



St Catherine's  
School & College

*Specialists in Speech, Language and  
Communication Needs*

# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## JANUARY 2025

**Document Information**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Accessibility Plan</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Revisions:</b>	- This plan has undergone a complete re-write
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every three years
<b>Next Review:</b>	January 2028

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## **1. Aims**

Schools are required under the Equality Act 2010 to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Improve the physical environment and other resources in the school to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities

St Catherine's recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, which has simplified and strengthened the discrimination laws which protect people from unfair treatment. It is unlawful for an education provider to treat a disabled student unfavourably through: direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; discrimination arising from a disability; and/or harassment. Education providers must take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage. Our school aims to treat all its pupils fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind.

St Catherine's strives to ensure that its culture and ethos are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of its community, everyone is valued equally and treats one another with respect. Students will be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity. The plan will be available online on the school website and paper copies are available upon request.

Our school is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010, including understanding disability issues.

Our school's complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in school, the complaints procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

As part of the school's continued communication with parents, carers and other stakeholders we continually look at ways to improve accessibility through data collection and parental discussions. We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan.

## **2. Legislation and Guidance**

This document meets the requirements of [schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Department for Education (DfE) [guidance for schools on the Equality Act 2010](#).

***'The Equality Act 2010 defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake 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 pupil with disabilities faces in comparison with a pupil without disabilities. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

### 3. Action Plan

This action plan sets out the aims of our accessibility plan in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

#### Aims:

1. Improving the physical environment for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education, therapy, care and associated services and to increase the extent to which disabled staff and visitors can access the site.
2. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.
3. Improving the delivery of information to students with disabilities.

Aim	Strategies	Assessment	Actions	Timeframe
1. Improving the physical environment for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education, therapy, care and associated services and to increase the extent to which disabled staff and visitors can access the site.	There have been a number of improvements to the physical environment with respect, for example, to additional hand railing across the school and upper school sites and in the houses; visibility paint/tape to highlight steps and hand rails; disabled parking bays provided in the lower car-park and more vigorous monitoring of their availability; the purchase of specialist ICT equipment, desks, chairs, cutlery, portable aids and other equipment; and the installation of ramps, a wheelchair-accessible entrance to the upper part of the school site and a wheelchair-accessible toilet in the main building.	<p>The steep gradient of many parts of the school site means that wheelchair access is very restricted at present. Due to the current limitations of the school buildings and the landscape, the school is unable to support students and staff who are wheelchair users because of the risks attached to evacuation in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>Resources are being sought to improve accessibility and the redevelopment of the site and buildings is a long-term aim, subject</p>	To ensure that these developments do not fall into disrepair, all improvements made under this Accessibility Plan will be built into the regular checks of appropriate staff.	To be reviewed continuously by Site Manager

	<p>Our College site (which opened in September 2020) had an accessibility assessment and is wheelchair accessible for students. Adaptations have also been made to include a Changing Space and work spaces that are wheelchair accessible in both the science laboratory and cookery room.</p> <p>St Catherine's occupational therapy team work with staff from all departments and with individual students across the school site, in classrooms and in the residential houses to support students' access to all activities. Therapists advise whether specific adaptations are necessary and these recommendations are acted upon.</p>	to the identification of the necessary finances.		
2. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.	<p>Children and young people at St Catherine's usually have an Education, Health &amp; Care Plan-which indicates they have a significant language disorder.</p> <p>The school offers a fully inclusive, broad, and balanced curriculum that is tailored to meet the specific needs of individual students. Our modified</p>	<p>The curriculum is regularly reviewed to make sure it meets the needs of all pupils.</p> <p>Staff members are encouraged to participate in a wide range of training opportunities, whether</p>	<p>To continue to ensure that staff are fully aware of individuals' specific needs and differentiation.</p> <p>To continue to improve the ways in which students' awareness of their individual</p>	To be reviewed yearly by subject co-ordinators and the Principal

	<p>curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum that has been developed specifically for students with speech, language and communication needs.</p> <p>The sixth form college uses a flexible combination of nationally-accredited courses to provide the framework for the delivery of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.</p> <p>Each student has an individual programme tailored to meet their specific needs. High staff-to-student ratios are maintained to facilitate greater individual attention. Each class has a teacher and teaching assistant.</p> <p>Careful planning for rooming, seating and support (including equipment) to ensure disabilities are not a barrier to lesson access.</p> <p>A speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist are assigned to each pupil and who work collaboratively to plan programmes and agree targets. Additionally, speech and language therapy assistants and</p>	<p>through external courses or in-house sessions, to continuously develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding.</p> <p>Staff training and information regarding special educational needs, particularly Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN) are vital components of the school's day-to-day operations. This training has a significant impact on the quality of provision and the delivery of the curriculum. The quality of teaching and therapy within collaborative settings is regularly monitored to ensure it meets the needs of individual students, as well as those of the group and class as a whole.</p>	<p>targets and progress towards these is communicated.</p>	<p>To be reviewed yearly by subject co-ordinators and the Principal</p>
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	<p>occupational therapy assistants and learning support assistants work with students both within the classroom and on a one-to-one basis.</p> <p>Each student has a keyworker in the residential team and together they identify the skills needed to develop the self-confidence and independence of the young people.</p> <p>Individual Care Action Plans are agreed, linked with the student's Individual Education Plan and the development of independence skills.</p> <p>Pupil Profiles are shared by staff to highlight students' individual needs and particular areas for support.</p> <p>Risk assessments are undertaken when and if there are specific areas of concern with respect to individual students.</p>			
3. Improving the delivery of information to students with disabilities.	<p>Our school uses a range of communication methods to make sure information is accessible. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal signage</li> <li>• Large print resources</li> <li>• Induction loops</li> <li>• Pictorial or symbolic representations</li> </ul>	<p>Work is on-going towards improving signage and other means of communication across the site.</p> <p>All of the buildings on the main school site have been renamed and colour-coded to aid students' understanding of locations.</p>	<p>To continue to develop total communication across the school by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• becoming a signing environment;</li> <li>• developing the use of alternative and augmentative</li> </ul>	<p>To be reviewed yearly by Head of SaLT and the Principal</p>

	<p>School continues to enhance the variety and quality of physical aids necessary for pupils to access the curriculum. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and laptops, available for use by both children and staff. Augmentative and alternative communication aids are provided for students who require them, and their usage, along with relevant programs, is regularly monitored.</p> <p>Online safety is a key priority for both learners and staff at the school. As part of the school's plan, the requirements for IT, computing, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools are regularly reviewed, and any recommendations are incorporated into subsequent action plans.</p> <p>Arrangements are made to enable students to access exams, through the provision of readers, scribes, oral language modifiers, transcripts and/or additional time during exams as appropriate.</p> <p>Education/Therapy and residential staff have been trained in the use of a</p>		<p>communication (AAC) for students for whom it is appropriate; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring a consistent approach to the use of symbols across the school.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>recognised symbol system to enhance students' understanding of the printed word.</p> <p>A rolling programme of work across the site seeks to make continuous improvements with respect, for example, to improving lighting, avoiding shiny reflective surfaces and using contrasting colours wherever feasible.</p> <p>Staff from each department have been trained in sign-supported English and St Catherine's is working to become a whole school signing environment.</p>			
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#### **4. Monitoring Arrangements**

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 body and the Principal. It will be approved by the governing body and the Principal.

Reviewed Oct 2010 / Jan 2013 / Jul 2014 / Feb 2015 / Jan 2018/Mar 2021/Jan 2025

#### **5. Links with other Policies**

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- Health and safety policy
- Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication
- Special educational needs (SEN) information report
- SEND policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy