

# **Accessibility**

## **Statutory Responsibilities**

The Disability Discrimination Act, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, placed a duty on all schools and LAs to plan to increase over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils and to implement their plans. We produce accessibility plans for our school and work with the LA, as appropriate, to develop our work in this area.

It is part of the ethos of Carmel Education Trust schools to routinely identify and remove barriers to learning through all that we do, though we still occasionally find it helpful to apply a checklist or audit approach to be sure we are not becoming complacent in this area. Whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, we are increasingly in the habit of giving thought to the equality implications. We aim to keep a note of any equality consideration that is made and report this back to our senior leadership team or reports to governors/directors, as appropriate. This helps us to demonstrate that the 'due regard' duty is being fulfilled.

## **Vision and Values**

St Michael's Catholic Academy expects all students to be able to participate and achieve in every aspect of the life of the school.

As a school, we are committed to inclusion and to equal opportunities for all of our students in respect of access to the requirements of the National Curriculum and entry for examination courses.

The school will set suitable learning challenges for all students in response to their diverse needs. We recognise the varying needs of pupils with a disability and/or a special educational need. We seek to identify and then put in place strategies to overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of students.

We increase and promote access for disabled pupils to the school curriculum in a wide range of ways. The following gives some examples of what we do, but is by no means exhaustive:

- Specially trained TAs, specialist outside agencies, charities and private educational consultants, promotes access to teaching and learning. In addition to this, all staff have access to relevant CPD.
- It is considered vitally important that all learners are able to participate in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits, including residential trips. We run and act on risk assessments to make all activities accessible, taking advice as appropriate from external professionals.
- We have improved access to the physical environment by adapting the main entrance into school to be wheelchair accessible via the use of a lift to access the main hall and dining area, ramps, widened doorways, handrails - to meet safeguarding requirements. In addition, we provide disabled toilet facilities.

We try to anticipate the needs of students and other members of the school community by including consideration of access issues at regular intervals.

- Access to education has been improved in a wide range of ways, which include:
  - *PEEP – personal Emergency Evacuation Plan/s as needed*
  - *Seating to suit specific needs*
  - *Lift handling training*
  - *Specialist PE equipment to suit individual needs*
  - *Occupational Therapists*
  - *Physiotherapists*
  - *Flexible timetabling*
  - *EAL specialists/translators – where need is identified*
  - *Clear signs to identify emergency exits, medical room, curriculum areas, offices, classrooms etc*
  - *Use of technology to support those with visual impairments e.g. Load to Learn, shared resources e.g. enlarged graph paper etc*
  - *Use of technology to support those with hearing impairments e.g. “Roger” pen.*
  - *Audio equipment to aid learning e.g. headphones for individual instructions and feedback, dictaphones for the recording of homework or to present work*
  - *Provision of lap tops for those with poor fine motor skills*
  - *Provision of specific stationery to aid written presentation e.g. pencil grips, “Y” pens*
  - *“Fidget” toys to aid concentration and engagement*
  - *Provision of coloured overlays/ coloured paper/ differing font sizes as appropriate to suit individual needs*
  - *Provision of readers/ scribes/ word processors for those requiring exam access arrangements*
  
- Parents and carers can contact key staff such as Vice Principal for Pastoral Care, Pastoral Learning Managers or the Acting SENCo by dialling the main office and asking to speak with the appropriate member of staff. The Acting SENCo aims to deal with all enquiries via phone, email or face-to-face meetings as soon as possible, wherever practicable. We recognise that dealing with any issues or concerns quickly can greatly reduce the severity of any difficulties experienced or anticipated.

### **Improving the delivery of information that is provided in writing for all students**

In order to improve the delivery of the curriculum to all students, the school will consider such issues as:

- ✓ The layout of worksheets/handouts
- ✓ Use of pastel coloured paper in place of white

- ✓ Use of enlarged texts, including exam papers where appropriate
- ✓ The layout and size of timetable information
- ✓ The suitability of textbooks
- ✓ The use of student planners
- ✓ Alternative methods of recording
- ✓ The use of IT.

In considering the relaying of information to parents, the school will consider aspects such as:

- ✓ The type and size of font used on letters
- ✓ The need to possibly translate letters into another language
- ✓ The format of reports, e.g. the use of Braille.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.