



ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Policy Custodian: *Deputy Head (Academic) and Bursar*

Approving Governors Committee: *Full Governing Body*

Approved: *March 2020*

Next Review: *March 2021*

1. **Ethos and Aims of Merchant Taylors' School (MTS)**

MTS aims to offer the highest quality of teaching and learning and support all pupils in the pursuit of academic and personal excellence. We have high expectations of all of our pupils and we strive to ensure that each and every pupil can take part in the whole school curriculum. We value the diversity of our school community and appreciate the contribution that all pupils can bring to school life, including neurodivergent pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We aim to take reasonable steps to avoid any member of the school community (including pupils, prospective pupils, staff and governors) being at a substantial disadvantage due to a disability and the school actively promotes positive attitudes towards disability.¹

Our Admissions Policy (available to view on our website) seeks to remove barriers to entry for pupils with SEND. We are an academically selective school that strives to be fully inclusive and welcoming. We recognise our obligation to support those with SEND and/or health issues including mental health conditions. Pupils with SEND will be assessed according to the School's entry criteria. The Head Master will make a judgement on whether the candidate has the ability to benefit from the provision on offer. In respect of any declared disability, the Head Master will decide whether the School can make reasonable adjustments to enable the pupil to benefit from the provision on offer. Other colleagues such as the Head of Learning Support or the School Nurse will be consulted, along with academic colleagues such as Heads of Department. If an existing pupil is identified with a disability, the School will make reasonable adjustments to enable that pupil to continue to access the curriculum.

We review our approach annually and take steps to improve the environment of the School in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the School. Each year we maintain our investment in ramps, walkways, accessible WC facilities and lifts, as well as specialist support services and staff training

Recent investments include review and adjustment of lifts, provision of adjustable furniture, purchase of an , purchase of an inflatable riser cushion to improve pool accessibility and annual specialist support reviews for pupils with hearing impairments. The new Geography Building includes a lift and new medical centre with an accessible hygiene facility. The School gives ongoing consideration to what constitutes best practice for accessibility and includes this in the planning and review of its facilities and services.

Where physical access remains difficult, the School will introduce alternative forms of interpretation in order to extend access as far as practicable. Interpretative resources will also be used to meet the needs of pupils and visitors with cognitive and sensory impairments. Whenever necessary, we provide written information to pupils with disabilities in ways that are user-friendly and fully support

¹ An individual is considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. The School recognises this includes many of the pupils with SEN, particularly those with access arrangements

the pupils in their learning experience. We review our signage and seek to improve its visibility for all pupils, staff and visitors.

Teaching strategies are reviewed regularly to ensure that any potential barriers to learning and participation by disabled pupils are removed. We support our teaching and support staff with a programme of in-depth training designed to raise their awareness of neurodiversity and disabilities and to enable them to minimise barriers to learning. We promote the importance of using language that does not offend amongst both our staff and our pupils and ensure that, wherever possible, positive examples of diversity and disability are portrayed in teaching materials.

2. **Context**

As at 1st March 2020, Merchant Taylors' School has one pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There are, at present, no Looked After Children (LAC) in the School. Pupils with identified needs are monitored at appropriate intervals for their needs and at least once a year, in order to assess progress and review support (including any exam access arrangements).

We have in the region of 130 pupils with learning support needs and medical disabilities. These include dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, ADHD/ADD and visual impairment and hearing impairment. All our pupils are fully integrated into school life and have the opportunity to participate in the whole curriculum including extra-curricular activities (such as school trips).

We take a fully inclusive approach to our staff recruitment and aim to appoint the best person based on their skill set and qualifications and regardless of any disability he/she might have and where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are put in place for interview. We actively implement the School's equal opportunities policy for staff in the day-to-day management of MTS. Those staff with e.g. diabetes, hearing impairment, mobility differences and specific learning difficulties are all provided with the necessary support for their roles.

We currently have no governors on our governing body with disabilities. However, we review this annually and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can access meetings as well as all the necessary information and equipment to enable them to undertake their role.

The MTS accessibility policy is reviewed annually by the Bursar, Senior Deputy Head (Academic), Registrar, Head of Learning Support, Director of Sport, School Nurse, HR Manager and Buildings Manager. The terms of reference for this review are:

1. to review the School's policies, procedures and facilities as they are likely to affect disabled pupils and prospective pupils who are disabled.
2. 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
3. to prepare the School's disability inclusion, SEND and learning support policy
4. to prepare the School's accessibility plan
5. to review such plans and policies as necessary and at least on an annual basis

We will regularly monitor the success of the plan and it will also be reviewed annually by the Governors' Education Committee and the Governing Body.

3. Accessibility Action Plan

Our action plan has considered the following areas:

- 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

The results of our continuous monitoring of the above has informed the accessibility plan below which relates to Schedule 10 from The Equality Act, 2010:

Schedule 10	Description
3 (1)	The responsible body of a school in England and Wales must prepare an accessibility plan;
3 (2) (a)	Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum;
3 (2) (b)	Improving the physical environment of the school for the purposes of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School.
3 (2) (c)	Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The Governing Body recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), which prevents discrimination against disabled people in their access to education. Merchant Taylors' School is committed to providing a full curriculum to as many pupils as possible and aims to enable all young people to achieve their full potential, academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually. In order to meet the needs of disabled pupils, applicants will be asked to disclose their disabilities or conditions that the School should be aware of, any learning support received or the content of any educational psychologist reports. The School will remain sensitive to issues of data protection and confidentiality.

March 2020
Deputy Head (Academic) & Bursar
Review Date March 2021