



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Accessibility Policy – Junior School

(Preschool – Year 6)

This policy is the responsibility of the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) committee.

Primary person responsible for this document: Olivia Buchanan - Head of Juniors

Secondary person responsible for this document: Pascale Lavoie (Head of Learning Support / SENDCo)

Last review date: 30 April 2025 (updated by C Hald – Interim Head of Juniors)

Approval by Governance Committee: March 2024

Next review date: March 2027

Aims

Seeking Justice is one of the Mary Ward values of St Mary's School, whilst Empathy, one of the school's five HEART learning habits, includes a commitment to celebrating diversity. St Mary's School therefore seeks to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school and aims to ensure that each member of the school community can participate in and excel at all aspects of school life.

The school aims to ensure the highest standards of teaching and learning for every student. We seek for each pupil to participate in and benefit from the curriculum, and the wider opportunities of our extracurricular offer. In doing so, we strive to enable each pupil to reach their full potential academically whilst supporting their pastoral care, promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and building important life skills.

This policy should be read in conjunction with related policies including but not exclusive to: SEND Policy, EAL Policy, Equality Policy, Admissions Policy, Anti- Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Supervision Policy and Curriculum Policy.

Duty

The school fully recognises its legal duty to make its products and services, including but not limited to, its premises and provision of information as accessible as possible to students, staff, users, visitors and the wider school community. The school has regard to the following in respect of this policy:

- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND code of Practice 2015

- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools'.

Definition of Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

As defined by the Equality Act 2010 the school recognises:

- that a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.
- that the term 'disabled' may include pupils with Special Educational Needs and health issues, including mental health issues.
- that 'disability' expressly excludes tendency to set fire, steal, physical or sexual abuse of others, exhibitionism, voyeurism, tattoos and piercings and any addictions

The school will promote understanding of disability and work to show positive models of people who are less able. We will avoid stereotypes and use language which emphasises ability rather than deficit. The school seeks to address possible admission and participation barriers to school life by anyone working in their second language, as well as those from all faiths, traditions and cultures. We celebrate diversity and value the varied contributions of everyone to our school community.

The commitment not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extracurricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school. In deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, the school will consider:

- maintaining academic standards
- availability of resources including time
- the practicalities of making a particular adjustment
- the health and safety of the disabled pupil and the interests of others

Scope of the SEND Committee

Permanent members of the SEND Committee are: Head teacher, Head of Learning Support, Assistant Head Enrichment and Partnerships, Deputy Head Operations and Data, Head of Juniors, Junior School SEND Teacher. The SEND Committee can co-opt members whose expertise would be of assistance. The SEND Committee meets termly.

The SEND Committee's terms of reference are:

- To review annually the school's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities
- To make recommendations with a view to providing equity of opportunity and accessibility to all in its community by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future.
- To prepare and review the School's SEND Policy
- To review such plans and policies as necessary and at least on an annual basis.
- To formulate and approve the school's Accessibility Plan

The SEND committee provides a report annually to the full Governance Committee (Spring Term) which includes the Accessibility Plan, highlighting measures which have been achieved, those which need changing or carrying over, and associated timeframes. There is a formal review of the implementation of the Plan by the Governors who are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Accessibility Plan during the period to which it relates.

The School's SEND committee has considered the following when developing and reviewing the plan:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Attainment • Attendance • Behaviour expectations • Education • Exclusions • Extra-curricular activities • Food & Diet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical environment • Selection and recruitment of staff • Sporting education and activities • Staff training • Uniform • Welfare
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Junior School Accessibility Plan 2024-2027 (Preschool – Year 6)

This plan will be reviewed annually and a new one drawn up every three years to include provision for the whole school, including Early Years and our boarders. The school's 3-year Accessibility Plan includes consideration of how the school proposes to:

- A. *Increase the extent to which less able pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's **curriculum**.*
- B. *Improve the **physical environment** of the school for the purposes of increasing the extent to which less able pupils can take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school; and*
- C. *Improve the **universal delivery of information** which is readily accessible to pupils without disabilities*

