St Mary's School
Gerrards Cross

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2026 - 2027

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Person Responsible	Deputy Head/Bursar
Reviewed by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2027

AIMS

The school values all its students and seeks to ensure its practices are fully inclusive. Every effort will be made to ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' are made to accommodate disabled students, while bearing in mind the interests of other students.

The school values each member of staff for their contribution to the school and will seek to ensure that no member of staff is disadvantaged by reason of their disability.

The school aims, within the constraints of resources are:
• To enable each student to fulfil their potential, within an educational programme that has development of the whole person at its core
• To help students with disability gain access to the curriculum
• To fulfil the requirements of the legislation to make 'reasonable adjustments'
• To ensure fair treatment for disabled students
• That no member of staff is less favourably treated in the school's procedures and practices

The school will examine each disability case individually to determine the best adjustments that can be made to accommodate a disabled student's and staff needs.
This plan looks to assess and make:
• Improvements in access to the curriculum for disabled students
• Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services (e.g., cocurricular activities)
• Improvements in the provision of information, in a range of formats for disabled students

LEGAL REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:
• The Disability Discrimination Regulations 2005
• The Equality Act 2010
• The Children and Families Act 2014
• SEND Regulations 2014
• SEND Code of Practice 2015
• Disability Discrimination Act 1995
• Code of Practice for Schools (Disability Rights Commission) 2002
• The Disability Discrimination Codes of Practice (Employment and Trade Organisations)

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:
• Equal Opportunities Policy

• SEND Policy
• Admissions Policy

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body is responsible for the discharge of the duties under the DDA 1995 and SENDA 2001, and the provision of education and associated services.
The Head is responsible for:
• Ensuring that this policy is implemented
• Identifying and liaising with staff who have a disability
• Identifying students who have disabilities
• Identifying where 'reasonable adjustments' can be made, and reporting to the Governing Body those that cannot be made within the allocated resources
• Implementing and maintaining procedures that identify and eliminate areas of possible 'less favorable treatment' for disabled staff
• That non-discriminatory practices are developed
• Training all staff in their responsibilities towards disabled students
• Delegating responsibilities and tasks to other staff as appropriate
• Liaison with parents and any agencies as necessary
• Reporting annually to governors on the provision of access

All staff are responsible for knowing their responsibilities towards students with disabilities and for taking appropriate action.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 states that the school has no duty if the employer does not know, and could not reasonably be expected to know, that a person has a disability and is thus likely to be at a substantial disadvantage by reason of the arrangements and so on made by or on behalf of the employer.

DISABILITY DEFINITION

'Disability' is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as: a 'physical or mental impairment' which has a 'substantial and long-term adverse effect on' a person's 'ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes not only physical disabilities but also learning disabilities and mental health. There is a threshold in terms of impact on 'normal day-to-day activities' ('substantial' means 'more than trivial'), and length of time ('long-term' is defined to mean lasting or likely to last more than one year).

Having a disability does not imply that a person has for that reason alone 'special educational needs' under the terms of the Education Act 1996 and the Code of Practice. Therefore, each student with a disability will require separate consideration and treatment.

UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

It is unlawful to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else without justification, or to fail to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments without showing that the failure is justified.

It is unlawful to fail to take 'reasonable adjustments' to admission arrangements and curriculum arrangements, and, in relation to education and associated services, to ensure that disabled

students are not disadvantaged in comparison with students who are not disabled, without justification.
For 'less favorable treatment' to lead to unlawful discrimination:
• It must be for a reason related to the person's disability
• It must be less favorable treatment than the treatment given to a non-disabled person
• It must not be justified
Less favorable treatment can be justified if the reasons are material to the circumstances and are substantial.

ADMISSION

Non-admission to a school can be justified if it is because of a 'permitted form of selection'. Selective schools can continue to select so long as the criteria are not such as to only exclude disabled students. All non-selective schools when they have reached their admission limit can admit students according to criteria, which must not, amongst other things, discriminate against the grounds of disability.

The school will ensure that disabled students are not discriminated against:
• Through the criteria for admission to the school
• By refusing, or deliberately not accepting, an application from a disabled person for admission to the school

CURRICULUM

Ensuring that the curriculum is appropriate is a continuous process. The curriculum should be accessible by all and provide appropriate levels of challenge for each student.

