



## St Mary's C of E Primary School Accessibility Policy – Autumn 2018-2021

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### Rationale

At St Mary's we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for staff, pupils and all those receiving services from the school, such as parents and visitors, irrespective of disability. We are committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their physical, educational, sensory, social, spiritual, and emotional needs.

At St Mary's we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

### Introduction

The Accessibility Policy and Plan are drawn up in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

The duty to promote disability equality requires all schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to: promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others, eliminate unlawful discrimination, eliminate disability-related harassment, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, encourage disabled people's participation in public life, take steps to take into account people's disabilities, even where that involves more favourable treatment.

St Mary's plans, over time, to ensure that there is accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school. An Accessibility Plan is drawn up to cover a three year period and the plan is updated annually.

**The Accessibility Plan** will contain relevant actions to:

- Overcome attitudinal and institutional barriers.
- Improve access to the **physical environment** and overcome environmental barriers adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
- Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are able bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as in participation in after school clubs or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Improve and make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Eg handouts about information to the school made available in various formats where needed within a reasonable time frame.

The action plan for physical accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the school. This audit will be undertaken regularly by pupils together with governors. (Governor to lead with the School Council, Parent representatives and HT / DH). The audit will be revisited towards the end of the first three-year plan in order to inform the development of the new plan for the following period.

All curriculum policies will be reviewed with due regard for the matters relating to equality and access.

Information about our Accessibility Plan will be published on our website.

The Plan will be monitored by Michele Oliver, Governor. We acknowledge 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.

Policy written by: Helen Austin (Headteacher)

Next review due: Summer 2021



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### Appendix (i)

#### Checklist for school and governors

##### Information Gathering

- Is information collected on disability with regards to both pupils and staff? Is this information used to improve the provision?
- Is pupil achievement monitored by disability? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action?
- Are disabled pupils encouraged to participate in school life? How is this shown through representation in school events such as class assemblies and the school council?
- Are disabled pupils given access to opportunities to participate in a range of activities, both in and outside of school hours?
- Is bullying and harassment of disabled pupils monitored and is this information used to make a difference?
- Are stereotypes in terms of disability actively challenged in both the classroom environment and in the playground?
- Is the school environment as accessible and welcoming as possible to disabled people? Are open evenings and other events which parents or carers attend held in an accessible part of the school?
- Are disabled parents / carers encouraged to participate in their child's education eg attending parents' evening, taking up parent / family learning courses, and assemblies?
- Does the school take appropriate steps to meet disabled people's needs even if this requires more favourable treatment?



### **DEFINING DISABILITY (Appendix ii)**

The disability discrimination duties and the planning duties are owed to all pupils who are defined by the DDA as being disabled. The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has:

*'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'*

The definition covers a much larger group of children than most people think. A report from the Cabinet Office (2005) *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, draws on estimates that suggest that about 772,000 children in the UK are disabled, equivalent to 7% of all children.

#### **Definition of the terms:**

- 'Physical impairment' includes sensory impairments.
- 'Mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness.
- 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'.
- 'Long-term' is defined as 12 months or more.

#### **Mental and physical impairments**

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above. Some progressive conditions, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV / AIDS are included before they have an effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

#### **Normal day-to-day activities**

The test of whether impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one of the following:

- Mobility.
- Manual dexterity.
- Physical co-ordination.
- Continence.
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects.
- Speech, hearing or eyesight.
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.
- Perception of risk of physical danger.

#### **Special educational needs and disability**

Though the definition of disability comes from the DDA and the definition of special educational needs comes from the Education Act 1996, there is a significant overlap between the two groups of children. The definition of SEN includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.