

Merchant Taylors' School



MTS ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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

Approving Governors Committee: *Governors Education Committee*

Approved: *June 2024*

Next Review: *June 2025*

This policy is written under the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010), and taking account of the SEND Code of Practice (2014, updated May 2015), as outlined in the Independent School Standards Regulations. The policy draws upon the DfE guidance, *The Equality Act 2010 and schools* (2014) and sets out the School's strategy for improving access for disabled pupils, including those with learning difficulties. The policy is primarily pupil focused and applies to MTS and MTP. It is closely linked to the Learning Support policies and should be read in conjunction with those policies.

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.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to show how Merchant Taylors' School intends, over time, to increase accessibility to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information so that all pupils with a disability can take full advantage of their education and associated opportunities.

Definitions

The Equality Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'.

The Children and Families Act (2014) states that children who have been identified with 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) may be disabled, but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and not all disabled pupils have an SEN. 'Disabled pupils', for the purpose of this policy, refers not only to those pupils with physical disabilities but also includes others who meet the legal definition of disability, which may include those with health issues, including mental health, or learning difficulties.

Principles and Expectations

- Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Equal Opportunities policy and Learning Support policy.
- Our staff recognise their duty under the Equality Act:
 - Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
 - To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
 - To publish an accessibility plan
- In performing their duties governors have regard to the Equality Act 2010
- Merchant Taylors' School
 - recognises and values the young person's knowledge/parents' knowledge of their child's disability
 - recognises the effect their disability has on their ability to carry out activities,
 - respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality
- The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that is adapted where needed and age appropriate.

Expectations of staff

Staff have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that they do not treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the person's disability
- To not indirectly discriminate against a pupil with a disability by failing to make a reasonable adjustment and so placing the pupil (or making it likely they will be placed) at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled pupils.
- To implement reasonable adjustments where a potential need for reasonable adjustments is identified by the learning support department
- To ensure that if a disability is disclosed, the pupil's permission (where appropriate) is sought before sharing information with other staff.

The school works to meet its accessibility aims through three key areas (identified in schedule 10 of the Equality Act):

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with SEN) can participate in the curriculum and the wider school community.
2. Improving the delivery of written information for disabled individuals, including that which has already been written for non-disabled pupils.
3. 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.

The school aims for all pupils to have access to the education provided and where there are potential barriers to this, we support pupils to access as much education as possible. This is achieved through a flexible approach which takes into account the needs of the pupil, where they are in their journey through the school and the adjustments that might be made to current provision. The appropriate

manner of access will therefore vary and will be discussed with the Head of Section in the first instance, in consultation with the pupil's tutor and the Learning Support team where appropriate.

The school completes an accessibility audit in conjunction with writing its three year accessibility plan, however interim audits may take place as needed to take account of the needs of new pupils and staff. Staff involved in the accessibility audit may include (but are not limited to): Head of Operations (MTS), Heads of Learning Support, Senior Deputy Head (MTP), Deputy Head (Academic, MTS), School Business Manager (MTP), Assistant Head of Teaching, Learning and Innovation (MTS), and the Buildings Manager.

Reasonable adjustments

The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments, this includes 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide auxiliary aids ... where a disabled person would, but for the provision of the auxiliary aids, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled'. Examples of 'auxiliary aids' include, height adjustable furniture and specialist software.

Financial Planning and control

The Head Masters of MTS and of MTP, SLT and the Governors' finance committee will review the financial implications of the accessibility plan as part of the normal budget review process.

Linked policies

Equal Opportunities Statement

Admissions Policy

Assessment and Feedback Policy

Curriculum Policy

Behaviour Policies

Examinations Policies

Health and Safety, Fire Safety, and Security Policies

MTS Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025

Access to the physical environment					
Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
Improving the physical environment of the school for the purposes of increasing the extent to which SEND pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.					
Develop systems so that new facilities are planned to take account of accessibility.	<p>Include accessibility during planning for all future new build and refurbishment projects.</p> <p>Identify key staff who can provide input on aspects of accessibility</p>	Bursar (with others as required)	<p>Long</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2025</p>	Updated to reflect the multifaceted nature of accessibility
School facilities are accessible to all users	<p>Service and maintain all automatic door opening sensors.</p> <p>Maintain lifts/chair lifts in School buildings.</p> <p>Maintain accessible pathways between all school buildings.</p> <p>Admissions to include request for information about access needs in their communications.</p>	Buildings Manager	Long	Ongoing	