Improving access to the curriculum

Overview

- The Junior School Learning Support team is led by the Junior School SEN Teacher, with the support of Learning Support Assistants, the Head of Wellbeing, specialist and class teachers. In addition, a visually impaired pupil is directly supported with a 1:2:1 Learning Support Assistant. The team supports directly and indirectly less able and neurodiverse pupils across all years to access the curriculum in-class, as well as out of the classroom individually or in small groups.
- The Junior School SEN Teacher reports regularly, and shares information with the Head of Juniors, Deputy Head, Senior School SENCo and class teachers. This also includes leading Staff Meetings to share information, give overviews of strategies and highlight the needs of pupils in the school. In addition, the celebration of Neurodiversity Week is marked with assemblies and activities in the classroom led by the Junior School SEN Teacher in conjunction with the class teachers.
- The Junior School SEN Teacher and/or members of the team link with nurses, the school counsellor, external agencies or providers. All interactions are recorded using the school's systems for reporting including MyConcerns.
- Relevant training is provided for all colleagues in the Junior School and includes Positive Handling, ADHD and ASD training, Neurodiversity discussions and Disability Awareness.
- A curriculum audit highlighting EDI and Protected Characteristics has been undertaken by the Head and Deputy Head, with Subject Leaders reviewing their subject areas, resources, topics and approach.
- Differentiation is widely used to support pupils with special educational needs, impairments or disabilities. Teachers are adaptive in their teaching and learning strategies, and expectations are high whilst being realistic and individualized to the pupils. All classes are taught in mixed ability groups.
- Monitoring of pupil achievement and progress is undertaken termly, and in some cases more frequent discussions are sought with the class teacher, specialist teachers and support staff. Pupil and parent voice is sought.
- Reasonable adjustments with regard to accessing the curriculum are implemented by class teachers; and include adapting resources, texts and work, providing overlays, scaffolds, word mats and/or mathematical manipulatives. Where appropriate some online resources are used to support learning.
- Reasonable adjustments are also made for assessment so that access does not become a barrier to the pupil achieving their full potential.
- All pupils are encouraged to take part in music, drama, PE, extracurricular activities, trips and visits. All reasonable adjustments are made to enable participation.
- Parents are kept fully informed about reasonable adjustments and initiatives with regard to the curriculum and its provision.

Increasing flexibility in learning and the extent to which disabled pupils can actively participate in the curriculum

Curriculum Area	Current situation	Aim/considerations	Time Frame
Sharing of information	Junior School SEN Teacher updates the staff about the needs of the girls on the SEND register regularly – half-termly meetings, 1:2:1, ad hoc	To attend pupil progress meetings (termly review) with Deputy Head and class teacher.	Ongoing – from Summer 24
	Each SEN pupil on the SEND register has an Individual Support Plan which outlines in brief any reasonable adjustments, accessible language needs, differentiation tools, etc.	To make certain the SEND register is shared with new staff and that the Individual Support Plans are explained to them.	Ongoing
	<p>The staff have had training about many of the difficulties in the four categories of SEND:</p> <p>Learning and Cognition (dyslexia and dyspraxia)</p> <p>Interaction and Communication (autism, Speech and Language difficulties)</p> <p>Physical and Sensory (Sensory Processing Disorder)</p> <p>Social, Emotional and Mental Health (Supporting Children's Mental Health)</p>	Bring in specialists or experienced practitioners to speak to team to increase awareness and upskill when supporting pupils with these needs.	Ongoing
Accessing the Curriculum – tools and resources	All teachers differentiate the work so that the curriculum is accessible to all	Effective differentiation as a focus for training and observations by the SLT: SEND staff meeting update to all JS staff	Ongoing from 2024
	Pupils in Y3-Y6 have access to the online support tools, IDL for Maths and Emile for Spelling, and are given additional support lessons outside of their classroom with a member of the LS Team	Increase the number of devices available to use across school	Spring 2025
	Pupils in Pre-Prep and Prep who require extra phonics support access the Little Wandle resource	Continue to monitor the impact of this tool as the pupils progress through school	Ongoing

	with their teacher/support and at home with parents		
Participation in wider curriculum	All pupils included in sporting activities, access to music (group or individual), trips and events	Monitor and track the participation of SEN/EAL pupils to ensure taking part, and highlight impact, ensure reasonable adjustments are made	Ongoing
Tracking and monitoring of information about SEN pupils	Data Diamonds used for all pupils, highlight the needs of SEN pupils and triangulates with SEN Teacher and class teacher data and observations.	Now introduced, continue to explore the impact of DD on tracking pupil progress and interventions	Ongoing
Assessment accessibility	We provide access to all school exams for those whose reading and writing speed is well below the national average by providing an adult as reader, prompt and scribe	Review procedures and explore access for EAL pupils	Ongoing
Increase focus on providing support for wellbeing and mental health			
Link between wellbeing, mental health and curriculum/progress	Head of Wellbeing established as an Additional Responsibility for one member of the SMJS staff team. A thorough and detailed JD has been created.	<p>Establish a Wellbeing Policy to provide targeted, proactive and preventative strategies, to help build resilience and emotional wellbeing and provide therapeutic activity.</p> <p>Embed reflection within the Prep School by creating greater awareness, providing further training for staff and integrating mindfulness within daily school life.</p>	Spring 2025
Increase opportunities for pupil and parent feedback			
Parental support with initiatives and curriculum	Termly reviews and updates provided to parents of pupils receiving support or with additional needs.	SEN Teacher to attend parents' evenings; continue to review open door access.	Ongoing

Improving access to the physical environment

Overview

The school regularly reviews the physical environment so that reasonable steps can be taken to develop and ensure accessibility.

