

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School

Accessibility & SENDA Policy

Date policy reviewed:	January 2021
Approved by:	
Date approved:	

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SEND Policy
- Pupil Mental Health Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Management of Health & Safety in Schools Policy
- School Health Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Employment policies

MERCHANT TAYLORS' GIRLS' SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY AND SENDA POLICY

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School (MTGS) is committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their spiritual, educational, physical, sensory, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

MTGS continues to enhance provisions to increase the accessibility for all pupils, staff, parents and visitors to the school.

The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant actions to:

- Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for all pupils, ensuring those with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve the delivery of **information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and

information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

Action Plans relating to these three aspects of accessibility are reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis.

MTGS acknowledges that there is a need for on-going awareness raising and training for staff and governors in the matter of disability discrimination and the need to inform attitudes on this matter.

Introduction

This policy has been written with government policy and legislation in mind. Relevant legislation and guidance taken into consideration include:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Education Act 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2014)
- Accessible Schools: Summary Guidance DFES/0462/2002
- The Disability Rights Commission's Code of Practice for Schools 2002
- The Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended (S12003/1910)
- The Equality Act 2010

1. Definitions of Disability

- 1.1 The schools will treat each case in which a pupil or adult considers that they have a disability individually and with sensitivity.
- 1.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal daily activities.

2. Admissions, Disability and Accessibility

- 2.1 MTGS is an academically selective, independent school. We welcome all pupils who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in our caring environment. We aim to provide all our pupils with a school career that promotes intellectual, emotional, social and physical development, allowing them to emerge as confident, well-educated and well-rounded adults.

- 2.2 The school asks parents to make a declaration regarding disabilities and learning difficulties in respect of a prospective pupil when accepting the offer of a place. This declaration forms part of the admissions form. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may seek advice and/or assessments as it regards as appropriate in order to best support the pupil. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality. If a girl, who has a history of a learning disability, is successful in being offered a place all reasonable adjustment will be made to support her needs. Parents should be aware that although SENCO advice is given to all teachers, support with a qualified specialist teacher in the Learning Support Department occurs only if a pupil's needs cannot be met in the classroom.
- 2.3 The school's policy is also to ensure that no member of staff, visitor or parent is put at a substantial disadvantage because of a disability and to ensure that their needs are met, in accordance with its obligation to make reasonable adjustments.

3. Access to the curriculum

MTGS have a whole school approach to the provision of SEND.

MTGS endeavor to provide a learning environment which allows all pupils to feel safe, secure and valued. Teaching staff set high expectations and encourage independence, providing all pupils with the opportunity to experience success. Teachers must take into account potential barriers to learning and make provisions where necessary to support pupils.

Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with SEND must take into account the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil.

Effective strategies and resources can be found in MTGS Academic SEND Team and Pupil Profiles of the individual pupil.

Merchant Taylors' Girls' School SEND Policy details the processes and provisions available by the Learning Support Department. It covers all areas of SEND as per the SEND Code of Practice. Please refer to this policy for further advice and guidance on the school's support of pupils with SEND.

Wider Curriculum

MTGS provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, activities and visits. Those organising such activities must plan for and support the individual needs of pupils who attend. Where appropriate, the school makes reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of the pupil(s) during activities and visits.

4. School Site / Physical Accessibility

At present, our facilities for people with disabilities are subject to limitations, but we will do all that is reasonable to ensure the school's culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to pupils, parents and visits who have disabilities. We will fulfil our legal and moral responsibilities in order to accommodate the needs of applicants, pupils, parents and visitors who have disabilities which, after reasonable adjustments, we can cater for adequately.

There has been a major investment in the facilities over the last five years and these are ongoing. We access sports facilities available Merchant Taylors' Boys' School, which are compliant with the Equality Act however, there are still a number of historical buildings which are not totally accessible. Nevertheless, the schools believe that adjustments can be made where needed, through classroom and timetable changes to provide access to pupils with SEN/disabilities.

We conducted a 'Disability Access audit' in 2009 to review our provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The School is currently developing a Master Estates Strategy Plan covering the next 5 – 10 years which will look at in detail, how best to deliver a more accessible/diverse Estate for our pupils. This review is underway and being considered by the Board of Governors.

We also consider accessibility needs and requirements during major refurbishment programs or as part of any specific individual needs or requirements should they arise.

5. Other Adjustments

- 5.1 Pupils who need to use laptop computers in lessons are permitted to do so and there is provision for pupils to use laptop computers in examinations. Provision is made for pupils who require examination access arrangements. All pupils who require a reader or scribe for either external or internal exams are supported in a separate examination room.

5.2 If pupils with visual impairment are admitted to the school, facilities would be made available to provide appropriate materials i.e., large print documents, coloured paper or Braille materials.

5.3 Pupils with sensory impairments have an individual Pupil Profiles detailing their needs and any provisions required; this is addressed on a case by case basis. Similarly, individual plans and reasonable adjustments would be made for any member of staff with impairment to ensure they are appropriately supported.

5.4 All members of teaching and support staff will receive appropriate training on working with disabled people when required.

5.4 On request we will endeavor to arrange production of relevant leaflets or brochures to be made available in large print. Many of our publication are also available on our website.

6. Information Technology

6.1 The School Portal: The School Portal allows accessibility of information to all pupils, parents, and staff.

6.2 The School Website: The website does have a high visibility option however we encourage the use of web browsers such as Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Microsoft Edge as they have appropriate accessibility tools built in.

7. Welfare

7.1 We review and agree suitable arrangements in consultation with relevant professional advisers, parents and the pupil herself.

7.2 The school curriculum and all staff promote equality and the acceptance of difference.

Action Plan A – Improving Curriculum Access

Aim	Action	Time Scale	Date completed	Responsibility
Improved Quality First Teaching for SEND pupils.	<p>SEND department to deliver departmental staff training to support high Quality First Teaching</p> <p>SEND department to observe girls in lessons to inform better strategies and interventions</p>	ongoing		<p>SENDCO</p> <p>Learning Support Department</p>
Further improve whole school approach to supporting learners with SEND	As part of CPD programme, departments work more closely with the Learning Support Department to discuss and plan for the needs of pupils with SEND	ongoing		<p>Learning Support Department</p> <p>Head of Departments</p> <p>Teaching staff</p>
To develop the use of the school's tracking system to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils with SEND, and identify pupils with potential SEND	Learning Support Department to liaise with Heads of Year and Director of Pupil Progress and Tracking to track progress of all pupils	ongoing		<p>Learning Support Department</p> <p>Heads of Year</p> <p>Director of Progress & Tracking</p>
Develop the provision of a Sensory Room for pupils with ASD	Establish 2 designated areas for Lower and Upper School Sensory Room	ongoing		Learning Support Department

Action Plan B – Improving Physical Access

Aim	Action	Time Scale	Date completed	Responsibility
Improve longer term access to buildings	Estates strategy review	ongoing		Estates Team / Exec / Board of Governors

Action Plan C – Improving Delivery of Written Information

Aim	Action	Time Scale	Date completed	Responsibility
Develop availability of written material in alternative formats when specifically requested	School be aware of service available for converting written information into alternative forms	ongoing		Administrative staff