



ST PAUL'S ACADEMY

Accessibility Plan



*'You are God's work of art'
Ephesians 2:10*

**Approved by: Sheila Ward
(Principal) and Governors**

Last reviewed on: November 2024

Next review due by: November 2027

Introduction

The governors and staff of St. Paul's Academy have high expectations for all students. St. Paul's Academy is an inclusive Catholic Academy which welcomes students regardless of their level of need, ability or disability, ethnicity and socio-economic background. It is important to note, however, that we are not a specialist provision.

We expect all students who come to the academy to achieve their potential and to have their achievements recognised and valued. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our students matter.

The **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** was amended by the **SEN and Disability Act 2001** and the **Equality Act 2010** to include Education. The Equality Act specifies that **'schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.'**

According to the Equality Act a person has a disability if:

- (a) He or She has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Under the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled pupil faces in comparison with non-disabled pupils. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

Purpose of the Accessibility Plan

All schools must plan, over time, to increase access to all areas of school life for all students with disabilities. This Accessibility plan is listed as a statutory document of the DfE's guidance on statutory policies for schools. It must be reviewed every three years and approved by the governing body.

This plan shows how St. Paul's Academy intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled students, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

The aim is to achieve steady planned progress over three years, not to rebuild or re-equip the Academy.

Context

The governors and staff of St. Paul's Academy remain committed to using our best endeavours to ensure that all our students have access to all educational provision across the school. We are further committed to challenging attitudes about disability and accessibility and to develop a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

St. Paul's Academy has been in its current location since 2010. The Academy building is a purpose-built school on two levels which was completed in late 2009. It is fully equipped with 2 lifts, disabled toilets and two hygiene suites. All classrooms have been designed with regard to physical access, acoustics and lighting to maximise accessibility for students, staff and visitors.

The school has specific evacuation procedures to assist in the emergency evacuation of people with physical disabilities.

Current range of known disabilities in St. Paul's Academy (January 2024)

St. Paul's Academy currently has students with a range of physical disabilities including a small number of students with mobility issues who may need physical assistance in the course of the school day.

A number of students have a lift pass and keys to the disabled toilets and the hygiene suites.

We have a number of students with Sickle Cell Anaemia.

There are a significant number of students across the Academy who require emergency medication as needed. These include epipens and controlled medication such as Buccal Midazolam.

We have a large number of students with invisible disabilities and difficulties such as ADHD, ASD, Speech & Language Disorders and social communication difficulties. We have increasing numbers of students with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) difficulties across both key stages.

There are also a large number of students with moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia.

Some students use specialised equipment e.g. walking aids or assistive technology [tablets and laptops]. These arrangements are organised in advance and monitored by the SEND Department.

Some, but not all, of the students described above also have Education and Health Care Plans [EHCPs].

The number of students with severe mental health issues continues to grow.

Some of our parents and carers have similar difficulties to their children. It is important that we continue to strive to find ways to successfully work with families in order to provide a holistic package of support to best meet their needs.

Action Plan

1. Increasing access for all students within the school curriculum and beyond

[See SEND & Inclusion Policy for further information].

Teaching and Learning is at the heart of the school's work. Through self-evaluation and Continuous Professional Development [CPD], we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote Quality First Teaching and learning for all students.

Students are in set groups for core curriculum and humanities subjects. All staff have access to individual provision maps [including personalised teaching strategies] for students with additional needs in their teaching groups. Students who require specialised equipment and/or resources will be catered for by teaching and support staff and the SEND department.

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Continue to ensure that full information is gained on all pupils' needs before they start the Academy	<p>Induction interviews with parents of vulnerable students, additional visits for students</p> <p>Transition booklet for vulnerable students</p> <p>SEND staff to meet with new students for initial assessment</p> <p>SEND continue to be involved with planning for new intake</p>	Annually and as needed with in-year applicant students	Vice Principal: Pastoral / Assistant Principal: SEND / SEND Team / Inclusion Staff / Year 7 Pastoral Team	All necessary provision in place as soon as possible
Continue to promote whole staff awareness in identifying barriers to learning	<p>Awareness training for all staff [SEND training annually]</p> <p>Written guidance for all staff on Shared Area</p> <p>Facilitate staff support [referrals] through Inclusion Panel</p>	Ongoing	SEND & Inclusion team	<p>Access to the curriculum for all</p> <p>Staff confident in making referrals to SEND team & Inclusion Panel</p>
Continue to develop teaching staff confidence in differentiating the curriculum including	SEND Workshops in differentiation and full range of needs	<p>Ongoing CPD</p> <p>6 annual SEND</p>	SEND	Increased staff confidence / Improved outcomes

