St. Helen's College

# Accessibility Plan

**This is a whole-school plan which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage**

This plan should be read in conjunction with the school's Equal Opportunities and Admissions Policies.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 St. Helen's College recognises its duty towards pupils, staff, parents and members of the wider community who have a disability. Where pupils or prospective pupils are concerned, St. Helen's College acknowledges its non discrimination and planning duty under the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

1.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as : 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This has some overlap with the definition of 'special educational needs' in The Education Act 1996 (which includes pupils with a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of that age, or a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of their age in the area). Not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa. The Equality Act also covers prospective pupils.

## 2 Admissions

2.1 Admission to the school depends upon the prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, where possible, improve the educational and general standards for the pupils.

2.2 Prospective parents are asked, when their child is invited for assessment, to disclose whether their child has a disability, special educational need or medical condition. If so, the school will liaise further with parents and make reasonable and appropriate arrangements or adjustments.

2.3 In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil, the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it deems appropriate. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.

2.4 Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments based upon the information given and advice received, in order to enable a prospective pupil to take up a place at St. Helen's College and to satisfy the admissions criteria outlined above, the school is committed to providing these reasonable adjustments.

2.5 The school recognises its duty to provide, where it is reasonable to do so, auxiliary aids and services where not to do so would cause disadvantage to a pupil,

parent or member of staff with a disability. The duty is always person specific and context specific. The school may not charge for such aids and services.

## 3 Background to the Accessibility Plan

3.1 Ducklings Kindergarten was opened at All Saints Church Hall in January 2017 and comprises a hall, small kitchen and toilets. The building is fully accessible with a level entrance through the main door. The marked fire exit has a ledge to be cleared which makes it unsuitable for wheelchair users; however, the Kindergarten policy is for the main entrance door to be used for fire evacuation purposes. There are no disabled toilet facilities at Ducklings Kindergarten, but some are available in the main All Saints Church Hall area.

3.2 The Lower School was opened in 1999 and modernised in 2018. It now comprises three standalone buildings which are fully accessible.

3.3 There are disabled toilets at Lower School in the Nursery block and in the main block.

3.4 The Lower School entrance and grounds are level, without steps, and are accessible to wheelchair users. It might not be safe for children with some disabilities to use the climbing frame or outdoor castle.

3.5 The main classroom block at the Upper School was opened in 1948. The first floor extension was built in 1988 and the building was extended further in 2007. In 2014 an art studio was built and Windsor was extended to provide a refectory. Ground floor rooms are fully accessible to wheelchair users and there are disabled toilet facilities. There is no lift to the first floor.

3.6 Cambria is used for the school library, individual music lessons, welfare and administration. The library is accessible to wheelchair users. Entrance to the welfare and administration areas is limited by steps, and there is no lift.

3.7 The science block, opened in 2001, comprises a single, open-plan room, and is fully accessible to wheelchair users.

3.8 Windsor is used for dining and teaching purposes. The ground floor is fully accessible and disabled toilet facilities were installed in 2014. The first floor is used by staff only. There is no lift to the first floor.

3.9 The school entrance, lawn, garden and playground areas are all level, and fully accessible to wheelchair users. It might not be safe for children with some disabilities to use the climbing frame or treehouse.

3.10 The games fields are about 50m from the Upper School and there are no restrictions to access.

3.11 St. Helen's College is not required to make physical changes to the existing buildings. A pupil with restricted mobility is likely to be put at a disadvantage by some of the restrictions outlined above. A pupil with severely restricted mobility may be unable to access some or all of the educational and recreational facilities that the school offers.

3.12 Where practicable, adjustments are made for parents and visitors with restricted mobility. These include, but are not limited to, reserving parking spaces on the Cambria forecourt and holding meetings in the most accessible areas of the school.

## 4. Accessibility Plan - General

4.1 The school will review this plan biennially to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of action taken in the previous two year period, set relevant targets for the next two year period, and respond to any further legislative changes.

4.2 The school is committed to improving accessibility of the buildings and curriculum over time, subject to financial constraints.

## 5. Increasing Inclusion – 2025-2027

As budgets allow:

5.1 The school will review and update its SEN policy at regular intervals.

5.2 All school policies will be reviewed and updated appropriately to take into account SEN/LDD and disability issues at regular intervals in order to maximise the participation of all disabled pupils in the curriculum.

5.3 All staff will receive regular training in disability awareness.

5.4 The school will facilitate full transfer of relevant information between all schools at pupil transfer. SEN information is sent on to secondary schools if they request it.

5.5 Training will be provided for relevant staff to support any pupil with a disability or LDD and access will be provided to specialist help for that pupil where reasonable and practicable.

5.6 Where physical access to the site is difficult for a prospective pupil, the school recognises the need to be proactive in enabling such access. Wherever practicable, the school will make reasonable adjustments to the timetable to allow children with restricted mobility to attend accessible parts of the school.

## 6. Improving the Physical Environment of the School – 2025-2027

As budgets allow:

6.1 The school will aim to make newly constructed buildings fully accessible to disabled pupils.

6.2 All conversions, extensions and renovations to existing areas of the school will be considered with regard to disabled access and every reasonable effort made to improve access within the scope of the work.

6.3 All new equipment purchased for teaching will be considered as to the suitability of its use by pupils with disabilities and every reasonable effort made to purchase equipment that meets the needs of such pupils in a better way than the existing equipment it replaces.

6.4 Diffusing lighting will be installed where computer use makes it necessary. Faulty lighting will be replaced within 24 hours wherever possible.

6.5 An acoustic level of between 50-70 decibels will be maintained wherever possible in all classrooms.

## 7. Improving the Delivery of Information to Disabled Pupils – 2025-2027

As budgets allow:

7.1 The school will arrange for documents to be provided to prospective parents who have a disability in ways that meet that need, if so requested and it is reasonable to do so.

7.2 All school documents will be provided in large print format on request.

7.3 The school will continue to provide CPD for staff in order to support them in better communication with pupils with SEN/LDD or disabilities.

7.4 The school will plan to invest in classroom technology to better facilitate communication with pupils with SEN/LDD and disabilities, specifically:
a) to enable clear provision of images and text in large printed format;
b) to enable the use of high quality audio/visual material and
c) to enable the easy dissemination of printed handouts of appropriate clarity.

**References**

Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils (Guidance for Schools in England)

The Equality Act 2010

The Education Act 1996

The SEND Code of Practice 2015

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| Person Responsible | NM |
| Date | January 2025 |
| Review Frequency | 2 years |
| Next Review | January 2027 |