Action	Timescale
Assessment of Needs - Students who are recommended via teacher referral or parent notice will have their needs assessed - Students will complete cognitive examinations, and these will be analysed to explore profiles which may indicate access difficulties	Continually and at the start of each academic year
Tracking and monitoring Students will be tracked at department level and as part of the pastoral provision. Their progress will be assessed and analysed to ensure that all students are making appropriate progress or that support is put in place to allow for future progress	Continually
INSET Staff will be appropriately trained and educated on the needs of individuals and the wider student body. This will promote the use of innovative teaching techniques as well as providing time to consider the accessibility of their resources	Annual
Review and Evaluation All departments will review and evaluate Schemes of Work and lessons to ensure that they are accessible and appropriate for all students they teach	Continual
Technology	Annual

Access to technology will be promoted via the school's ICT strategy and BYOD policy. This will help all students to access the material needed	
Read & Write Software Software has been purchased to allow students to have support in lessons which matches that of their exam access arrangements. This is installed on student devices where appropriate, and training is provided to students to ensure that they are competent in using the software.	Annual
Use of LEXIA in Prep and Years 7 & 8. The licence will be reviewed every 3 years following assessment of efficacy.	Continual
Century Continue to develop use of Century, an AI based learning support resource in English, Maths and Science. Continue to use as a support tool for students accessing LEAPS and to train staff in English, Maths and Science on its application to support overlearning for students. Investigate further use of Century to evaluate whether it is a tool that could support the learning of students beyond LEAPS.	Continual
Dynamo Maths Introduce Dynamo Maths in KS1 and 2 for students who are identified as having significant need, e.g., below age related expectations or displaying Dyscalculic tendencies.	Continual
Resources Resources will be created, adjusted, and distributed in a way that allows all students to access the material. This could include larger print, digital copies, background colour and overlays	Continual
Learning Support • Continuation of a specialist Prep Learning Support Teaching assistant • Additional Learning Support teacher – appointed for Jan 2025 • Maintain time and support offered at department level for Learning Support • Strengthen the Learning Support department by increasing specialist support offered to students.	Continual

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Ensuring that all stakeholders have appropriate access to information and documentation about the school is an ongoing process and often responsive to specific needs as and when they arise.

Action	Timescale
Firefly VLE Expand use and promote the use of Firefly and the VLE. As well as provide regular, key information to parents and students. Develop the use of Epraise with parental viewing.	Ongoing
Website Review We have a new website. The website will be reviewed and updated to ensure that information is highly visible and accessible for all	Ongoing
Office 365	Ongoing

Staff and students to have access to Office 365 and training allowing them to create and share digital resources which can be easily adapted for learners needs and to allow for different working and learning styles	
Investigate offering letters, communication, application form, etc. in a variety of styles and languages to increase access.	Ongoing

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (PREMISES)

The core of the site (Main Building and Paddington House) are historic buildings which were not built for education. The historic nature presents several challenges in providing disabled access.
The school is committed to improving access within its financial and structural limits, and recent investment has improved access to some areas of the site. In the short-term, we adjust better to meet the needs of the whole community, for example re-rooming lessons to the ground floor.

Action	Timescale
Ensure that all new buildings, repairs or renovations meet all legal requirements laid down in the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Equality Act 2010 & the Buildings Regulations 2000 (with Approved Documents) where such regulations are in force.	Ongoing
Ensure that all new equipment is purchased with full consideration as to the suitability of its use by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.	Ongoing
Ensure that lighting is appropriate in classrooms and workspaces, which creates an appropriate atmosphere for learning and work.	Ongoing
Ensure that toilets are suitably maintained and that the site maintains adequate access to accessible toilets	Ongoing
Classrooms are organised and timetabled to take account of access needs of students and staff	Continual
Install or improve signs, where appropriate, ensuring they are clear and understandable for the visually impaired	Continual

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACCESS PLAN

Based on the previous three-year access plan the school believes that it has made good progress in the following areas:

CURRICULUM

• Increasing Learning Support – Increased integration in the school, higher profile, increased specialist staff, and newly renovated rooms.
• Ensured smooth transition between prep and senior house via the transition project and relationships with other schools and particularly feeder schools.
• Increased the provision of access arrangements for examinations. Including the introduction of the Read Write system plus additional support as a when required, so that examinations are accessible to all students who require it.
• Adaptive learning training runs on a continual basis on a variety of SEND strategies.
• Increased teaching staff in Learning Support.
• As a school, we subscribe to the RNIB Bookshare which is free to any girls with a qualifying diagnosis. It is regularly used. We also have visually friendly reads available in the library.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

• Firefly VLE embedded into everyday school life and integrated into a considerable number of processes and procedures.
• Continual development of the school's new website ongoing.
• Office 365 accessible to all plus additional IT developments in place to enable remote working.

PHYSICAL ACCESS

• All new buildings comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995.
• Accessible parking spaces available for staff and visitors.
• School has a considerable number of ground floor classrooms for easy access.