



The St Marylebone Church of England School

64 Marylebone High Street
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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY & PLAN

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Reviewed in May every three years

1. Introduction

This policy and plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty within the Equalities Act 2010 ["EA"] for the prescribed periods as set out within the Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Times and Periods for Accessibility Strategies and Plans for Schools) (England) Regulations 2005 ["REGS"].

The EA requires the proprietor of a school to have an Accessibility Plan, over a period as prescribed in the REGS, for:

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- (b) improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school; and
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

This policy is also informed by the School's Church of England ethos, ensuring that the School takes a compassionate and supportive approach in accommodating the needs of students, staff and parents/carers with a disability.

2. The Accessibility Policy

Definition of Disability

Under the EA, a person has a disability if that person has a physical or mental impairment and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Key Objectives

To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to ensure full participation in the School community for students and prospective students with a disability.

To also ensure that the needs of disabled staff and parents/carers are accommodated in the school environment, as far as is reasonably practical.

Principles

The School recognises its duties under the EA and has adopted the following principles in order to satisfy those duties:

The School will:

- ensure that the School's Equality Information and Objectives, the operation of its SEN policy and any other School policy that has a focus and impact on its disabled students, staff and parents/carers are consistent with the requirements of the EA
- not discriminate against disabled students, staff and parents/carers in admissions and exclusions or in provision of education and associated services; and
- not treat disabled students, staff and parents/carers less favourably;
- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students, staff and parents/carers at a substantial disadvantage;
- publish an Accessibility Plan (Appendix A).

3. The Accessibility Plan

The plan, which is detailed at Appendix A, is summarised below:

- In performing their duties, the Board of Governors and staff will have regard to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance for Schools in England relating to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010.
- The School recognises and values parents'/carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents'/carers' and the child's right to confidentiality.

- The School provides all students with a broad, balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, promoting the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges;
 - responding to students' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- Accommodating the needs of disabled staff and parents/carers as far as is reasonably practical.

4. Activity

This section outlines the main activities and facilities which the School already has in place or undertakes, or is planning to implement or undertake, in order to achieve the key objectives.

a) Education and related activities

The School already offers a broad and balanced curriculum with a diverse range of additional opportunities that are appropriately differentiated so as to maximise student access and to encourage wider participation. The School will continue to review provision and seek input from students, parents/carers, relevant specialist advisers and appropriate health professionals on a regular basis.

b) Physical environment

The School currently has good access to its Blandford Street site but restricted access to some buildings at its High Street site, although there is full access to all external parts of the School's site, the Theatre and Performing Arts Block, including the Sports Hall. The restrictions are mainly in respect of stair access. The School has ensured that there are washroom facilities designed specifically for disabled users. As has been best practice in the past, the School will continue to take account of the needs of its students, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and other impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes.

c) Provision of information

At the time of writing, the School is developing a new website and web content and will be ensuring that improvements are made that enable accessibility for users with disabilities. The School will make itself aware of local services, including those available through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when that is useful or requested.

5. Policy Review

This policy has been adopted by the Finance & Premises Committee and is reviewed and approved every three years, in line with the REGS, unless a significant change requires agreement outside of this timescale. In the meantime, it is reviewed as necessary by the Director of Finance and Administration and any resultant changes other than minor clarifications or amendments will be brought to the attention of the Finance & Premises Committee.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Accessibility Plans

Each individual Accessibility Plan will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis by the Director of Finance and Administration. Any significant deviations or delays to implementation will be brought to the attention of the Finance and Premises Committee.

Updated: May 2021

The St Marylebone Church of England School – Accessibility Plan

1. This Accessibility Plan has been drawn up by the Director of Finance and Administration and approved by the Finance & Premises Committee of the School and covers the period from May 2021 to April 2024.

2. At the School we are committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all students, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

3. The School is well provided for in terms of enabling accessibility of provision for all students, staff and visitors to the School, though will continually strive to ensure that this is both prioritised and taken into account when considering future developments. There will be continued efforts to improve accessibility within the physical environment of the School, but, in addition, the following specific areas will form the basis of the Accessibility Plan with relevant actions to:

- Improving access to education for pupils with SEN including speech, language and communication needs.
- Reducing the impact of mental health issues on pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Improving the delivery of information to students, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities through website development.