Ensure AV facilities cater to all users	When updating AV facilities, take specific actions to improve the accessibility e.g. brightness, size, hearing loops	Senior Master	Long	Ongoing	
Review and maintain appropriately accessible WC and hygiene facilities/ changing facilities that meet the needs of users.	Maintain accessible WC and hygiene facilities across the School. Maintain RADAR locks. Maintain accessible changing areas in the swimming pool, sports corridor and surgery.	Buildings Manager	Long	Ongoing	
Ensure the swimming pool is accessible for all pupils and support curriculum participation.	Maintain Emergency Lifting Cushion (ELK). Develop a system to review incoming pupils with the surgery and learning support team to identify accessibility needs proactively.	Director of Sport (with support of Head of Learning Support and other staff as appropriate)	Long	Ongoing	
Provide appropriate Evacuation Processes and aids	Review and maintain Evac Chairs and Wireless Refuge Point communication systems across all areas. Identify and train suitable staff as users of Evac chairs	Buildings Manager, Head of Operations and Evac chair trainers	Long Short	Ongoing Autumn 2024	
Review and improve accessibility to the library	Maintain chair lifts on Library stairs; trial their use at least termly to ensure they are fit for purpose. Consider alternative access if	Buildings Manager	Long	Ongoing	

	necessary. Keep library access under review				
Review, maintain and improve classroom accessibility.	Provide height adjustable desks in classrooms where required..	Buildings Manager	Long	Ongoing	

Access to the curriculum					
Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
Ensure that all pupils have equal access and benefit equally from the curriculum.					
Pupils with SEND are adequately monitored to ensure they make appropriate progress and are not disadvantaged.	Monitor disabled pupils' achievements in external examinations, internal 'Trials' and grading sessions. Maintain individual monitoring processes via learning support interactions, tutors and use of CPOMS	Triage meeting teams, tutors, learning support department	Long term	Monitor progress in Spring 2025	
Necessary adjustments are made for each pupil. Access to the school curriculum is	Improve use of MIS ¹ information by staff leading activities, trips and visits regarding pupils with SEND to ensure these activities	Head of Learning Support, Examination Officer, Heads of	Long	Monitor progress in Spring 2025	

¹ Management Information System (e.g. ISAMS).

<p>maintained and improved for disabled people on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>are accessible.</p> <p>To ensure that all teaching staff of any disabled students make appropriate use of information regarding individual pupil needs.</p> <p>Provide CPD to develop staff understanding of SEND.</p>	<p>Department, Heads of Year, Heads of Section, Learning Support staff and individual teachers.</p>			
<p>Ongoing analysis of data will show no distinction in performance between disabled pupils and other pupils.</p>	<p>Use standardised tests where appropriate to identify pupils' position in the cohort (e.g. MIDYIS²).</p> <p>Pupil tracking will be used for all years to provide further understanding of pupil learning in the school.</p> <p>Each pupil's performance is benchmarked against our expectation (derived from analysis of baseline data) of their attainment.</p> <p>A statistical analysis of pupil, departmental and whole school performance is prepared each year once remarks have come in. Within this, there is always a focus upon performance of SEND pupils.</p> <p>Departments will maintain detailed, cumulative records regarding pupil achievement. The school will support them by, wherever possible, determining prior</p>	<p>Head of Learning Support, Examination Officer, Heads of Department, Heads of Year, Heads of Section, Learning Support staff and individual teachers.</p>	<p>Long</p>	<p>Monitor progress in Spring 2025</p>	

² Middle years information system. A baseline assessment for pupils entering secondary education.

	performance in feeder schools. Information will be analysed to inform teaching and learning strategies.			Autumn 2025	
SEND pupils achieve their full potential. SEND pupils are monitored and not disadvantaged	<p>Where appropriate, curriculum and timetable modification are considered.</p> <p>Room modification to ensure ease of access.</p> <p>Extra resources such as duplicate text books and coloured overlays to be made available where necessary.</p> <p>Ensure staff are aware of accessibility features of software available to pupils as part of the tablet project.</p> <p>Pupil support available through bespoke support plans which may include, in-class, individual, and group support sessions.</p> <p>Academic Departments encouraged to document their in-department provision for each of the three waves of intervention.</p> <p>Ensure the SENDCo (Head of Learning Support) has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and be familiar with regulations (requirement introduced by JCQ³ in August 2022).</p> <p>Set up interviews at key points with Careers Co-ordinator to ensure good choice of</p>	Head of Learning Support, Heads of Department, Heads of Year, Heads of Section, Learning Support staff and individual teachers.	Long	Monitor progress in Spring 2025	Ongoing analysis of data shows no distinction in performance between disabled pupils and other pupils.

