

Hitchin British Schools Trust The British Schools Museum

Access Policy Statement

This document prepared by the Curator/Manager:

(Sign).....(Date).....

This Document is to be review annually

Next Review: April 2018

Hitchin British Schools Trust

Hitchin British School Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity

Registered Office 41/42 Queen Street, Hitchin, Hertfordshire UK SG4 9TS

Registered in England No. 2576495. Registered Charity No. 1010345

www.britishschoolsmuseum.co.uk *email: admin@hitchinbritishschools.org.uk*

Access Policy Statement for the British Schools Museum, Hitchin.

Status as at 8 January 2016

This page sets out the British Schools Museum's Access Statement based on a template provided by Visit Britain.

1 What is an Access Policy Statement?

An Access Statement is a written, clear, accurate, and above all honest description of our current facilities and the services we offer, to enable you to make an informed decision as to whether the Museum meets your particular access needs.

2 Introduction

The Museum tells the story of education as it developed on the site from the date the first school opened here in 1810. The furnished classrooms are open to the public and equipped to show the history of elementary education from pre-Victorian times to 1969, when the school finally closed. Interpretation of the site is effected through text panels and folders of graphic and textual information, an extensive photographic archive, guided and self-guided tours, using objects (both in cases and on open display to touch and explore), historic teaching methods (on the first Sunday of each month and by prior appointment) DVDs and digital photograph frames and temporary exhibitions.

3 Pre-Arrival

- ❖ The museum is opposite the ASDA supermarket on Queen Street. There are brown tourist information signs on the roads entering Hitchin and signs for pedestrians in the market square. You can plan your journey by car or public transport using www.transportdirect.info to get directions, simply enter your postcode and ours, which is SG4 9TS.
- ❖ There is no visitor parking available at the museum except by prior arrangement for Blue Badge holders. There are plenty of public car parking spaces (pay and display) nearby at the St Mary's Church car park along Queen Street by the market.
- ❖ Hitchin Railway Station is exactly 1 mile from the museum and is on the direct line from London Kings Cross to Peterborough and Cambridge. Taxis are available at the station.
- ❖ Hitchin is served by bus from London, Luton, Bedford, Cambridge and Stevenage. The bus stop is by St Mary's Church, just 3 minutes walk from the museum.

4 Admission Prices

- ❖ General admission is £4.50 for adults and £2.50 for children. Discounted family tickets are available. Children under 5 enter free. Access to the café and shop are free. Where a visitor requires the assistance of a carer in order to visit the museum, the entry fee for the carer is waived.

5 Navigation around the site

Note: In terms of access for wheelchair users, at least 750mm clear opening width (ie the actual space that is available between the door frame and the door in the open position) and a maximum of 13mm lip at the threshold is generally considered suitable. ¹

5.1 Main Entrance, Reception and Shop

- The entrance to the reception area is via two sets of manually-operated double doors; each has a small 'lip' but are suitable for wheelchair access.
- The reception area is sited within the Museum's Meeting Room. Displays and an extensive range of folders with information about the museum, its history and current and previous exhibitions are available to view.
- Also available at reception/shop are leaflets for visitors for self-guided tours and colouring sheets and other activities for younger visitors. Dressing-up clothes are available for children wishing to tour the site dressed as a Victorian child.
- The shop sells souvenirs, toys, books, postcards and prints. We accept cash and cheques.
- The room is also used for talks, training sessions and meetings. A hearing induction loop was installed in September 2015.

5.2 Café

- Access to the café is via a set of manually-operated double doors; there is a small 'lip' but it is suitable for wheelchair access.

5.3 Exhibition Gallery

- Access to the Exhibition Gallery is from the café, through a manually operated single door with an operative width of 700mm
- The case layouts within the Gallery have been planned to include space for the turning circle of a wheelchair
- An audio-post was acquired in 2014 and provides interpretation designed to improve the experience for visitors with visual impairments

5.4 Discovery Room

- Access to the museum room is from the shop, via two manually operated single doors; both with an operative width of 700mm
- The Museum Room holds displays of Victorian domestic and school life and includes numerous objects which visitors are welcome to handle

¹ Making access to goods and services easier for disabled customers – Disability Rights Commission. Accessed via http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Everydaylifeandaccess/Everydayaccess/DG_4018353 on 9 July 2012

