

SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

MARCH 2023

Review every 3 years (February 2026)

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Inclusion & Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy and all other school policies

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

Schools and Local Authorities have to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils.

Our school's accessibility plans are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided, and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them.

Notes

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one. A disabled person is someone who has a

- Physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The definition includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included.

If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoveries and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.

2 MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission statement recognises the value and worth of the individual pupil and it is this which lies at the heart of our Curriculum Access policy and Accessibility Plan.

Every student is entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and all-round educational experience.

Furthermore, an explicit aim of the Mission Statement is that each student should be guided towards mental and physical well-being and should leave the school with a sense of her own giftedness. The Mission Statement also commits us to respecting the uniqueness, worth and development of each individual, both as a learner and as a person called by God in dignity and faith.

All members of staff together with the authorities (Governing Body and LA) have a responsibility to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to attain their potential in all aspects of the curriculum.

3 ENGAGEMENT

We actively seek the views of disabled members of our community within any programme to adjust the school facilities or access. We have an established Pupil Voice programme within the school which enables students to communicate their views to the senior leadership team. Students with disabilities are enabled and encouraged to represent their form groups on the Student Council.

We have established a “parent mail” email communication system which enables all parents to contact and receive information directly from the school. We meet requests for information in other formats (e.g. large print).

Disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers are invited to attend additional pastoral meetings, transition planning sessions and parent teacher meetings; access arrangements are considered and put into place (e.g. a few classrooms have communication support for those with hearing impairments). We use a variety of communication media in order to address all accessibility issues but we recognise that wheel chair accessibility is still a challenge due to size of classes and environment.

Consultation took place in relation to the design of our new science/sports building and the new build, the design of which is now fully DDA compliant.

4 IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 What is Already in Place?

The age and design of Sacred Heart High School creates access and mobility difficulties which are not all possible to resolve. Scope for improvements is further complicated by the building’s Listed Building status.

Nevertheless, a number of features are already in place which aim to improve accessibility for pupils, staff and visitors. The following list describes features already in place and identifies recognised mobility limitations.

The Calder Building is constructed and equipped as DDA compliant including easy access toilets, lift access to all floors.

The use of the Teaching and Learning Observatory with remote access is intended to provide access to learning from all areas of the building and beyond.

Easy Access toilets are available in the DT department and at ground level in both the new building and in the existing main building (in the reception area at the front entrance onto Hammersmith Road).

The main toilet facilities are available in the basements of the East and West Wings. Staff toilets within the Barat main building are only accessible by stairs.

Mobile ramps are in use to overcome split levels where possible.

Wheelchair access is available into the main Barat building through the Bishop’s door. Access to the ground floor West Wing, Cloisters and Chapel and Technology Block is then possible. A lift provides access to all floors of the main Barat building and the Technology/Science block but not to the West Wing or the East Wing.

Movement from one part of the school to another is difficult and potentially hazardous, because of narrow corridors. This raises serious health and safety concerns for people with impaired mobility and safety of other pupils.

In the event of a pupil being temporarily confined to a wheelchair, room changes would be made but this would not be practicable on a permanent basis.

Before any wheelchair bound pupil, staff or visitor was admitted to the school plans would be put in place to cover evacuation. The school has a 'Fire Safety for those with Disability Risk Assessment' which would be used in such cases. Changes to classroom layout may also be required, but our remote access Teaching and Learning Observatory can also be used where accessibility is compromised.

The school has an operational medical room on the days when the school nurse is on site. This is located on the ground floor with easy access to the front entrance (meeting Room 2, School Nurse's office). On other days, unwell children are monitored from the Student Services office.

In order to help parents make an assessment of the difficulties the building presents for pupils with mobility difficulties or any other disability, the school will encourage the parent and child to visit the school when it is in session.

The school has a marked parking space for anyone with disabilities.

4.2 Further Improvements

The school will continue to take advice and seek improvements as far as it reasonably can to address the existing mobility restrictions but our scope for this is limited.

- Pupil voice about experience in SH building;
- Improved access for wheel chair users on ground floor;
- Environment made easier to access for those with sight difficulties i.e corridors to be kept clear of obstacles.

