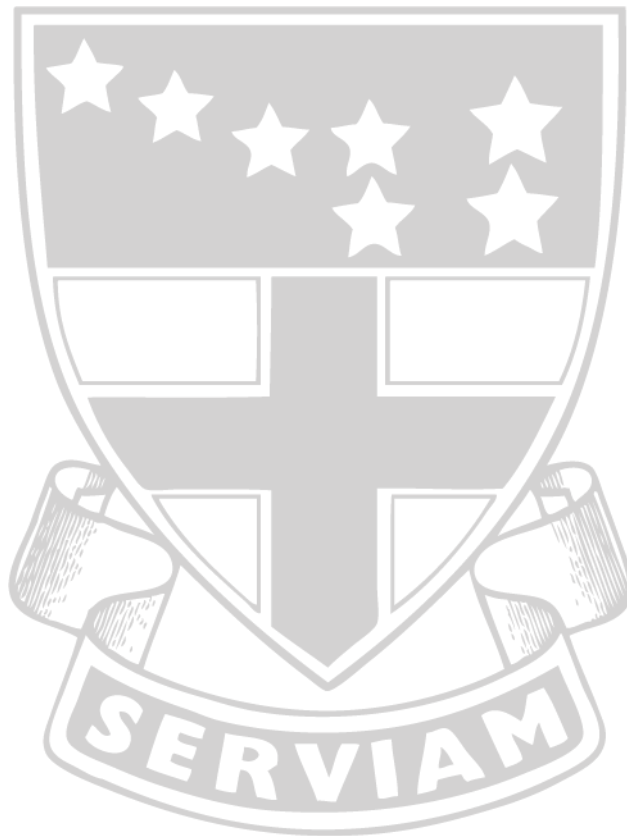


# **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**



**Date of Review: May 2026**

**Date of Next Review: May 2028**

## Introduction

- 1 **The Equality Act 2010** has replaced the former SEN and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001. According to the Act a person has a disability if s/he 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'*. The ODA definition differs from the definition in education Special Educational Needs legislation. Not all disabled children will have a special educational need or learning difficulty.

Schools will now need to ensure that:

- No disabled pupil is treated 'less favourably' than other pupils in the school
  - 'Reasonable steps' are taken to avoid putting disabled pupils at a *'substantial disadvantage'*.
- 2 'Substantial disadvantage' is defined in the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice for Schools 2002 as 'more than minor or trivial' and explained (para 6.11 of the Code):

*'In considering what constitutes a substantial disadvantage, the school will need to take account of a number of factors. These may include: the time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled child; the inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer; the loss of opportunity or the diminished progress that a disabled child may make in comparison with his or her peers who are not disabled.'*

- 3 Where physical features of premises place a disabled pupil at a disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled children, the school will be required to do everything it reasonably can to **mitigate the effects of the feature** and provide the pupil with access to the educational service. For example where a school does not have appropriate physical access for disabled pupils to above ground floors as much of the curriculum as possible should be delivered to the pupil and his peers on the ground floor.

There are two exceptions to the reasonable adjustments duty. Schools are not required to:

- Provide auxiliary aids or services
  - Remove or alter physical features
- 4 Schools are also required to prepare **accessibility plans** for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils.

St Angela's Ursuline Accessibility Plan draws on advice from the DfES Guidance 'Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils' ref: LEA/0168/2202, the Ofsted Report 'Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools' ref: HMI 2276.

In addition, the advice of the London Borough of Newham Inclusion Team is sought.

- 5 The duties include a requirement for institutions to think about the needs of disabled students in advance. This will reduce the number of adjustments that

need to be made on an ad hoc basis in response to an individual disabled pupil, thus creating an environment where provision for disabled pupils is seen as on a par with, and not different from, that for other pupils.

