



**St Thomas More
Catholic High School**

Accessibility Plan 2024 - 2026

All members of our community are given equal opportunities in line with the Single Equality Scheme.

ADOPTED BY BOARD OF GOVERNORS/DIRECTORS: 09/07/2019

Reviewed: June 2024
Next Review: June 2026
SLT Responsible: Laura Warland

1. Aims of the Plan

St Thomas More Catholic High School is a fully inclusive school, supporting **all** students to achieve their potential personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and educationally.

We recognise our duty:

- To create opportunities for every child to develop and learn
- To release potential in people to make the most of themselves
- To achieve excellence in standards of education and skills for all children
- To ensure the building and premises are accessible to all users, including students, parents/carers and visitors.
- To link with the school Single Equality Policy Action Plan in order to have due regard to the duties from the Equality Act as follows;
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
 - Foster good relations between different groups.

2. Introduction

This plan is drawn up in accordance with national regulations including the Equality Act 2010, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils", issued by DfE in 2002 and the Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.

3. Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as:

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on his or her ability to do normal day to day activities".

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, **where the effect of the impairment on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term.**

A significant number of students are therefore included in the definition.

4. Key Objective

To ensure that St Thomas More Catholic High School is a fully inclusive school. To reduce and eliminate barriers of access to the curriculum, and to enable full participation in the school community for students, prospective students and our adult users with a disability.

5. Principles

1. Compliance with the Equality Act is consistent with the school's Single Equality Policy and Action Plan, and the operation of the school's SEND policy;
2. The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act (as amended by the SENDA):
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
 - Foster good relations between different groups.
 - Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
 - To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
 - To publish an Accessibility Plan.
3. In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty written by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.
4. In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the Special Educational Needs and Disability regulations 2014.
5. The school recognises and values parents/carers' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on their child's ability to do normal activities, and respects the parents/carers' and child's right to confidentiality.
6. Schedule 10 (Accessibility for Disabled Pupils) of the Equality Act also requires schools to:

- **Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in school curriculum**

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted and adjusted where appropriate to meet the specific needs of individual pupils and to therefore be accessible to all.

We have designed an inclusive curriculum by: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils' diverse learning needs; overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of pupils.

- **Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services, provided or offered by the school**

We take into account the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises. We have made recent improvements to improve the accessibility of our site for those with disabilities.

- **Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils which are not disabled.**

The school works with the LA and external agencies to ensure they are following the advice of professionals. St. Thomas More staff will make themselves aware of how to find out about local services that may be of use to a disabled student they are teaching.

6. Activity

The School has identified a range of actions for development in line with the duties arising from the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant statutory regulations and will review in light of periodic changes in such regulations as necessary. A priority list is identified in the accessibility plan enclosed for the period 2022 - 2024 academic years. This plan will become an addition to the school School's Single Equality Policy.

Recent investments and developments have been made including:

- Installation of lift in sixth form block affording access to all levels for students, staff and visitors. All other buildings on site with the exception of RE/Science block* provide lift access enabling wheelchair users access to most areas on the school campus.
- Purchase and installation of evacuation chairs in each building with training for staff in event of use.
- Installation of more handrails to some stairways.
- Creation of more disabled parking bays.
- Designated area for purpose of recharging electric wheelchair.
- Appointment of additional staff to support and encourage the learning of students with particular access requirements.
- Designated staff to assist wheelchair users in event of emergency evacuation being required.
- Staff from external agencies monitor students through the school.
- Training for all relevant staff delivered by external agency on supporting students with visual or hearing impairment.
- Purchase of specialist equipment and assistive technology.
- Use of specialist equipment and resources for those with a physical disability and/or medical condition such as specialist chairs, kitchen utensils.

*Note: Where adaptations cannot be made, we work with families and design students' room timetables carefully to ensure our students with disabilities have an inclusive experience in school. For example, in RE/Science where there is no lift to the upper

floor, any students with a physical disability are timetabled to the downstairs Science labs and RE classrooms so there is no negative impact or narrowing of their curriculum.

7. Linked Policies

This Plan will contribute to the review and revision of related school policies, e.g.

- SEND policy
- Single Equality Policy & Action Plan
- Equality Impact Assessment Template & Guidance
- Equality & Diversity Guidance for schools
- Guidance on Publishing of Equality Data for Schools
- Curriculum policies
- Behaviour
- Admissions
- Health & Safety

ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ACCESS PLAN – 2024-2026

	Actions	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Impact
Short term	SEND Information Report Information updated and available to stakeholders.	Accessibility Plan to be reviewed with stakeholders and ratified by Governors.	Information to be made available to parent/carers, students and stakeholders on STM website.	June 2024 and then June 2025.	Updated information available for parent/carers to evaluate school provision and make informed transition decisions.
	Liaise with specialist agencies to ensure that access to building and Health and Safety needs are appropriate for students with disabilities and/or additional learning needs.	Agency visits and assessments as appropriate. Information shared with school. Transition meetings held with parent/carers, students and relevant agencies. Risk assessments made.	School able to inform staff of needs. Planning and curriculum development needs informed. Appropriate resources available within reasonable adjustments.	June 2024 —Sept 2024 and on-going.	Students able to access full curriculum and extra curricular activities within Health and Safety guidelines.
	Disseminate relevant information and strategies for intake Year 7 students and mid-year inclusions. Staff able to access and use strategies to support student achievement and inclusion.	SEND information to be made available on Class Charts system for all staff and on shared staff SEND Google drive. Detailed information sharing with pastoral staff. September SEND INSET to all staff to focus on new intake.	SEND information available for staff to access in a secure environment and to use when planning and delivering lessons and activities.	September 2024 and on-going for in-year transfers and newly identified needs.	Staff able to access and use strategies to support student achievement and inclusion. Lessons planned effectively enabling access to curriculum.

