



St Martin's School Accessibility Policy

Introduction

St Martin's is an inclusive school and our small, nurturing environment ensures that everyone can thrive and reach their full potential without discrimination. We teach and reinforce our School Values and the core British Values which underpin the equality this policy strives to ensure. We believe every child has the right to be safe, happy, healthy, loved, valued and successful in achieving high aspirations for their future. Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, personally and academically.

Background

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. The Equality Act applies to all independent schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005) It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. (For further information see the Equality and Diversity Policy). St Martin's fully complies with this Act, which makes it unlawful for any school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil, in relation to:-

- admissions;
- provision of education;
- access to any benefit, facility or service;
- excluding or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are:-

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

Definition of Disability

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.

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

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

Disability Discrimination Act

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.

Our Responsibilities

St Martin's Head Teacher ensures we meet the requirement to have an accessibility plan, reviewed every 3 years, outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and accessible information considering resource implications.

Furthermore, the proprietor and governors are responsible for the St Martin's equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Staff at St Martin's School are responsible for their own discriminatory actions.

The Proprietor must ensure she has taken all reasonable steps to stop any staff member from discriminatory action.

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.

Reasonable Adjustments

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.

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.

Discrimination claims

Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against St Martin's must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.

Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil, 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.

Disabled access

When a potential admission of a disabled pupil is considered, we at St Martin's School endeavour to provide any disabled child with full access to the school and all curriculum areas using the 'Identifying Barriers to Access Checklist' and the following principles:

1. We review whether the access to the building including toilets, corridors and all necessary areas within it are safe and suitable. For wheelchair users, the provision of a ground floor classroom and ramp placement where appropriate to allow easy entry and exit to and from those areas, would be considered.
2. We ensure that the furniture (desk, handrails etc.) are appropriate and supportive of the disability.
3. Each child's individual needs are considered and strategies to support them are recorded on an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) in school. This takes into account the needs of the child, advice from parents and other professionals such as occupational health. In addition to this a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is agreed with the child and parent under our Fire Safety procedures.
4. PE lessons and sports days are conducted in a variety of locations, these and the travel involved are risk assessed and adapted as appropriate to ensure the safe access and participation of a disabled pupil. Lessons are adapted to the particular child's needs in order that they may participate.
5. Offsite activities, such as trips and residential: As above, all transport and venues are fully risk assessed prior to the visit taking place and any individual need is considered with clear support strategies and access plans in place. These are fully communicated to those who require the information which may include: the child, adults on the trip, parents and carers/buddies.
6. Staff will be trained where necessary on the legalities, best practice and individual needs when supporting a disabled pupil.
7. We will endeavour to form a strong relationship with the pupil's parent/carer to ensure that we are providing the best possible form of care, well-being and education we can.
8. We regularly review individual children's needs and the provisions being made to ensure they remain appropriate and sufficient.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The named person in our school who is responsible for this policy is the Head Teacher, Samantha Mbah. The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that all elements of this policy are implemented and that it is fair and equal to all.

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.

Our Accessibility Plan and any updates will be shared with all staff members.