- 6 In accordance with advice from the Council for Disabled Children, it is therefore likely that the initial Accessibility Plan will identify areas for consideration and become more detailed after the first year.
- 7 This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the School to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010
  - Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
  - Improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take advantage of education and associated services
  - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

This school plan is closely linked to the school's **Special Educational Needs and disability (SEND) Policy** and should be read in conjunction with it. The current St Angela's SEND Policy was revised in light of the DDA and states

*"Inclusion is a process that maximizes the opportunity for all children and young adults to access a broad, relevant and stimulating curriculum in a range of educational settings appropriate to their needs."*

As a school we accept responsibility for both the physical and educational needs of our pupils.

- 8 **Admissions Policy:** St Angela's is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided School dedicated to the education of RC girls in the Ursuline tradition. All students who demonstrate a commitment to the Catholic Faith are welcome at St Angela's. Its Admissions Policy is based on the catholicity of each candidate irrespective of whether or not she has a disability.
- 9 **Full, Broad and Balanced Curriculum with Adaptive Teaching:** St Angela's School believes that all students should have access to the same opportunities. Consequently all students follow the same full, broad and balanced curriculum with Adaptive Teaching and differentiated resources for access.
- 10 **Withdrawal from lessons:** St Angela's believes that all students should have the benefit from attending all lessons offered. However, the school recognises that some students who have a disability and /or learning difficulties may benefit from specialist intervention to equip them with the skills and knowledge to access lessons more fully. In such cases, identified students may be withdrawn from mainstream lessons for a maximum of 1 hour a day in order to develop literacy, numeracy, social, communication, mobility and independent living skills. In all cases of withdrawal from lessons permission from the parent/carer is sought.
- 11 **Alternative Curriculum:** In response to the Government's 14-19 initiative, St Angela's provides an optional vocationally based curriculum to students in Years 10 and 11. Students on the alternative curriculum follow a variety of entry level courses. There is also a particular focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills for adult life. In Year 7, we deliver a Nurture Group for a small group of students who are offered a personalised and tailored curriculum that

aims to retrace and redeliver the primary curriculum. Attention is specifically focused on literacy and numeracy, aiming to narrow the gap in these core areas.

- 12 In-class support:** St Angela's believes strongly in the provision of in-class support for students who may experience difficulty in accessing the lesson. The majority of students identified as having a learning difficulty will receive in class support on a case by case and need basis, each week. Students with physical, sensory or mental disabilities may receive up to 100% support depending on the level of need.
- 13 Additional Support:** Students with physical, sensory or mental disabilities may receive supervision at break times and lunch times depending on their level of need.
- 14 Out of hours learning:** Support is made available for after school activities as when a need arises particularly for Homework Club each evening.
- 15 Target-Setting:** St Angela's believes strongly in learning / behaviour targets negotiated with the student.
- 16 Exam Access Arrangements:** Students are carefully monitored and appropriate exam access arrangements are sought for students who may have difficulty accessing examinations
- 17 The School has set the following overall priorities for increasing curriculum access:**
  - To develop the knowledge and skills of Support Staff in order to increase expertise in the classroom
  - To review the structure and procedures in the context of the Code of Practice 2015, ensuring full inclusion and access for student progress
  - To monitor the use of adaptive teaching in the classroom in, order to enable students to better access the lesson

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

- 18** St Angela's was originally built as a Convent some 150 years ago modelled on the original Dutch Building. The age and style of this building (known as Brescia) does not lend itself very easily to adaptation e.g. narrow corridors. A newer building (known as Merici) is located in the grounds. The gardens between the two buildings provide a very pleasant environment for the students to both relax and work in.
- 19** The LEA is very aware of the difficulties of adapting St Angela's to meet all disabilities and does not actively seek to place pupils with physical disabilities at the school.
- 20** In the case that a pupil with a physical disability wishes to have the benefit of a Catholic education at St Angela's, the school will endeavour to accommodate the pupil to the best of its ability given the restrictions already identified.

## **21 Current facilities:**

There is a lift that can provide access to all floors in Brescia. The lift was replaced in 2014-2015 and is maintained and regularly serviced.

