



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Accessibility Plan – Senior School and Boarding (Cambridge)

Applicable for three years from March 2021

This policy is the responsibility of the SEND committee.

Approval by Governance Committee: February 2022.

Next review by Special Education Needs and Disabilities Committee (SEND): February 2022.

Next review: Summer 2022.

St Mary's School, Cambridge ('the School') strives to be a fully inclusive and welcoming school and therefore aims to ensure that each pupil can participate fully in the life of the School.

Definition of Disability and Scope of the Plan

The Accessibility Plan is drawn up in accordance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. In drawing up our plan we have also had regard to The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools'. Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with the School's aims and ethos, and Equality Policy, Admissions Policy and Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Policy (SEND).

A child or young person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

This Accessibility Plan includes consideration of how the School proposes to:

- A. *Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the School's curriculum.*
- B. *Improve the physical environment of the School for the purposes of increasing the extent to which pupils with disabilities are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and*
- C. *Improve the delivery to pupils with disabilities of information which is readily accessible to pupils without disabilities.*

The School has a SEND committee and any other co-opted additional members whose expertise would be of assistance. The committee's terms of reference are:

- To review annually the School's policies, procedures, and facilities as they are likely to affect pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities.
- To make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education in many aspects to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments and by planning for the future.
- To prepare the School's SEND Policy
- To prepare the School's Accessibility Plan
- To review such plans and policies as necessary and at least on an annual basis.

The School's SEND committee have considered the following when developing and reviewing the plan:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Education
- Extra-curricular activities
- Governing body representation
- Physical School environment
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Sporting education and activities

- Staff training
- Welfare

St Mary's School, Cambridge is committed to planning for the provision of an accessible environment, within the context of a selective Catholic independent boarding and day school for girls, which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their physical, sensory, social and emotional needs. We challenge negative attitudes about accessibility and disability, and endeavour to develop awareness, tolerance, respect and inclusion across the School in relation to these.

The School's SEND committee meets once per term. It frames recommendations for inclusion in the plan. The document is placed on the agenda for the meeting of the full Governance Committee in February. There is a formal review of the implementation of the plan. The SEND committee provides a report at this meeting and identifies which measures have been achieved and where any delay in implementation is foreseen. The plan is then updated with adjusted timeframes where necessary.

The School's governors are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Accessibility Plan during the period to which it relates. This plan will be reviewed annually and a new one drawn up every three years to include provision for the whole school, including Early Years and our boarders.

A: Improving access to the curriculum

Overview

The School has a deservedly strong reputation in supporting every pupil to access the curriculum. Pupils are invited to join St Mary's School, Cambridge on a reduced curriculum and with personalised timetables in order that they can benefit from the education provided at the School. The SEN Department consists of 11 staff members across both Senior and Junior schools: this has been an area of growth over the past decade; the main Learning Support Room has been recently refurbished. Teachers continue to have frequently updated INSET in how best to deal with specific disabilities from the Head of Learning Support in the Senior School and the SENCO in the Junior School. Learning Support information is kept on ISAMS and the St Mary's cloud and is accessible to our teaching and support staff as relevant.

Our High Performance Learning (HPL) philosophy means that teachers and tutors have high expectations of all pupils irrespective of special needs, sensory impairment or disability. Lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve and they are responsive to pupil diversity. Lessons involve pupils working individually, in pairs, groups and as a whole class. Differentiation including in learning style is used to suit the need of individual pupils. Setting is used to support learning. Staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by pupils with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Pupils can access in-class support as well as out of class support in small groups. They can also have a reduced number of lessons on their timetable as appropriate. Acknowledging that pupils were struggling with content of the new Maths GCSE, more time has been allocated on the timetable. Computing Science has been made an option in

Year 9 as opposed to a compulsory component of the timetable. We have developed our curriculum to include more practical subjects. Food Tech GCSE and the Leith's Food & Wine Certification for Sixth Formers.

Extra sets of textbooks are provided for those with a physical disability to retain at home. Online textbooks (external and internally produced) are increasingly used. Many lessons have been recorded during lockdown phase 1 and 2 and we are currently reviewing how best to use recordings going forwards for the purposes of revision. All pupils in the Senior School are provided with a chrome book with appropriate software to meet their needs. Our aim is to push this provision down to Years 5 and 6 for September 2021. To support our digital strategy new mobile devices are being provided for teachers for additional flexibility and most desktops will be removed in spring 2021. Our librarian oversees facilities in our Learning Resources Centre and is adept in supporting those with SEND requirements. This has included purchase of digital technology for oral access to literature.