³ Joint Qualifications Council.

	<p>subjects as pupils move through the school.</p> <p>Access to School Counsellor through pastoral or self-referral.</p>				
<p>All relevant SEND documents concerning individual pupils will be accessed by staff using the school database.</p>	<p>As a further development of centralised SEND records on the School's MIS (implemented 2015), transfer and maintain SEND information to the new module in ISAMS, allowing a more detailed and individualised approach to documenting access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Once in place, develop the use of the module for admissions pupils to improve consistency of information transfer.</p> <p>Provide update training for staff (and in particular new staff) in use of records</p>	<p>Head of Learning Support</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Long</p>	<p>Monitor progress in Spring 2024</p> <p>Sept 2025</p> <p>Sept 2024</p>	<p>New system now well established for existing pupils. System now being extended to cover pupils in the admissions system</p>
<p>Develop a whole school system for recording class-based support so it can be monitored from both a whole pupil and department perspective, thus ensuring effective, individualised support and facilitating the sharing of best practice.</p>	<p>Head of Learning Support to work with Heads of department on:</p> <p>i) developing and</p> <p>ii) updating subject provision maps</p> <p>Detailed Learning Support provision map to be written</p> <p>Obtain access to and encourage the use of accessible resources for SEND pupils.</p>	<p>Head of Learning Support, Heads of Department, Learning Support staff and individual teachers.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>i) Spring 2024</p> <p>ii) Spring 2025</p> <p>Spring 2025</p>	<p>Subject provision maps now in place and particularly good examples shared to support future updates</p>
<p>To ensure exam and tests are accessible to all pupils</p>	<p>Head of Learning Support and Specialist Teacher to undertake annual training on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARAs) for exams.</p>	<p>Head of Learning Specialist Teacher Head of Exams Heads of Department</p>	<p>long</p>	<p>Review annually in line with AA policy in</p>	

	<p>Head of Exams to liaise with invigilators and relevant school staff regarding the conduct of exams where AARAs are in place.</p> <p>HoDs to ensure access arrangements are provided (in line with JCQ guidelines) in internal tests and exams.</p> <p>Tests and Exams are presented in a format which all pupils can access, including those with SEND. Individual access arrangements to be in place for individual pupils, where required, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word processors• ‘Reading’ software• Colour overlays• Extra time• Supervised rest breaks• Read aloud provision• prompting• Individualised seating arrangements (including invigilation in a smaller room, separate to the main exam room)			Autumn term and public exams in Summer term.	
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Access to information advice and guidance

Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
Improving the delivery of information to SEND pupils that is readily accessible to other pupils.					
To ensure that parents and guardians are fully informed.	<p>Review information sent to parents and guardians to ensure it is accessible through assistive technologies, such as screen readers and ensure the inclusion of appropriate features like alt-text.</p> <p>Ensure that parents are able to receive information in accessible formats. Staff produce routine information for pupils in an appropriate format</p>	Senior Master		Monitor progress in Spring 2025	
To improve communication with SEND pupils and users.	<p>Review the website to ensure that it is clear, simple and easy to use.</p> <p>Publish information in an appropriate format as required. Ensure published information and the website is reviewed annually from an accessibility perspective.</p>	Senior Master Admissions Learning Support Department		Monitor progress in Spring 2025	

MTP Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025

Ensuring inclusion in the school community

Access to the physical environment					
Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
Improving the physical environment of the school for the purposes of increasing the extent to which SEN and disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.	Monitor the effectiveness of the accessibility arrangements in place in the new office building, including automatic doors, disabled WCs, disabled parking bays, lift and accessible medical area	School Business Manager (SBM) Support from Admissions Officer	Long-term	Ongoing Monitor twice annually	Be aware of significant new admission (pupil/parent), or change in circumstance.
The whole school site is as accessible as possible.	Ensure that the school remains accessible to SEN and disabled pupils, looking at how existing procedures can be improved.	SENDICo and SBM working together	Long-term	Ongoing Monitor monthly	As above, including also needs of staff and occasional visitors.

Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
Ensure that all pupils with SEN and disability who are attending one of our assessments are adequately provided for.	<p>Involve parents in identifying what additional support might be required for the assessment process.</p> <p>Gather information from current/previous settings about the kind of support that might be required for the assessment process.</p> <p>Review information from relevant professionals about individual pupils in order to meet their needs so that they can access the assessment.</p>	<p>Head of Pre-Prep</p> <p>SENDICo</p> <p>Admissions Officer</p>	Medium-term	Nov and Jan and as required	Desired outcome is that all pupils can access the assessment for entry to the school.

Access to the curriculum					
Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
SEN and disabled pupils achieve their full potential.	Academic departments encouraged to develop a consistent approach to differentiation to	SENDICo + AH (Academic)	Long-term	Annual as part of	Intended outcome is to ensure that all pupils have equal access

<p>SEN and disabled pupils are monitored and are not disadvantaged in any way.</p>	<p>support SEN and disabled pupils.</p> <p>Monitor any SEN and disabled pupils' achievements in internal and external assessments.</p> <p>Correct Access Arrangements for assessments and examinations are put into place with regard to JCQ3 regulations</p> <p>Consideration is given to enable SEN and disabled pupils to access co-curricular activities such as after school clubs and day/residential visits.</p>	<p>and EVC and Senior Deputy Head</p>	<p>Medium-term</p> <p>Short-term</p> <p>Long-term and Short-term</p>	<p>dev cycle</p> <p>Twice annually</p> <p>Twice annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>and benefit equally from the curriculum (short term).</p>
<p>Ongoing analysis of data suggests no distinction in performance between SEN and disabled pupils and other pupils.</p>	<p>Use of standardised tests where appropriate to identify pupils' position in the cohort (e.g. INCAS1 and MIDYIS2).</p>	<p>SENDICo + AH (Academic</p>	<p>Long-term and Medium-term</p>	<p>Termly</p>	<p>Longitudinal data also used to provide perspective.</p>
<p>Necessary adjustments made for each pupil. Access to the school gradually improved for disabled people.</p>	<p>Ensure that all teaching staff of any SEN and disabled pupils are informed of individual pupil's needs via the school's Fact Sheets.</p> <p>Wherever appropriate, curriculum and timetable modification are considered.</p>	<p>SENDICo + School Business Manager</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>On diagnosis then annual + review</p>	<p>Be aware of significant new admission, or change in circumstance.</p>

	<p>Room modification has and will be used to ensure ease of access.</p> <p>Extra resources relevant to individual pupils to be made available where necessary and new resources investigated.</p>	<p>+ Site Manager</p> <p>+ HoDs</p>	<p>Short-term</p>		
<p>Wellbeing of pupils is maintained and improved, ensuring full access to the curriculum.</p>	<p>One to one and small group extra support is available where necessary.</p> <p>Coaching and counselling are used to support pupil wellbeing.</p>	<p>SENDICo + Senior Deputy Head</p> <p>AH (Wellbeing)</p>	<p>Medium-term and Long-term</p>	<p>Termly +</p> <p>As needed</p>	<p>In timetabling and when considering needed workforce.</p>

Access to information advice and guidance

Accessibility Outcome	Action to ensure Outcome	Who responsible	Long, medium or short-term	Time Frame	Notes
<p>All parents receive information in a format appropriate to their needs e.g. tape, large print.</p>	<p>Review information sent to parents and guardians to ensure it is accessible.</p>	<p>Head</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Termly</p>	

Staff produce information in appropriate format.	Ensure that parents receive information in accessible formats.	Senior Deputy Head	Medium-term	Termly	
Website has improved information.	Review the new website to ensure that it is clear, simple and easy to use.	Senior Deputy Head	Long-term	Annually	
		Director of Marketing and Comms	Medium-term	As needed	
Delivery of information is appropriate for individual pupils.	Publish information in an appropriate format as required.	Senior Deputy Head	Medium-term	Termly	