- A disabled lavatory is available at the school reception area, 6th Form Area and also in the Sports Hall
- A disabled stair lift is available to access Brescia Hall
- Lift access to the Sports Hall viewing gallery is in place
- Access ramps are in place where it is necessary
- Handrails are available on most staircases
- Safety signs are in place in all areas of the school and are clearly visible
- Internal steps and nosing with contrasting vinyl are applicable in most areas
- The school is well lit and also has good natural lighting
- External steps are edged in safety yellow paint and drains highlighted with white outer lining

## **22 Identified access difficulties**

- The only wheelchair access to Merici Building is via the Art Department and a difficult entrance to negotiate outside MFL
- No wheelchair access to first floor of Merici
- The lift does not give access to all parts of Brescia building

**23** This school has set the following overall priorities for physical improvements to increase access:

- Single doors to have sign indicating wheelchair user access
- Electronic disabled push pad to be reviewed in order to signal reception that a wheelchair user wishes to enter
- Disabled toilet facilities (Priority Medium) - Investigate the need for a possible disabled cubicle in the existing girls' toilet in Merici

## **Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided for pupils who are not disabled**

**24** Written information provided to pupils in schools covers a wide range of areas. Most obviously there is the curriculum material provided through textbooks, worksheets and computer screens. This can be complemented by written information on whiteboards, electronic interactive whiteboards and flip charts.

**25** In addition to curriculum information there is a wide variety of other information provided by schools to its pupils. This can be the class timetable, the information on a class excursion, newsletters, exam arrangements, room changes, upcoming events etc. displayed on large monitors in the main school canteen and Brescia.

**26** St Angela's is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access all information provided by the school:

- Due consideration is given to the layout of worksheets, test and exam papers etc
- Teachers ensure that work is appropriately enlarged and modified for students with visual Impairments under the guidance of the Newham service of the Visually Impaired
- Assistive technology is being explored to enable computer access for visually impaired students
- Visual timetables are provided for students with severe communication

difficulties

- Modified exam papers for external exams are ordered for identified students
- Keyworkers communicate directly on behalf of students with severe learning / communication difficulties to ensure that school information is passed home.

### **27 This school has set the following overall priorities for providing information for disabled pupils**

- To provide training for staff in the adaptation of written information for students with visual impairments and/or learning/communication difficulties
- To ensure that teachers of identified students are fully aware of their needs and follow the advised action plan
- To provide training for support staff in the use of the assistive technology and other techniques of modifying computer screens
- To devise a system to enable keyworkers of identified students to monitor the delivery of information to identified student

### **Wider Considerations**

#### **28 Coordination of the Accessibility Plan**

- The Accessibility Plan will be implemented by the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the SENCo and Premises Manager
- The Head teacher will ensure through his Senior Leadership Team that all school policies will reflect the Accessibility Plan
- The Head teacher in consultation with the Finance Committee will decide on the budgeting, timing and implementation of recommendations given within the plan
- The School Development Plan (SDP) will reflect the implementation of the Accessibility Plan
- The SENCo will continue to monitor the needs of students present and future in the school and inform the Head teacher of the need for revision of the plan

#### **29 Availability of the Accessibility Plan**

- Copies of the Accessibility Plan will be available to parents from the School Office
- A copy of the Accessibility Plan will be found on the School Website
- All staff will have access to a copy of the Accessibility Plan

#### **Review and Revision of the Accessibility Plan**

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated by the SENCo in consultation with the Head teacher, Deputy Head and the Senior Management Team

The Accessibility Plan will be formally revised annually to take account of:

- Improvements made
- Changing needs of the school population
- New legislation; as well as Government and LEA Advice

- Identified staff training needs
- The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed in the light of any admission of a student with a disability at the time of admission

### **Evaluation of the Accessibility Plan**

The effectiveness of the Accessibility Plan will be measured by:

- Views of individual pupils with disabilities will be sought both formally through the Annual Review Process; and more informally through day-to-day contact with disabled students
- Views of parents/carers of students with disabilities will be recorded through the Annual Review Process