4. Attached are three Action Plans, relating to these three key aspects of accessibility. This plan will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. New Plans will be drawn up for the following three-year period, 2021 – 2024.

5. It is acknowledged that there will be need for ongoing awareness raising and training for all staff and students in the matter of disability discrimination and the potential need to inform attitudes on this matter.

6. This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Equality Information and Objectives
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

7. The Action Plan for physical accessibility may include works that the School is unable to undertake during the life of this Accessibility Plan through funding caution, and/or identification of other School funding priorities, and as such some items may roll forward into subsequent plans. At all times where fully desired works are not achievable, the School will look to make reasonable adjustments short of the full works if this is deemed possible. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of this three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for 2024-2027.

8. As curriculum policies are reviewed, a section relating to access will be added to that on Equality Information and Objectives. The School prospectus and its website will also make reference to this Accessibility Plan.

9. The School will be particularly alert to any needs arising from the requirements of newly enrolled students to Year 7 and Year 12 each year as well as in-year entrants where accessibility issues may arise.

10. The Plan will be monitored through the Finance and Premises Committee.

Accessibility Plan 1

Aim:

Improving access to education for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, including the ability to accommodate students from The St Marylebone CE Bridge School from time to time.

How aim will be achieved:

The School will continue to be committed to supporting pupils with SEN, particularly those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and aims to continue to employ specialist Learning Support Teachers and Learning Support Assistants.

The School will continue to maintain its relationship with The St Marylebone CE Bridge School for the mutual benefit of both schools. The Bridge School employs three Speech and Language Therapists with significant SEN expertise, in addition to other SEN specialists, and that expertise can be shared so as to support pupils and staff in a mainstream environment. Conversely, the Bridge School can benefit from time to time by utilising our mainstream facilities when that is appropriate for a particular pupil's or group of pupils' needs.

The School will continue to work actively with Local Authorities to access statutory support for students with SEN.

The School will improve physical access to SEN expertise by re-purposing rooms for SEN use so as to avoid certain current locations that are difficult to access due to narrow and steep staircases.

Timescale for implementation:

Improvements to physical access of SEN rooms will be implemented by December 2021. The remaining actions above are all ongoing and build on progress achieved in the previous Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility Plan 2

Aim:

Reducing the impact of mental health issues on pupils, staff, parents and carers whether individuals suffer directly, or indirectly due to mental health issues suffered by others close to them, and having specific regard to the impacts of COVID-19, lockdowns, self-isolation and period of school closure.

How aim will be achieved:

The School will encourage positive discussion of mental health matters within its community to eradicate any perception that mental health is a taboo subject.

The School's 'Open Minds' student support group will continue to be developed further with staff

being encouraged to participate to share their personal experiences of mental health issues affecting themselves or their friends and relatives, particularly in respect of COVID-19.

Mental Health Awareness Week will be a key point in each year when additional activities will be organised to increase participation and openness.

Other initiatives will include:

- Mental Health Ambassadors, recruited from Sixth Form students and trained by MIND, to provide continued mentoring support for their peers;
- Continuing to support the role of the Chaplain; promoting the use of the Worship Programme, including the Contemplation Room, as a way for those in the School community to feel safe and valued;
- Trailblazer Mental Health Support practitioners will be called in to support pupils when early indicators of anxiety or low mood have been identified;
- a partnership with DreamArts will continue to provide expressive art and drama therapies for pupils;
- ensuring that mental health issues remain a regular topic raised in assemblies and within Thought for the Day;
- maintaining a staff wellbeing scheme that includes a helpline and access to specialist support;
- Delivering a PSHEE programme that promotes positive mental health and explores mental health issues;
- Creating a new Mental Health Lead;
- Ensuring that students receive their CAMHS sessions virtually in school by providing a laptop and room, following disruption to sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Timescale for implementation:

By 31st December 2021.

Accessibility Plan 3

Aim:

Improving the delivery of information to students, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities through website development.

How aim will be achieved:

The School will create a new website on a different server platform to allow the development and maintenance of design features that facilitate improved access for parents and carers, staff and pupils, particularly pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Consideration will be given to font size, colour and style as well as background choice, content and navigation.

Timescales for implementation:

This work is in progress and an improved website for The St Marylebone Church of England School will be completed by 31st August 2022.