

Accessibility Plan

St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School

We recognise our duty under the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005 to: "have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for disabled persons and eliminate discrimination." This is very much in keeping with our Christian values where we view each person as equal in the sight of God. Our Mission Statement begins: "At St Bernard's School, students are educated in a nurturing community where each person is loved and valued."

Our Experience:

St Bernard's has experience of educating students with visual and hearing impairment. Once we knew these students were to join our community, we adjusted our practices, teaching and environment (for example the installation of a hearing loop) in order to assist these students to make full use of the opportunities offered by our school. As a result, all students have flourished and have been very successful in both their academic and extra-curricular lives. In addition to our students, St Bernard's has recent experience of two teachers with mobility problems. We were able to manage the timetable and rooming of meetings and lessons in order to accommodate their needs so they could continue to perform their roles effectively.

The Aim of this Plan:

Although we do not currently have staff or students with physical, visual or auditory impairment, we are conscious that we may at some future time admit a physically disabled student or a student with visual or hearing impairment or employ a physically disabled member of staff. The purpose of this plan is to show how our school intends, over time, to continue to increase accessibility to the curriculum, the physical environment and written information, so that all students with a disability can take full advantage of their education and associated opportunities in the school community. We are determined that all students will have access to appropriate qualifications and will develop the skills and resilience to meet the demands of adult life. Students will demonstrate the empathy and confidence to work with others to achieve a better future.

Objectives of the plan

- To ensure all disabled students are fully involved in school life and are making good progress.
- To identify barriers to participation and find practical solutions to overcoming these.
- To work with disabled students and their parents or carers to create appropriate provision, including education health and care plans where relevant.
- To increase the confidence, sensitivity and expertise of staff when teaching or supporting a wide range of disabled students.
- To meet the requirements of the Equality Act and the SEND code of practice in respect of disabled pupils/students.
- To reduce or eliminate where possible any barriers to adults with a disability, be they staff, parents, carers, Governors or other users, to ensure their full potential in the life of the school and enable full use of the available facilities.

The Equality Act 2010

Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with our school aims and Equalities policy as well as our SEND policy. The Governing Body has full regard to the Equality Act 2010 when carrying out their duties and responsibilities. All those who work in the school as employees or volunteers recognise their duty under the Equality Act 2010:

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in admissions or exclusions, or in the provision of education and associated services.
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.
- To publish an accessibility plan.

Key Staff and Governors

- The Headteacher takes lead oversight of our special educational needs and/or disabilities provision.
- The SEND co-ordinator (*Ms Jaafar*) is responsible for
 - The special educational needs register.
 - The welfare of all SEN and disabled pupils/students.
 - Appropriate training for staff.
 - Ensuring that the accessibility plan is implemented.
 - Monitoring its effectiveness in meeting disabled students' needs.
- Each Head of Year plays a fundamental support role for any student in their year group with a special educational need and/or disability.
- All teaching and support staff involved in the teaching and learning of SEND pupils receive regular specialist training as part of our CPD programme.
- Our named Governor (*Angela Oxlade*) is responsible for ensuring that the Governing Body has a termly update on SEND pupils at a full board meeting and an annual report on the improvements achieved for disabled pupils under the accessibility plan.

Action Plan

In preparation we have put together the following plan, which will act as a starting point for future adjustments once a person with disabilities joins our community. The plan used will also depend upon the funding made available and the restrictions placed upon us by our non-purpose built and Grade II listed accommodation.

Our plan is based on the three main tenets of the DFE statutory advice 2014:

1. Increased access to the curriculum

Ideally, all areas of the curriculum should be available to all students, regardless of their disability. We make every effort to educate students with disabilities alongside their peers in

a mainstream classroom setting. Where this is not possible the SEND co-ordinator consults with the student and their parents about proposed flexible alternative arrangements. The school curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it is accessible to students of all levels and abilities and supports the learning and progress of all students as individuals. This includes learning outside the classroom through activities such as extra-curricular clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in the next three years include:

- Early identification of the needs of disabled students and staff awareness of these.
- Regular training of staff on aspects of SEN and disability in the school and developing appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- Revised awareness raising programme for all students about the range of disabilities in the school.
- Embedded mechanisms to listen to views of SEND students and their parents/carers and consider them in all aspects of school life.
- Specific specialist intervention where needed for all SEND pupils.
- Specialist advice from other professionals.
- Special access arrangements for internal/external exams.

2. Improved access to the physical environment of the school

The school will carry out an accessibility audit every two years in advance of reviewing this policy. The audit is carried out by the lead Governor and the school's health and safety committee (Health & Safety lead, Site Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead) as part of our safeguarding provision.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in the next three years include:

- Installation of chair lifts (where required).
- Additional ramps.
- New disabled toilets.
- Handrails and a hoist.
- Customised furniture and equipment.
- Accessible disabled wet-room/shower.
- Improvements to the medical room.
- Additional allocated parking spaces.
- More doors with low level glass panels.
- Evacuation chairs.

- Installation of Braille signs or coloured signs appropriate for any student with reduced sight or blindness.
- The repair and maintenance of the lift in the Main Building.
- Widening of corridors and doorways to enable easier wheelchair access.

3. Improved delivery of information to disabled students

Teachers and TLAs consider the needs of each disabled student or student with a special educational need and provide accessible learning resources for them. The increased use of interactive whiteboards and other digital technology have diversified the ways in which all students receive information.

Areas on which we intend to concentrate in the next three years include:

- Investigating symbol software to support learners with reading difficulties.
- Raising awareness of font sizes and page layout for students with visual impairments.
- Greater use of readers and/or scribes in examinations.
- Greater use of coloured overlays for texts.
- Auditing the school library to ensure the availability of large font and audio books.
- Provide additional tactile resources.
- Auditing signage around the school.
- Devoting a Humanities Day to the theme of disability to raise the awareness of all.

Adult users

Many of these improvements will also benefit any disabled adults visiting, working at or associated with the school, as well as any disabled family members of pupils, staff or Governors. The improvements would also enable more disabled adults to have access to the school premises for its wider use.

Monitoring:

Monitoring of this policy will take place biennially. The provision of the adjustments made will be examined in the context of the needs of the student/staff member with the disability. The views of any disabled member of the school community will be taken into consideration in monitoring and adjusting this plan.

Agreed by Leadership Committee

Next Review: Summer 2023