- Teaching facilities are split over two key buildings within the site. Acton House is set over multiple floors (four), whilst The Coach House is mainly on the ground floor, with an additional Art Studio upstairs.
- Acton House is the main site for teaching Y2-Y6 and houses spaces such as the main school library, dining hall, and school offices. However, all spaces are multi-use and adaptable and the allocation of such spaces are reviewed each year to support the pupils and their access needs. When pupils and/or staff are unable to access a first or second floor, all reasonable efforts are made to relocate lessons to more accessible places.
- All buildings have accessible toilets although much of Acton House is accessed via stairs only.
- Disabled parking is available on site.
- A comprehensive review and assessment of the school facilities was undertaken with the admission of a visually impaired child. The site has been adapted to meet her requirements now and, in the future, with a further review being taken annually to ensure all needs are met.
- Furniture and fittings including desks at specific heights, special chairs, particular IT equipment to support visual impairment including larger screens and voice-activated software, or air flow systems have been provided for staff and pupils with identified needs.
- Adjustments to timetables, working hours and flexibility to attend appointments are also provided.

Area	Current situation	Aim/Next Steps	Time Frame
Acton House	Room temperatures are variable and inconsistent impacting the work and education environment.	New eco-boilers to be installed as part of an ongoing replacement cycle Window replacement or refurbishment	From Academic year 2025
	Toilet located on all floors with accessible cubicle on ground floor.	Refurbishment of pupil toilets on ground floor	Academic year 2025
Coach House	Accessible due to more recent refurbishment/construction.	To improve the outdoor area for better access and update toilet facilities for pupils to make access easier for children aged 3+	Academic year 2025
	Ventilation and heating are adequate	Explore air conditioning or air ventilation options as to take into account room conditions in summer	Academic year 2025
Whole School - evacuation	Evacuation from all floors above ground floor in the Coach House necessitates PEEP's and/or specialist equipment	Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place for all pupils and staff with a known disability	Ongoing

Area	Current situation	Aim/Next Steps	Time Frame
		or need. Evacu-chair on top floor	
Whole School - signage including room numbering	Some rooms are currently named but they are not numbered.	New signage including on the floors with room numbering to make ease of location better	Summer 2025
Whole School - furniture & classroom layouts	Layout governed by the size and design of the classroom, some furniture is dated. Pupils offered basic seats, with backs, in a range of sizes Note: Any furniture specifically needed for a colleague or pupil will be acquired. LA support team assesses the layout for VI pupil with new academic year.	Consider the use of more flexible furniture options which allow for better positioning support, the ability to move it around, as well as specific furniture to support pupils with additional needs, e.g. wobble stools	Ongoing
Whole School - outdoor spaces	There are a range of outdoor play areas available to pupils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coach House has free flow access to a large outdoor area • Paved playground • Enclosed netball courts • Lawn • Woodland Area Flat and easily accessible with alterations being made to ensure clear visibility, e.g painting outlines and surfaces, changes textures	Review the use of outdoor spaces and update to make them safer and more readily available for children of all age groups .	Ongoing

Improving access to information

Overview

The school seeks, where possible, to ensure the widest possible access to information for anyone working in their second language, with special needs or processing difficulties and/or disabilities including visual impairment. The school also seeks to be inclusive to all faiths, traditions and cultures.

- The school's reception is staffed by the Junior School Secretary who can deal with pupil, colleague and parent queries and emergencies. Cover is in place during the day.
- The school website is regularly reviewed and updated for its accessibility.
- The Parent Portal allows easy access to school information and forms for all parents.
- All admissions forms have been made available in electronic format online. International students or those living abroad are regularly virtually interviewed. The Admissions team seeks advice from Head of Learning Support if needed.
- Contact with parents has many forms and will facilitate the needs of the parents; this includes online meetings for overseas parents or those unable to come into school, written materials, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. If necessary, translators will be invited to assist.

- Pupils continue to use differing font sizes and other accessible formats, colour overlays, tinted glasses to support visual impairments. Readers and other adjustments are routinely made.

Information	Current situation	Aim/Next Steps	Time Frame
For pupils	<p>Good practice already embedded in the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff use power point presentations – with visual aids (pictures, diagrams and video clips) to communicate the content of the lessons • Written information for pupils is laid out in clear and legible font with double spacing • Hand-outs are increased in size for girls who need it and printed on different colours of paper 	<p>Continue to review current practices, introduce digital devices to help facilitate access to information in a variety of formats</p> <p>Introduce FireFly as a digital platform for learning and information. Review use of text in home language as background understanding for EAL pupils</p>	Ongoing
For parents	<p>Parent Portal gives access to all communications including submission of forms and replies. School reports are sent separately, and at key points in the academic year, parents are not able to see attendance numbers, house points or year group information in one place</p>	<p>Introduction of FireFly as platform will make limited changes to accessibility; however all information will be in one place</p>	Autumn 2025
For Prospective Parents	<p>All written information is in English language, and predominately digital.</p>	<p>Explore a wider range of languages and formats</p>	Ongoing