

Disabled Access @ Oakfield Road

All members of staff to read

1. International House Bristol, Oakfield Rd, is housed in an old, detached house in Oakfield Road, Clifton, which is a conservation area. The age of the property and the status of the area place restrictions on the extent of modification we can undertake. There are two points of access to the building: via a set of 5 steps into the lobby of the school or via a side lane which goes around the building to the rear entrance. For those in wheelchairs or on crutches, the side access is simplest. We are unable to install a lift because of the age of the building.
2. The nature of our business means that we do not have students who are blind or deaf. We are trained to teach and to train teachers but have no training in using Braille or sign languages. We have catered for partially sighted students in the past and this has not required any modification to the building.
3. We have also had a number of students with disabilities. The worst affected group were from Eritrea. We had a one-legged woman, a one-eyed man and a one-armed man. None of the above required a modification to the building, although we ensured that the one-legged woman had lessons on the ground floor (until she requested that we stop making special arrangements for her as she did not consider herself disabled and managed stairs in all other areas of her life).
4. We have also had a number of students using crutches and again we have endeavoured to place their classes on the ground or lower ground floors.
5. We have had one instance of a student in a wheelchair where our provision proved satisfactory. The student's class was timetabled to have their lessons in the basement classroom at Oakfield Road where he accessed the room from the side gate and down to the back garden door. We have a wheelchair ramp, which we installed for him into his classroom and the double doors to the students' room could then open at breaktime for him to access the water, sink and PCs, all linked to internet. Toilets (including the large disabled toilet with emergency red pull cord) are also on this level. He was told he could ask for any other special requirements as and when - all staff were informed as to his situation and needs.
6. The disabled toilet on the ground floor of the building (complete with emergency alarm and other special features) is normally kept locked, but when there is a disabled student present in one of our classes it will be kept unlocked for the duration of their enrolment.

NOTE: Our other site, 2 Queen's Avenue, Clifton, does not have disabled access.