All pupils are encouraged to take part in music, drama, physical activities, extra-curricular activities, trips, and visits. School performances, sports, trips, and visits are made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment, wherever possible. Rowing has become increasingly available on our timetable post the acquisition of a boat house and provides an alternative to land-based field sports.

The School takes great care to ensure appropriate JCQ Access Arrangements are in place for public examinations – (i)GCSEs and A Levels – which are designed to assist with specific learning difference/ disability in order to enable those pupils to achieve the relevant grade boundary for their ability. This might include such adjustments as additional time or laptop or reader or scribe or a small separate or small group room. Our IT support function is both committed and experienced in this regard. We also have access to 'Text to Speech' (Read and Write Gold). Additional software, including larger fonts and other accessible formats are also available as are reading pens for use in class and in examinations. The Head, in her capacity as Head of Centre, signs off access arrangements for all students with SEND or medical requirements in the autumn ahead of the next summer's examination season to ensure that we can support provision appropriately.

Parents and Sixth Form pupils are made aware of the process they need to follow if they wish to apply for the DSA allowance at Parents' Evenings. Relevant staff liaise with Universities etc. if an individualised Care plan is implemented at St Mary's, Cambridge

Parental satisfaction remains very high as evinced through an external independent review by RSAcademics in which SEND and EAL provision were highly rated. Parents have gifted part/ whole of their original deposits back to the school in gratitude for the work of the Learning Support Department.

Curriculum Area	Current situation	Aim/considerations	Time Frame
Curriculum offering	Limited range of practical courses	A Level PE being offered	Sept 2021

B: Improving access to the physical environment

Overview

The School is situated within a conservation zone. Teaching facilities are in multi floor buildings. There are accessible toilets on ground floor level in all School buildings. The School has invested heavily in new facilities over the last 14 years which have included ground floor public facilities: head's study, parent meeting room, staff work room as well as improved entrance with a new Cortile garden.

We have additionally invested in new boarding accommodation: Mary Ward House and the newly refurbished Elms accommodation and new sports facilities in terms of a boat house and astroturf on our playing fields at Long Road. The next stage in the development is better vehicular access by road during 2021.

Staff who have needs identified via Occupational Health referrals have been provided with particular furniture including desks at particular heights, special chairs, particular IT equipment to support visual impairment including larger screens and voice-activated software. Doors are replaced to incorporate three vision panels at different heights and colour schemes are helpful for visually impaired students/ staff/ visitors. When pupils and/or staff are unable to access a first or second floor, all reasonable efforts will be made to relocate lessons to more accessible places. All buildings have wheelchair access at ground level aside from the Junior School. The sound quality in our halls has been improved.

Additional reception cover provides assistance to visitors and there are parking facilities for people with disabilities on all parts of the site – Senior, Junior and Boarding. Our parent portal and website allow easy access to School information for current and prospective parents. Online parents' evenings and open events have made access to information easier for many parents including international families.

Bateman Street buildings	Current situation	Solution	Time Frame
The Elms boarding accommodation	Limited bathroom & lavatory facilities	Create additional facilities	Completed 2021
Boilers	Boilers need replacing & are inefficient to provide ambient temperature	New eco-boilers to be installed	Autumn 2022
Car parking/resurfacing entrance	Uneven tarmac/no designated parking spaces	Re-tarmac and designate parking	Completed 2021
Signage	Needs clarification	New signage including on the floors	Spring 2022

C: Improving access to information

Overview

Pupils use differing font sizes and other accessible formats, colour overlays, tinted glasses to support particular visual impairments.

Modified language scripts published by Examination Boards are available in public examinations for students with low reading comprehension.

Readers and other adjustments are routinely made.

Website continues to be developed including virtual tours of all aspects of the school site and films by relevant staff on all aspects of the academic, pastoral and extra-curricular aspects of school life, including SEND and EAL provision. Reception is permanently staffed to deal with parental queries and emergencies

All admissions forms have been made available in electronic format online. International students or those living abroad are regularly skype-interviewed. The Admissions team seeks advice from Head of Learning Support if needed.

Online events continue to be developed for the benefit of current and prospective, local, and international parents.

Information	Current situation	Aim/considerations	Time Frame
Signage	Could be more dynamic	Review digital signage as appropriate	Spring 2022