floor all of which provide handrails. Contrasting nosings are displayed on each step tread and riser. There is also a disabled passenger lift.
Staff and pupil WCs including unisex disabled WCs are located on each floor level.
In addition to audible fire alarm sounders visible alarms are installed throughout the building as required under RRO.
All pupils who are severely disabled are assigned a helper who assists with access and emergency egress. Each stair case on the First floor is a designated 'Safe Refuge' containing 'Evac-chairs'. The assistants are trained to use these to aid with evacuation of disabled pupils.

8.1.2. Block 1

Located adjacent to Block 3 the 2 storey building (GF-1F) was constructed in 2006 and is used for the main school assembly. The following departments are situated in Block 1;

- Assembly Halls (GF)
- Drama, Dance and Music (GF)
- Art Department (1F)
- Student Services (GF)

Block 1 is also accessed by the public such as parents attending performances.

The building is accessed via a double glass door which is opened manually. This leads into a stair lobby where access to the First floor can be attained. A further double door leads into the main rectangular-shaped corridor from which all rooms can be accessed.
Again the building provides a good level of access with hard floors and broad corridors. All classroom doors comply with Part M with a minimum opening clearance of 750mm.
A disabled passenger lift is located opposite the music office, providing access to the First floor. A second stair on the southern aspect of the building also provides access/egress from the upper floor.
Male and female WCs including unisex disabled WCs are located on each floor level.
In addition to audible fire alarm sounders visible alarms are installed throughout the building. All pupils who are severely disabled are assigned a helper who assist with access and emergency egress. Each stair case on the First floor is a designated 'Safe Refuge' containing 'ResQMats'. The assistants are trained to use these to aid with evacuation of non-ambulatory pupils.

8.1.3. Block 4

Situated adjacent to Block 1 the original building was constructed in 1973 and refurbished in 2005. A 2 storey building (GF-1F) contains the school's main dining facilities. The following departments/facilities are situated in Block 4;

- Dining/Social Area (GF)
- Maths Department (GF)
- Finance, Exams, Data and First Aid (GF)
- Learning Support Centre (GF)
- Geography Department (1F)
- History Department (1F)
- Social Studies (1F)
- RE Department (1F)

Visitors access the building to attend open evening.
The building contains 6 entrance points at Ground level. Disabled entrance signage is displayed externally leading visitors to the entrance close to the Dining Room.
The entrance is preceded by an incline where the concrete has been built up to create a level threshold. The entrance itself consists of a Smarts system aluminium double door. This leads into the main corridor from which all rooms at Ground floor level can be accessed. A platform lift is located in the dining area, providing access to the First floor.
All classroom doors comply to Part M with a minimum opening clearance of 750mm.
There are 4 separate staircases to provide access/egress from the First floor.
Staff and pupil WCs including unisex disabled WCs are located on each floor level.
On the south-west corner of the building, close to the rear car park, a separate entrance provides access to the Learning Support Centre. Access is gained via a shallow incline leading to a single outward opening door. This part of the school is used by pupils with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.
In addition to audible fire alarm sounders visible alarms are installed throughout the building. All pupils who are severely disabled are assigned a helper who assists with access and emergency egress. Each stair case on the First floor is a designated 'Safe Refuge' containing 'ResQMats'. The assistants are trained to use these to aid with evacuation of non-ambulatory pupils.

8.1.4. Block 6

Situated to the rear of Block 4 the original building was constructed in 1973 and refurbished in 2006. A single storey building (GF only) contains the school's engineering and crafts departments. The following departments/facilities are situated in Block 6;

- Design Technology and Engineering
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) Provision
- Dining Room

Visitors access the building to attend occasional competitions and open evenings.
Access levels are good. The entrance is preceded by a short incline and consists of Smarts system aluminium double door. This leads into the main circulation from which all rooms at Ground floor level can be accessed.
All classroom doors comply with Part M with a minimum opening clearance of 750mm. A number of class rooms also contain their own emergency exit door to comply with fire regulations.
Staff and pupil WCs including unisex disabled WCs are located throughout.
A separate level Fire escape provides emergency egress and limited access to the ASC Unit, which contains its own WC and kitchen.
In addition to audible fire alarm sounders visible alarms are installed throughout the building.

8.1.5. Block 20

Situated to the rear of Block 1 the building was constructed in 2003 and consists of 3 storeys. It is designated as the Sixth Form Block. The following departments/facilities are situated in Block 4;

- Sixth Form Centre, including study space, IT, dining, common room, offices. (GF)
- Library (1F)
- Office space (1F)

Overall access levels are satisfactory. The building entrance is preceded by a flight of steps. An alternative incline/ramp can be used to access the main entrance, which consists of a Smarts system aluminium double door, fitted with toughened double glazed panels and a remote control access system for disabled use.
This leads into the main corridor from which all rooms at Ground floor level can be accessed. All classroom doors comply with Part M with a minimum opening clearance of 750mm.
There are 2 separate staircases to provide access/egress to the First and second floors plus a platform lift.
Male and female WCs plus a unisex disabled WCs are located on the Ground floor.
In addition to the main entrance there are 2 further entrances both accessed from the Second floor. All disabled access to the west entrance second floor is via the platform lift.
Pupils who are severely disabled are assigned a helper who assists with access and emergency egress. Each stair case on the First floor is a designated ‘Safe Refuge’ containing ‘ResQMats’. The assistants are trained to use these to aid with evacuation of non-ambulatory pupils.

8.1.6. Around the site

Lift keys will be made available for any events where parents and members of the public may need access to the full site, such as at parents’ evenings.
Signage around the site is clear and accessible, the school makes use of the SWA communications team to improve this aspect.