5 IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: THE CURRICULUM

5.1 What is already in place?

Sacred Heart has moved all classes to non-prior-attainment groupings with a focus on teachers scaffolding information. This is in line with evidence and research that tells us that groupings that are mixed creates equal expectations for all students and removes narrowing of expectations; particularly students with SEND, lower ability students and students from minority groupings.

As part of differentiation the school makes reasonable adjustments to enable all pupils to take part in activities such as adjustments to furniture, special chairs, writing slopes, stationary equipment such as pencil grips, and scissors.

Pupils are given exit cards should their medical condition require quick access to toilets.

Class seating arrangements reflect accommodation to the pupil's needs.

If the pupils find their disability is preventing them from accessing the full timetable, temporary arrangements are made to enable the pupil to manage their learning and regain

confidence to return to the classroom fulltime. As such, Sacred Heart has further developed curriculum access provision in the establishment of The Janet Stuart Centre to facilitate this. The centre will provide students who present with behaviour, physical, SEND or attendance needs with interventions and programmes designed to minimise the barriers presenting them from accessing learning.

Pupils have been involved in training staff about their needs since 2012 (ADHD, Dyslexia, Aspergers, Irlene Syndrome and Hearing Loss).

As a result of pupil voice an introduction to hidden disabilities such as hearing loss, dyslexia, autism and attention deficit disorder and medical needs such as diabetes are part of the PSHÉ programme with the aim to create awareness, encourage tolerance, understanding and a respect for others.

Access arrangements in place for pupils whose 'limitations go beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people.' Candidates who are at a substantial disadvantage have arrangements such as extra time, special production of exam papers, scribes, readers and a small classroom.

Sacred Heart works with a range of local authorities and agencies to ensure students with EHCPs have access highly skilled support.

6 IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY: WRITTEN INFORMATION

6.1 What is already in place?

The SENCO and (when appropriate the School Nurse) updates training for staff every September at the start of the academic year. Pupils also feed into training for staff.

We already have systems in place to ensure accessibility to the printed word, presentations, learning resources, through guidance on typeface, font size, background, layout, etc.

We also have further auxiliary aids: writing slopes, pens and colour filters. The school additionally uses software to increase access to learning:

- Typing Club – touch typing proficiency
- Read and Write Gold Software programme
- IT resources such as 'Show My Homework'
- Use of IT in exams

Ipads are provided for pupils with temporary injuries or surgery to their backs.

6.2 Further improvements

- Carry out a review of signage throughout the school to improve clarity, for example easy access to toilets and lift.
- All classrooms to have writing slopes for pupils to use in class.
- Continue to expand language friendly classrooms across the departments.

7 MAKING IT HAPPEN

7.1 Responsibilities, Timescales, Resources and Outcomes

Improving accessibility to	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Updates
THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Environment made easier to access for those with sight difficulties i.e. corridors to be kept clear of obstacles	Whole school	Ongoing 2023-24	Improved storage in so that corridors, classrooms and public areas are free from obstacles.	Walkways free for obstacles	All staff reminded to be vigilant at inset in September regarding the need to ensure corridors kept clear.
THE CURRICULUM	Updated Curriculum Access policy	Staff, in particular MF	Annually	Increased Learning Mentors	Increasing access to the curriculum	See Curriculum Access Policy
WRITTEN INFORMATION	Continuing to improve signage as required	Site Team (EG / YK)	Ongoing 2023-24		Key signs created professionally in a standard legible house style to be easily identifiable and readable creating clarity about where to find resources.	Signs have been updated and continue to be reviewed by the Site Team across the school.
	Use of IT in exams	Curriculum Access Dept.	Ongoing 2023-24	Read and Write Gold training for individual pupils.	Readers no longer required for exams. Improved access to English language paper as schools are allowed to use computer read out programmes.	Computer readout in place.

8 MONITORING

Progress with implementing the above will be monitored by SLT and reports on progress will be submitted to the Premises committee termly.

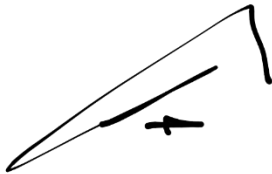
We will additionally track the experience of identified students in the course of a normal school week and monitor their accessibility.

9 RATIFICATION

This Policy was reviewed in February 2023 and approved by the Headteacher and full governing body in March 2023. The Plan will be reviewed three yearly. Renewal date February 2026.



Mrs S O'Donovan
Headteacher



Glen Hodgson
Chair of Governors