

COGNITA

Accessibility Plan



St. Mary's School
(inc EYFS)

September 2023

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The document outlines our Accessibility Plan as required by the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for Cognita, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil or staff in relation to:
- admissions;
 - the way we provide education for pupils;
 - the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.1 The Act outlines some protected characteristics (below) and we pay due regard to these:
- Sex
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.2 This plan fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This Accessibility Plan outlines how we ensure that we are working to remove barriers to learning and access in our school. The plan is reviewed every three years.
- 2.2 The school aims to treat all its pupils, staff and visitors fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind
- 2.3 The school ensure all staff are trained in understanding equality and disability issues in line with the Equality Act 2010

3 Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- 3.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.
- 3.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (i.e. via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 3.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.
- 3.5 Our SEN Policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.

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- 3.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; e.g. hearing aids.
- 3.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 3.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils

4 Aspects of the Plan

- 4.1 Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas:
- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
 - Improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
 - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that the school has an Accessibility Plan which matches the needs of the school and to ensure that it is available on the school's website.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Proprietor (via the Director of Operations) to ensure that the plan is reviewed annually and is fit for purpose.

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Actions to increase access to the curriculum and learning

2023-24 Curriculum

	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale Resp. Person	Review Date by SLT
Review of adjustments that might be made to curricular provision	To ensure schemes of work in all subjects are accessible.	Review Schemes of Work in relation to different needs.	Easter 2024 for 2023-24 budget SLT	Easter 2024 ongoing
Review of adjustments that might be made to extra curricular provision.	To ensure we provide a range of activities including some that are disabled friendly.	Research opportunities available.	June 2024 for 2024-25 programme Headmaster	June 2024 ongoing
Review programme of trips and excursions.	To ensure adequate enabling access.	Reminder to all trip organisers and Heads of Department to take account of all pupils needs.	September 2024 EVC	August 2024 August 2025 Visit leader training course.
Review access arrangements within lessons and for assessments	To ensure adequate provision enabling access.	Reminder to all subject and class teachers to review reasonable adjustments and access arrangement entitlements. To use normal ways of working when giving tests.	Termly Sept Jan Apr Headmaster and SLT	August 2024
Review access and use of Library	To ensure adequate and suitable provision.	Audit of all resources.	Annually SLT/ Head of English	To ensure adequate provision.
Review resources including classroom teaching aids.	To ensure adequate provision.	Audit of all resources.	Annually SLT	August 2024 ongoing

Actions to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Reasonable adjustments	As required	SENCO	iSAMs up to date with reasonable adjustment requirements for individual children.

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Actions to improve the physical environment to enable those with disability to take better advantage of the education and facilities

2023-2024 Environment

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Site Access Audit	April 2024	Allocate budget to conduct the audit and include any emergency actions in the repairs and maintenance budget.	To establish recommendations for future planning and implementation of recommendations.
Auxiliary Aids and Services. (e.g. chair lifts)	Spring 2024	Consider priorities and allocate budget as required.	To ensure provision where necessary and implementation of recommendation.
Refurbishment of Classrooms	Summer 2024	Ensure full compliance for both access and equipment.	Upgrade current facilities H&S review, VOP, VOS & VOE
Refurbishment and Toilet, kitchen and communal areas	Summer 2024	Ensure full compliance for both access and equipment.	Upgrade current facilities H&S review, VOP, VOS & VOE

2023-24 Information

	Objectives	Action Required	Timescale Resp. Person	Review Date by SMT
Review all current information available to parents and pupils.	To ensure adequate provision to all documentation and mediums	Ensure suitable alternatives are available as required.	Termly Sept 23/24 Jan 24/25 Apr 24/25 Events & Comm Officer	August 24
Website	To ensure full compliance as website is updated.	Review website on termly basis, seeking support from Proprietor when required to ensure compliance with all documents.	Termly Sept 23/24 Jan 24/25 Apr 24/25 Events & Comm Officer	August 24

**APPENDIX 1
IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST**

This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.

Section 1 : How does your school deliver the curriculum?		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	√	
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils?	Where necessary.	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	√	
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	√	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?	√	
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?	√	
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	√	
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	√	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	√	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	√	
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	√	
Are there high expectation of all pupils?	√	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	√	
Section 2 : Is your School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?		
Questions	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms; the assembly hall; canteen; library; gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities; playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all pupils?	√	

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Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?	Not all areas	all	Not all areas
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	√		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?			√
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?	n/a		n/a
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?			√
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	√		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	√		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?	√		
Section 3 : How does your School deliver materials in other formats?			
Questions	Yes	No	
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	n/a		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	√		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	√		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	√		

Curriculum Access (please also see SEND policy)

Staff and support staff are all aware of their responsibilities to ensure access and inclusion to all. Training needs are identified and met through Head of Learning Support guiding staff on a regular basis and INSET opportunities along with useful documents and resources lists maintained in the additional needs folder on the school system..

Reasonable Adjustment forms are created for each Year group and individuals needs are also collated on their profile in ISAMS.

Where pupils e.g. those with autism require quiet spaces, these are created suited the needs and age of that pupil in a place with appropriate supervision.

Accessibility Plan

Ownership and consultation	
Document Sponsor	Director of Education Europe
Document Reviewer	Director of Education Europe and Head of H&S Europe
Consultation & Specialist Advice	
Document application and publication	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	No
Switzerland	No
Italy	No
Version control	
Current Review Date	September 2023
Next Review Date	September 2025
Related documentation	
Related documentation	Health and safety policy and related documentation Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy Equality Act 2010