

ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The requirements under the DDA, require schools to think about the needs of disabled students in advance. This should reduce the number of adjustments that need to be made on an 'ad hoc' basis, in response to an individual disabled student, thus creating an environment where provision for disabled students is seen as equal, and not different from, that of other students.

The school's Accessibility Plan identifies areas for consideration and will be developed with further detail in relation to the needs of students joining the school. The Plan draws on advice from the DfES Guidance for School Accessibility Plans.

The Plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA, namely:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery of information to disabled students.

Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum

Admission Policy

St Bernard's is a Catholic Academy dedicated to the education of Catholic girls. Its Admissions Policy follows the Admissions Code.

Full, Broad and Balanced Curriculum

St Bernard's believes that all students should have equal access to opportunity. Consequently, all students follow a full, broad and balanced curriculum.

Withdrawal from lessons

St Bernard's believes that all students should have the benefit of attending all lessons. However, the school recognises that some students who have learning needs and/or learning difficulties may benefit from specialist intervention, to equip them with skills and knowledge to access aspects of the curriculum more fully.

In such cases, identified students may be withdrawn from lessons in a planned timetable in order to develop literacy, numeracy, social, communication, mobility or independent living skills. In all cases of withdrawal from lessons, permission from the parent/carer is sought.

Alternative Curriculum

In response to the Government's 14-19 initiative, St Bernard's provides some optional vocational curriculum to students in Years 10 and 11. Students can gain vocational qualifications alongside GCSE study.

In-Class Support

St Bernard's believes strongly in the provision of in-class support for students who may experience difficulty in accessing the curriculum. The majority of students identified as having a learning difficulty will receive in-class support. The amount is determined by

their individual learning needs and the distribution of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) resource allocation. Students with a physical, sensory or learning disability statement may receive up to 100% support depending on their level of need.

Additional Support

Students with physical, sensory or learning disabilities may receive supervision at break and lunch times depending on the level of need.

Additional programmes of learning

Support for students is made available through a wide range of learning and behaviour programmes across Years 7 to 11. The Learning Support room (E01) and the Learning Access room (E02), augmented by space in the Dining Hall extension, with Learning Mentors, provide support programmes for students individually and in groups (behaviour/attitude/self esteem).

Target Setting

St Bernard's believes strongly in learning/behaviour targets, negotiated with the students as a whole school programme.

Exam Access Arrangements

Students are carefully monitored and appropriate exam access provision is made for students who may have difficulty accessing examinations.

Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services

Current Facilities

The following facilities across the school support disabled students accessing its services:

- a) Disabled toilet facilities are available on the ground floor of the main building, the Dining Hall and the Performing Arts Centre;
- b) Access ramps have been provided where it has been appropriate to install them;
- c) Handrails are available on both sides of all primary staircases;
- d) The School has adequate lighting.

Identified access difficulties

Due to the age of some buildings and the sloping nature of the school site, wheelchair access to some upper floors is not possible.

- a) Whenever a building is modified or a new building built to look to ensure that the work includes a lift installation to increase access for those with mobility difficulties;
- b) Capital Funding bids submitted to allow the remodelling of the main toilets to allow greater access for all students;
- c) Installation of induction loop system in reception within this school financial year to assist communication with visitors and students with hearing difficulties;
- d) Ongoing review of school signage to ensure it meets current best practice and the needs of the community

Improving the delivery of information to disabled students

Written information provided to students in the school covers a broad area. Mainly curriculum material is provided through textbooks, worksheets and IT facilities. This is

supported by written information on whiteboards, interactive whiteboards, flip charts and through the VLE.

In addition to curriculum information, there is the wide variety of other information provided by the school to its students; for example, student timetables, newsletters, exam arrangements and school trips.

St Bernard's is committed to ensuring that all students can access all information by:

- a) giving due consideration to the layout of worksheets, test and exam papers etc;
- b) using adaptation guidance provided by the staff of the Visually Impaired team in Southend, to ensure that work is appropriately enlarged and modified for students;
- c) providing visual timetables for students with severe communication difficulties;
- d) ordering modified exam papers for external exams for identified students;
- e) enabling staff to communicate directly on behalf of students with severe learning/communication difficulties to ensure that school information is passed to home.