



ST. MARK'S CE SCHOOL
ONE SCHOOL - SERVING ALL - THROUGH EXCELLENCE

Accessibility & Disability Discrimination

Policy Plan, Statement and Guidelines

Plan agreed: September 2024

Plan Review: September 2025

Accessibility & Disability Discrimination School Accessibility Plan and Statement of intent (see Disability Discrimination Policy)

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Aim: To identify key strategies and plans that will show over time how the school will increase its access for children with disabilities.

It will achieve this by:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

Introduction:

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA).

Definition of Disability:

Disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010.

“You are disabled under the [Equality Act 2010](#) if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”

The School's Context

St Mark's CE School is housed in a brand new DDA Compliant school.

St. Mark's CE School was established in 1881. We are the first All - through school in Shirley, a suburb of Southampton. We are proud of our multi-cultural mix of families and 27 languages are currently spoken within the school. The school highly values its Christian Ethos and we all believe in our Core Christian values of Love, Service and Belonging. This is the underpinning of our work at St Mark's and how we all treat each other, with an emphasis on high standards and ensuring our children leave reaching beyond their potential.

Starting Points:

At St. Mark's CE School our core Christian values of Love, Belonging to Service our commitment to a school where there are high expectations of everyone. Children are provided with high quality learning opportunities so that each child attains and achieves all that they are able to. Everyone in our school is important and included.

Through our core Christian Values we promote an ethos of Love, Belonging to Service, where every member of our school community feels that they truly belong and are valued. We work hard to ensure there are no invisible children here, recognising everyone's uniqueness and success. We recognise learning in all its forms and are committed to nurturing lifelong learners. We are a safe school, committed to improving children's confidence and self-esteem.

At St Mark's Church of England School we are committed to:

- increasing participation, improving the environment and improving the delivery of the curriculum to the disabled and vulnerable groups community. This is encompassed within our School Improvement Plan (SIP) and overall aims as a Church school.
- to collect a wide range of pupil and family information for improved accessibility and equality.

Key Objectives:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for students, and staff, with a disability.
- To embrace a partnership between the school and home.
- To offer to each member the opportunity to grow in knowledge fostered through Christian values and guidance.
- To acknowledge that every individual has a right to be part of a community where each member is valued and respected for their own worth irrespective of race, colour, creed or ability.
- Children will be helped to appreciate that they are members of the wider community in its richness and diversity.
- To ensure that our curriculum provides a setting in which all children have an equal opportunity to grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

Main Priorities/Principles:

The school's main priorities are to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in all of the school's activities and to ensure appropriate audits of the curriculum, buildings and out of school activities are completed. The aim is to provide services where there is evidence they make a difference and give value for money.

- Increase access to the curriculum through the development of staff expertise, ensuring specialist support is accessed where available.

- The new school building is completely DDA compliant, but we will continue to ensure that the environment meets the needs of those for whom their disabilities are not physical. This includes ensuring that our environment meets the sensory needs of those with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).
- Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school's SEND policy.
- The school recognises its duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA):
 - o Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - o Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
 - o To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.
 - o To publish an Accessibility Plan
- In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the DRC Code of Practice (2002)
- The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality
- The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils; and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum 2014 framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum.
 - o Setting suitable learning challenges
 - o Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
 - o Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils
- These will all be encapsulated in our School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Support will be sought from the Local Authority, voluntary agencies and charities to provide alternative communications where necessary.

Making it happen: Management, coordination and Implementation.

At St Mark's Church of England School all staff have a duty to work to this policy to ensure even greater inclusion of pupils with disabilities. Information collected will be coordinated by the SENDCos and brought to the Executive Headteacher and Governing Body prior to being incorporated in the School Improvement Plan. Action plans will be developed and monitored through the annual school improvement process.

A copy of the SIP is available to the school community on request.

Activity:

This section outlines the main activities which the school undertakes, and is planning to undertake, to achieve the key objective.

- **Education and related activities:**

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

- **Physical Environment:**

The school will take account of the needs of students, visitors and staff with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. The school will also implement reasonable adjustments as identified by the DDA Advisory Service audit and communication aids.

Linked Policies:

This plan will contribute to the review and revision of related school policies e.g.

- School Improvement Plan
- SEND Policy
- Equality policy
- Curriculum policies

Identifying barriers to access: A Checklist

This list will help us identify barriers to access that exist in our school. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of our school.

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary access to training and support to teach and support disabled pupils?	✓	
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils? As necessary	✓	
There are differentiated opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	✓	

Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	✓	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	✓	
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	✓	
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils?	✓	
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work? Where appropriate – LA advice followed	✓	
Do staff provide alternate ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education? LA advice followed	✓	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities? LA advice followed	✓	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities? LA advice followed	✓	
Are school visits made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	✓	
Are there high expectations for all pupils?	✓	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	✓	

Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

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 pupils?	✓	
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without	✓	

experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps, and stairs and toilet facilities?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed? Disabled adjustments made where necessary	✓	
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disability; including alarms with auditory components?	✓	
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		✓
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	✓	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment? LA advice followed	✓	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	✓	

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information? When requested reasonable adjustments are made	✓	
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud, projector screens and describing diagrams? When necessary	✓	
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	✓	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	✓	

Disability Discrimination: Policy of Intent and Good Practice.

