



DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

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

Approving Governors Committee: *Full Governing Body*

Approved: *March 2018*

Next Review: *March 2019*

This policy addresses DfE policy reflected in the ISI regulatory requirements (effective from September 2017) Part 1, Paragraph 2. (1) (b)

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 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can bring to school life.

Our Admissions Policy (available to view on our website) seeks to remove barriers to entry for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. We are an academically selective school that strives to be fully inclusive and welcoming. We recognise our obligation to support not only those with physical disabilities, but also those with health issues including mental health or learning disabilities. Disabled pupils 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 the Head of English or the Head of Maths. If an existing pupil is diagnosed 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 physical 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, disabled WC facilities and elevators, which improves our accessibility further.

Recent investments include the improved access to the new Design Centre, Print Room, Reception and our Sixth Form Centre. We have installed disabled WC and shower facilities in the School Store and the History Block refurbishment project incorporated a disabled lift and accessible WC. Wheelchair access between Sir Thomas White Drive and the Long Drive was improved by extending and linking the pavement to the new gates. Pedestrian/wheelchair access has been provided to the Lakeside through provision of a new path from the OMT car park to the Lakeside. Door opening automation has been extended to allow wheel chair users time to manoeuvre and Reception doors have been adapted to improve wheel chair access.

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 the pupils in their learning experience.

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 disabilities and to enable them to minimise any potential difficulties for pupils. 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 disability are portrayed in teaching materials.

2. Context

As at 1st March 2018, Merchant Taylors' School has no statemented pupils and no pupils with, or expected to transfer to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). 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 spectrum disorder, migraine, ADHD/ADD 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. We actively implement the School's equal opportunities policy for staff in the day-to-day management of MTS. Those staff with medical disabilities ranging from diabetes, hearing impairment and mobility issues are all provided with the necessary support for their roles.

We currently have no governors on our governing body with long term medical disabilities. However, we review this annually and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can travel to and from meetings and can access all the necessary information and equipment to enable him/her to fully and actively undertake their role.

The MTS disability access policy is reviewed 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 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 action plan below which relates to the following ISI Regulatory Standards on special educational needs and disability:

ISI Regulatory Standard Schedule 10	Description
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 2018
Senior Deputy Head (Academic) & Bursar
Review Date March 2019