	New Students added to SEND register through transition arrangements and new K students to have School Support Plan arranged.	K Review Meeting held with parent/carers, students and relevant support agencies to agree Individual School Support Plan. Reviews to be student centred.	All students on SEND Register to have either a School Support Plan (LA Local Offer) or an EHCP as appropriate.	September—Dec 2024 and on-going.	All stakeholders to be aware of support objectives and appropriate interventions to enable access to the school and curriculum activities.
	Staff data to be collected to update records/address needs for staff with disabilities.	Staff invited to share information confidentially with Governance and HR Manager.	Resources identified as required to support staff needs. Appropriate resources made available.	September 2024—ongoing.	Staff able to access the workplace effectively supported by appropriate resources and/or health and wellbeing needs.
	Support and guidance for form tutors on writing PEEP Plans for students with Physical disabilities (permanent and temporary) to ensure safe Fire Evacuation.	Meetings/support for relevant pastoral staff including Form Tutors , supporting Form Tutors and Heads of Year .	PEEP plans in place for students, staff and visitors requiring personal assistance with Fire Evacuation	Sept 2024—Dec 2024 On-going for staff new to role.	Staff awareness of responsibilities. Safe Fire Evacuation procedures in place. Staff aware and using appropriate systems.
	Training for staff of students with visual/hearing impairment.	Liaise with Sensory Team and organise delivery of CPD session for specific students' needs and appropriate strategies to support.	Staff have a greater understanding and awareness of specific need and how to support.	Sept 2024	Staff are able to make reasonable adjustments. Students are fully included in school life and able to access the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities.
Medium term	Improve current practice and develop provision for students with ASC	Identify safe spaces for students. Corridor passes. Develop more	Students and parents feel more supported and recognised. Staff have	2024 and ongoing	Students with ASC and/or sensory sensitivities are able to engage, progress

	and/or sensory sensitivities.	ASC friendly practice in classrooms. CPD for staff. Support group for parents. More signposting to the local offer.	greater awareness of unique difficulties faced by students with ASC both in and out of the classroom.		and feel safe both in and out of school.
	To take account of students and adults with disabilities when organising events and trips.	Forward planning to include accurate SEND and medical information use of interpreters, adult support, mobility issues when using/hiring buses, toileting facilities etc.	Risk assessments continue to be undertaken and practical arrangements made where possible to enable safe participation in events.	2024 and ongoing.	Students and adults able to access events safely. Develop range of opportunities through positive planning and risk assessment.
Long term	Maintain visual differentiation in areas of risk.	Risings painted and maintained. Visibility strips on stairs. Hazards marked. Staff to risk assess lessons and learning environments.	Assessment annually and maintenance work completed as identified.	Sept 2024 and ongoing	Safety adjustments in place enabling safe access and mobility.
	Maintain physical access in and around building.	Maintain disabled parking spaces and ramp access points within school. Handrails on stairs as advised. Lifts in 3 storey block and sixth form block. Staff training on EVAC chair.	Access points maintained and used to enhance physical access around building.	Sept 2024 and ongoing	Safe mobility to entrance and movement around school site and within classrooms. Independence for students. Access to curriculum areas to participate in activities.

		Annual audit and maintenance			
To encourage positive attitudes through developing inclusion in activities, positive visual images and visible role models.	Curriculum resources. Visual display for diversity including student Achievements. Raise awareness for Planning for Participation and activities with regard to inclusion, health and safety, withinschool, , Work Experience, LA and BBCET events. Anti-discrimination working groups.	Accessibility taken into account when planning activities. Enhanced opportunities for students. Achievements celebrated.	2024—2026	Positive attitudes promoted. Inclusion embedded.	
Review and agree Equal Opportunities provision and monitoring to identify and support groups of identified vulnerable students to provide appropriate support and guidance to enable Further Study and/or Training opportunities post 16/18.	Review and evaluate Pupil Premium Strategy Statement based on outcomes and impact. Evaluate impact and provide effective Careers Guidance for vulnerable students in partnership with Connexions.	Appropriate Careers Advice including Post-16 and Post-18 Connexions access.	2024—2026	Barriers to continued study and training identified and appropriate advice and support provided Stakeholders aware of Equal Opportunity responsibilities duties	
Develop school focus on Social, Emotional and Mental Health for SEND and vulnerable students	Audit of current issues and provision in place. Develop provision through staff training on	Increased levels of effective support available for vulnerable students.	Sept 2024—2026 on-going	Increased levels of student resilience. Increased levels of Mental Health and Wellbeing	

		<p>SEMH approaches. School Chaplain as Mental Health Lead to develop whole school strategy. Ensure that Mental Health and Well-being is included in School Policies and Pastoral provision interventions.</p> <p>Research good practice from external providers and other educational settings.</p> <p>Work with LA Connect Mental Health Support Team for support with approach and outreach. Closer working between SEND and pastoral teams.</p> <p>Staff CPD with a focus on emotion coaching.</p>	<p>Fewer students requiring separate accommodation for Exam Access Arrangements.</p> <p>Increased awareness for the impact of SEMH on well-being and attainment.</p> <p>Reduction in referral numbers for School Counsellor / Learning Mentors / Pastoral Staff.</p>		<p>which will support students throughout education and into adult life.</p> <p>Increased awareness of wellbeing for students and adults.</p>
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