Definition:

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010.

"You are disabled under the [Equality Act 2010](#) if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities."

The Duties;

The SEN and Disability Act (2001), the amended SEN framework set out in Education Act (1996) and the extended Disability Discrimination Act (1995) cover provision of education.

This Disability Discrimination: Policy of Intent and Good Practice reflects the importance that St Mark's Church of England School puts on the inclusion of all disabled members of the school community. The basic requirements for schools when carrying out their functions is to have due regard to do the following:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their impairment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled People in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Aims:

- At St Mark's Church of England School we are fully committed to making all reasonable adjustments to ensure no disabled child or adult is placed at a substantial disadvantage.
- The Governing Body as the 'responsible Body' for the DDA will ensure that everyone in school (staff or visitor) are aware of the duties owed to disabled pupils.
- Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all our children, and this of course includes pupils with disabilities.
- We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides.
- We will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than others because of the nature of his or her disability.
- We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage.

- We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before he or she joins the school.

Right of Complaint:

If a parent thinks their child has been discriminated against, they have a right of redress by making a claim within the schools formal complaints procedure and/or of contacting the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Accessibility strategies and plans:

To improve the school's education for disabled pupils, the school consequently has produced and regularly reviews its Accessibility Plan.

Removing barriers

- The school must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils and members of staff and of the public are not disadvantaged.
- Disabilities can limit the extent to which children are able to participate in the curriculum, and can impede the delivery of information.

The physical environment/Reasonable adjustments.

We will endeavour to improve provision for disabled pupils and staff by developing the physical environment of the school, within the limits of the resources available. Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory requirements when they:

- Act to prevent disabled pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Are aimed at all disabled pupils
- Are anticipatory
- Enable pupils to participate in education and associated services

When deciding if reasonable adjustment is necessary to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage, our school will consider the potential impact on disabled pupils in terms of:

- Time and effort
- Inconvenience
- Indignity or discomfort
- Loss of opportunity
- Diminished progress

We will fully involve the commitment of:

- Governors

- Executive Headteacher
- Senior Leadership Team
- Teachers and all other staff

We will know we are succeeding in making reasonable adjustments when disabled pupils are participating fully in school life:

- In the classroom
- In the 'school curriculum'
- At breaks, lunchtime and beyond the school day

And when:

- Disabled pupils feel part of the life of the school
- Disabled pupils are included by their peers in all parts of school life
- Parents feel their disabled child is part of the life of the school
- Staff feel confident in working with disabled pupils

The Curriculum

- We use teaching strategies to enhance learning and participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We find ways in which all pupils can take part in sport, music and drama. We plan our out-of-school activities and school trips in such a way that pupils with disabilities can participate.
- We use language that does not offend, and we make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language.
- Our library, reading books and other resources contain positive images of people with disabilities.
- The school regularly reviews the way resources are matched to the needs of all the children. If necessary, to improve our provision, adjustments will be made to classroom organisation, the deployment of support staff, timetabling and staff training.
- Many of the adjustments we make are dependent upon individual needs, and we are moving towards more individualised approaches. Pupil Support Plans are effective and manageable.
- We seek and respond to guidance from the parents and the children.

Information

- Information normally provided in writing (lesson context, texts, library resources and information about school events) will where necessary be made available in alternative

formats.

- We always take account of disabilities, be they the pupils' or their parents'. For example, communication with a parent who is visually impaired may need to be telephoned rather than by letter.

Staffing

- When advertising posts, or interviewing applicants, or deciding on appointment, the Governors and staff will follow the necessary procedures, and will not discriminate against people with disabilities.
- Should a member of staff become disabled, the Governing Body will make reasonable adjustments to that person's employment arrangements, or to the premises, in order to enable them to continue in post.
- All members of staff are entitled to professional development and training, and are expected to take advantage of a continuous programme of professional development.
- This school will liaise with specialists to support individual pupils. Among these specialists are the following: physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, the school nurse, social workers, and the staff of the voluntary and statutory agencies. We benefit from the LEA's advice, and its provision through the Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired services.

Health and Safety

- Members of staff follow the school procedures both for the storage and for the administration of medicines to pupils. We also have procedures for when blood or other bodily substances have to be cleared away.
- The school has members of staff qualified in giving first-aid treatment, and the emergency services will be called, should they be required.

Policy into practice

- The Governing Body is responsible for the school's duty not to discriminate.
- A named Governor and a designated member of staff jointly discharge the responsibility of ensuring that we meet our obligation not to discriminate.
- The Executive Headteacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities to all pupils without exception.
- All members of staff are fully committed to the policy of not discriminating against pupils, parents or staff with disabilities.
- Parents and carers are asked to keep us informed about any relevant issues, so that we can work towards resolving them.