planning of offsite activities	Availability of printed guidance on Staff Shared Area SEND Support Strategies	Workshops		
Annual audit of whole staff training needs	Audit to be completed by individuals via faculties	Annually	All staff / SEND team	All staff sure of responsibilities towards meeting needs of all students
Ensure support staff and PE staff have specific training on physical disability	Provide frequent specific training on range of needs and requirements e.g. physiotherapy, Moving and Handling and Intimate Care Training	As needed for specific staff	SEND team	SEN staff comfortable and confident with expectation Students / parents and carers comfortable with provision
Review all statutory policies annually to ensure that they reflect inclusive practice and procedure	Ensure that key staff involved in policy writing are fully briefed on Equality Act 2010	Annually	Principal / Vice Principal: Inclusion	Accessibility information available for all
Ensure that relevant staff have had training with administration of emergency medication / procedures	Co-ordinate specific training as needed Medical Alert Handbook	Annually / as needed	Inclusion / Medical Needs Co-ordinator	Staff confidence Full student participation in all areas of school life
Ensure that mental health needs of all (students / staff / parents) are considered when planning e.g. activities / events	Encourage staff to be aware of hidden disabilities Promote family support e.g. CAMHS Tier 2 / Coffee mornings	Ongoing as needed	Inclusion team / all staff	Increased awareness for all / staff & parent partnerships improved

2. Improving access to the physical environment of the school

Provision is made at St. Paul's Academy when a student's needs are known. We have a range of resources and equipment available for day-to-day use.

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
Continue to ensure all staff fully aware of needs of all students / staff / parents and visitors with medical and physical disabilities	Individual provision maps for teaching and support staff Ensure all equipment is in place e.g. changing beds, adjustable tables, HI & VI equipment etc Ensure all restaurant and housekeeping staff are briefed	Ongoing Annually	SEND Team	Students have access to full curriculum and full range of activities on offer
Car Park & Reception area access for all students / staff and visitors	Monitor automatic doors for wheelchair users Disabled parking bays	Ongoing Ongoing	Premises staff Premises staff	Access for all Access for all
Ensure all students / staff / visitors can be safely evacuated	Provide individual evacuation plans in place for students with physical disabilities Ensure all staff are aware of their duties towards students with disabilities Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in an emergency	As needed Annually Annually	Inclusion team / Premises staff / Fire Wardens / Principal	Safety for all in the event of an emergency
Ensure all IT packages and IT equipment are accessible for all	Provide alternative equipment e.g. large keys keyboard Ensure that individuals have the access they need [follow HI /VI /OT guidelines]	As required	SEND Team – work closely with IT / Network manager	All systems and equipment accessible to all students

3. Improving the delivery of written information to whole school community

Target	Strategies	Timescale	Responsibility	Success Criteria
To continue to review school information to parents / carers to ensure that it is accessible	<p>Provide letters / newsletters / school publications in clear print and plain English</p> <p>School staff available to support and help parents to access information and complete school forms</p> <p>Ensure school website and all documents accessible via school website can be accessed by visually impaired</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>Reception / key staff involved with supporting parents / carers</p> <p>SEND / Website design team</p>	All parents and carers receive information that they can access
Ensure all staff are aware of guidance on accessible formats	<p>Guidance for teaching and support staff on Dyslexia and accessibility [See Shared Area – SEND & Support Strategies]</p> <p>Annual SEND Workshop on Dyslexia and Exam Access Arrangements</p> <p>Teaching strategies available on Individual Provision maps</p>	Ongoing	SEND team	Staff produce own suitably adapted resources
Improve delivery of information for students with VI needs	<p>Provide suitably enlarged, clear print according to individual requirements [including the use of salmon coloured paper]</p> <p>Follow VI team advice for individual students</p> <p>Access VI library at CWS for specific text books</p>	As needed	SEND / liaise with teaching staff / MRO	All students access all teaching material without needing to ask
Annual Review Information to be made more	Develop a range of options for EHC plan / Statement	As needed	SEND	All SEND staff more aware of students'

accessible for non-verbal students	reviews e.g. talking mats, PECs, student voice			preferred means of communication
Provide information in other languages if requested	Access to translators / interpreters to be offered	As required	SEN / Inclusion team	Students / parents / visitors feel more included
Sign language to aid students and visitors who have difficulty with language or hearing difficulties	To be offered when needed			

Questions from DfE Guidance on Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled students

1. How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and TAs have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?	√	
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled students?	√	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?	√	
Are lessons responsive to student diversity?	√	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	√	
Are all students encouraged to take part in Music, Drama, and physical activities?	√	
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?	√	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding of for disabled students who cannot engage in some activities e.g. alternative form of communication or alternative form of exercise in PE?	√	
Do you provide access to technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	√	
Are all trips including overseas trips, made accessible to all students including those with disabilities?	√	
Does the school have high expectations of all students?	√	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	√	

2. Is your school designed to meet the needs of all students?

Question	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 students?	√	
Can students, who use wheelchairs, move around the academy without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?	√	
Are pathways around the academy site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	√	
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all students, including students with SEND 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?	√	
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		√
Are areas to which students have access well lit?	√	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a classroom's acoustics, noisy equipment?	√	
Is furniture and equipment and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	√	

3. Is written information accessible to all?

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students or prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	√	
Do you ensure the information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud presentations and describing diagrams?	√	
Do you have facilities such as IT to provide written information in different formats?	√	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	√	

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be reviewed by the Governing Board and the Principal.

It will be approved by the Governing Board and the Principal.

This Accessibility Plan should be read alongside the following policies and school documents:

- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND & Inclusion Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy