



St. Martin's School

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"At St Martin's School we are a fellowship of scholars who achieve excellence. We seek a rich, broad and challenging Curriculum. This culture puts us in control of our journey. Our children not only excel academically but are given the tools to enable them to pass their exams and converse at interview with confidence. This learning nurtures and stimulates us whilst emphasising the importance of individuality, intellectual wonder and self-actualisation. We obtain mastery in all aspects of the Curriculum. The heart of our journey is Literacy which we recognise as the fundamental tool of human communication. We explore the human condition through Music, Media and Drama. We value the planet, nature and fellow human beings in all their expressions."

We believe that this Policy aids us in valuing our fellow human beings and underscores the importance of individuality.

We have written this policy as it particularly fits the ethos of our school. We are aware that children who attend St Martin's School live in different boroughs. However, for clarity we focus on the London Borough of Barnet.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

1. Background

1.1 On 1 October 2012, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. (For further information see the Equality and Diversity Policy).

1.2 The Act makes it unlawful for St Martin's School, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:-

- admissions;
- the way we provide education for pupils;
- the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
- by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

1.3 The protected characteristics are:-

- sex;
- race;

- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity;

1.4 There is a still a requirement to have an accessibility plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.

1.5 The Equality Act applies to all independent schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005) Furthermore, as proprietors St Martin's School are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.

1.6 Staff at St Martin's School are responsible for their own discriminatory actions and the Proprietor is also liable unless it can prove that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the staff member from doing the discriminatory action, or from doing anything of that kind.

1.7 The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or old pupil networks.

2.0 Disability Discrimination Act

2.1 The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:-

- the definition of disability is less restrictive;
- direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- from September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through a Statement of Special Educational Needs or from other sources.

3.0 Definition of Disability

3.1 The Act defines disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3.2 Some specific conditions such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

3.3 Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least twelve months.

4.0 Reasonable Adjustments

4.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

- 4.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.
- 4.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (ie via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 4.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help.
- 4.5 We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.
- 4.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; eg hearing aids.
- 4.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 4.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be reasonable. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils.

5.0 Our Vision

- 5.1 St Martin's School believes in nurturing confidence and academic success in every student. For example, we believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future.
- 5.2 Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life.

6.0 Our Duty around Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

- 6.1 Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:-
- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
 - improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
 - improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.
- 6.2 Our plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.

7.0 Discrimination Claims

- 7.1 Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against our school must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.
- 7.2 Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil against our school, would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.

8.0 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 8.1 The named person in our school who is responsible for this plan is the Head Teacher, Dr Jason Walak.
- 8.2 The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that this Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.
- 8.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.
- 8.4 Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with all staff members.

9.0 Other Associated Policies & Procedures

- Special Educational Needs;
- Equality & Diversity;
- Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff;
- Safeguarding Children including Child Protection; and
- Health & Safety;

APPENDIX 1

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS : A CHECKLIST

This list is used to identify barriers to access that may exist in any school. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.

Section 1 : How does St Martin's School deliver the Curriculum?		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		
Are your classrooms optimally organized for disabled pupils?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups & the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama & physical activities?		
Do staff recognize and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognize and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectation of all pupils?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		
Section 2: Is St Martin's School designed to meet the needs of all pupils?		
Questions	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms; library and playgrounds – allow access for all pupils?		

Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs and toilet facilities?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted & located appropriately?		
Section 3: How does St Martin's School deliver materials in other formats?		
Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		

APPENDIX 2

ST MARTIN'S SCHOOL – DISABILITY POLICY

If the occasion arose, we at St Martin's School would endeavour to provide any disabled child with full access to all curriculum areas.

1. We would make sure that access to the building and all necessary areas within it were wheelchair friendly. Ramps would be placed at appropriate points to allow easy entry and exit to and from those areas. (Main school building, classroom, library, music room, etc.)
2. We would ensure that the class that the child was to be in was on the ground floor of the building so that the stairs would not be an issue. A desk suitable for a wheelchair would be provided.
3. We would ensure that one of our ground floor lavatories was adapted for wheelchair access with a wide enough door and bars placed at strategic positions to facilitate use of this facility.
4. We have laptop computers and hence despite our IT suite being on the first floor, lessons could be adapted by bringing laptops to the classroom to conduct IT lessons.
5. Provision would be made if a child required a computer in the classroom if the nature of their disability prevented them from using conventional methods of writing.
6. PE lessons are generally conducted in our own school playground which is all on one level. Lessons would be adapted to the particular child's needs in order that they may participate.
7. Offsite activities:
Sports Day: An appointed person or persons would be made responsible for taking any disabled child to the park where we hold sports day. Certain activities would already be suitable for full participation, certain others could be adapted.
Day Trips: We would ensure that the transport hired for these occasions had adequate wheelchair access and likewise that the places we were visiting had suitable provision for disabled persons.
Residential Trips: As per above we would ensure suitable transport was arranged. The activity centre that we use would be checked for disability friendliness regarding the particular disability we were dealing with.
8. Staff at school would receive instruction as to what was legal or not when dealing with a disabled pupil, i.e. is no longer legal to lift a person from a wheelchair due to the injuries which could be caused to both parties.
9. Dependent on the extent of the disability we would enter into discussion with the child's parents and medical experts to see if the child needed a specified "Carer" in school with them.
10. We would regularly review the child's needs and the provisions being made.
11. We have in place contacts, i.e. Signers, should a child be partially sighted or hard of hearing.

This Policy will be disseminated to all staff for their contribution, understanding and agreement to adhere to it. It is on our website, in every classroom and a copy is in our main office for anyone to read and discuss.

Signed: Dr Jason Walak

Date: 1st January 2017

REVIEW DATE: 1st January 2019