5.5 'Boys' School'

- Access to the complex of buildings known as the 'Boys' School' is via a long slope leading from the car park. There are two small steps near the top of the slope, for which temporary ramps can be erected by museum staff/volunteers on request
- The main access to the 'Boys' School' is via two sets of stone steps, but a ramp, designed for wheelchair users, gives access to the rear entrance via two manually opening single doors, both with an operative width of approx 800mm. This provides access to:
 - **The Monitorial Schoolroom**
 - A grade II* listed building dating from 1837 set up to demonstrate the monitorial teaching method

This, in turn, leads on to two further classrooms:

The Edwardian classroom

- Accessed via a manually operated single door with an operative width of approx 770mm
- Built in 1905 and set up to demonstrate a typical classroom of the 1905 – 1938 period

The WW2 classroom

- Accessed via manually operated double doors
- Built in 1905 and set up to demonstrate a typical classroom of the 1939 – 1950s period

5.6 The Gallery classroom

- A Grade II* listed building dating from 1953 and set up to demonstrate a classroom of the mid-Victorian period
- Accessed only via a flight of stone steps, no wheelchair access currently
- A video of the Gallery Classroom has been prepared, which can be viewed in the Museum's Meeting Room and via the Museum's website
- A folder containing an extensive photographic record of the Gallery Classroom is available in the Meeting Room

5.7 The Headmaster's House

- Only accessible via a flight of steps, no wheelchair access currently
- A video tour of the Headmaster's House is available to view in the Meeting Room. A folder containing an extensive photographic record of the Headmaster's House is also available

5.8 The air-raid shelter

- Only accessible via a flight of steps, no wheelchair access currently

5.9 Public Areas - General

- The flooring throughout the internal areas of the museum is of carpet and wood. The external areas are of tarmac, block paving, stone steps and a wooden ramp to allow wheelchair access to the 'Boys' School'
- Seating is provided throughout the site
- Lighting is mainly by strip-lighting, window blinds are widely used to protect the artefacts
- All areas of the museum are heated. However, during period of very cold weather some parts of the site can be cold
- The galleries include a variety of opportunities for accessing information, including text panels, information folders, photographs, Video and digital photo frame presentations handling/tactile objects, toys and dressing up clothes.
- Guided tours of the site are available and inclusive in the entry price

6 Toilets (WCs)

On the lower site

- There is a male toilet (WC), 2 urinals, 2 cubicles
- There is a female toilet (WC), with 4 cubicles
- There is one unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet

On the upper site

- There is a toilet block with 4 cubicles (unisex)

Details of unisex accessible toilet:

- There is one unisex accessible toilet with baby changing facilities.
- The operative width of door is 940mm
- The height of toilet (floor to seat) is 450mm metres
- The height of the wash basin (floor to rim) is 700mm metres
- There are vertical and horizontal wall rails to the left of the toilet
- There are vertical and horizontal wall rails to the right of the toilet
- A drop-down grab rail can be lowered from a vertical to horizontal position to the left of the toilet
- There is an alarm call cord (red) which alerts volunteers in the cafe

7 Refreshment area

- There is a café with seating for up to 16 people. Hot and cold drinks, snacks and home made cakes and scones are sold.

8 Additional Information

- Assistance dogs welcome – water bowl available on request
- No smoking in the buildings

9 Contact Information

- Address: 41/42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS (Opposite ASDA supermarket)
- Telephone: +44 (0)1462 420144
- Email: admin@hitchinbritishschools.org.uk
- Website: www.britishschoolsmuseum.co.uk

10 2017 Hours of opening

Friday: 10am – 4pm

Saturday: 10am – 1pm

Sundays: 2pm – 5pm

Check our website for details of events and activities outside the published opening hours.

11 Local public transport information:

Intalink: <http://www.intalink.org.uk> provides travel information including timetables and routes for the whole of Hertfordshire.

Local trains are operated by First Capital Connect: <http://firstcapitalconnect.co.uk>

12 Future Plans

The museum is seeking funding to improve access around the museum.

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve. If you have comments or suggestions please leave them with a volunteer or at reception before you leave or phone or email them to us. Should you have a complaint please ask to speak to the Duty Manager.