Monitoring

- We have high expectations of all our pupils. We monitor a range of data to make sure

that all pupils are making the best progress possible, and that no groups of pupils are underachieving.

- We monitor:
 - Admissions
 - Attainment
 - Exclusions
 - Rewards and sanctions
 - Parental and pupil questionnaires
- Evaluations based on these data are then reported to the Governing Body, and an action plan will be drawn up if necessary.

Monitoring and review

- The Executive Headteacher implements the school's disability non-discrimination policy on a day-to-day basis, and ensure that all staff are aware of the details of the policy as it applies to them.
- The Headteacher reports to Governors annually on matters regarding disability discrimination.

1. Planning Templates 1-3 Starting points

1. Starting points
1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values St Mark's CE School is a one whole school community, where we create a sense of belonging for all who enter our school. Our core Christian values of love, belonging and service are nurtured and modelled through high standards by excellent staff.
1B: Information from pupil data and school audit Current numbers of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs): 33 Current numbers of pupils on the SEND register without an EHCP: 107 Current areas of additional need that we support in school: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Moderate learning difficulties● Specific learning difficulties

- Severe learning difficulty
- Autism spectrum conditions
- ADHD
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Auditory Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Physical Impairment
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Children with food allergies

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

All sections of the school community have been consulted on the development and Implementation of this plan. This has been undertaken via meetings, direct dialogue and questionnaires. All members of the school's community are consulted on any changes that need to be made and our open door policy enables all stakeholders to share their views.

2. The main priorities in the school's plan

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.

There are increasing numbers of pupils entering St. Mark's with a range of complex needs requiring special provision. Staff at St. Marks are mindful that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum irrespective of their needs or disability and provide resources, classroom support and access to expert advice both from within the school staff and from outside agencies.

Enlarged print and sensory equipment such as visual timetables and a range of specialised resources are available to improve the accessibility as required by the individual pupils.

The use of Interactive Whiteboards and screens have been installed in all classrooms and the school hall to enable all pupils, especially those with visual impairments to have access to all parts of the curriculum and to participate in all areas of school life including whole school collective worship.

A wireless network system has been installed throughout the school to enable all pupils to access ICT from all classrooms and shared learning spaces.

Meetings with parents with disabilities will always be held in an accessible area.

2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

The school has been designed for full disabled and wheelchair access and meets Building Regulations Part M 'Access to and Use of Buildings'. In reference to Acoustics the building is designed in accordance with the DfE Output Specification BB93 Acoustic Design in School, the requirement for compliance with Building Regulations Part E, resistance to the passage of sound (although is far more detailed).

Among various items included in the design, there is level/ wheelchair access across all floor areas with flush thresholds and lift access to move between floors. External stepped areas are provided with ramps. Accessible WCs are evenly distributed around the school, handrails and colour contrast is provided. With reference to acoustics the rooms have been designed for both appropriate acoustic separation and speech clarity to assist with hearing.

In the classrooms, we ensure that access is given to children moving around the classroom when finding resources. We are careful to ensure that displays do not create an environment which is too 'busy' or overcrowded which can be confusing to children on the autistic spectrum, children with attention difficulties (ADHD) and children with specific learning difficulties.

We have an accessible toilet. Support is discreetly available and offered if this is required.

Where possible, ramps for wheelchair users and for those for whom steps may cause a difficulty have been installed. Provision is made for wheelchair users in case of fire. We monitor corridors to keep them free of obstacles to ensure easy access. Evac chairs and specific call points have been installed for the purpose of fire evacuation.

When a child with a disability comes to St Mark's, we will meet with the parents/carers and the child to discuss their needs and make necessary provision. We also access outside agencies to advice, help and provide equipment and advice. This includes occupational therapy, hearing and visual impairment services.

We will include children with disabilities on day and residential trips. We have a disabled parking bay in the car park, which is available on request from school and given a permit.

If you have a physical disability, we will ensure that meetings with you are held in accessible places.

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:

All pupils have equal access to information, curriculum and other facilities both on and off site wherever it is possible to do so. There will be additional support and / or facilities provided for children, staff and other adults as the need for such things arise.

3: Making it happen

3A: Management, coordination and implementation

The Senior Team, Staff and Governors all have the responsibility for ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all our pupils, staff, families and visitors to St. Mark's CE School.

Accessibility and resources are outlined for all building works and /or changes to the school site. All guidance related to these specifications are followed and all reasonable adjustments are made wherever practically possible to do so. Where it is reasonable to do so, adjustments can be made or where the purchase of resources can be proven to be cost effective in preparation for any pupil or staff member with a disability, this will be done.

3B: Getting hold of the school's plan

St. Mark's CE School will make its Accessibility Plan available to all on the school's website. Paper copies with a minimum of 14 point text size can also be requested from the school office.

