

Accessibility Plan

St. Joseph's Catholic Academy

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Aims of the Accessibility Plan

This Plan outlines how the School aims to increase access to education for pupils with disabilities in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010 (i.e. the curriculum, physical environment and information).

A person is regarded as having a disability under the Act where they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This Plan aims to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.

This Plan is reviewed every three years to take into account the changing needs of the school and its pupils. The plan is also reviewed where the school has undergone a refurbishment/significant alterations or new build.

The Accessibility Audit

To assist in the development of the Plan and the identification of key issues the School will undertake an Accessibility Audit – at least once every three years. A template for the audit is attached at **Appendix 1** and covers the following three areas:

- **Access to the curriculum** – the School will assess the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access the curriculum on an equal basis with their peers.
- **Access to the physical environment** – the School will assess the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access the physical environment on an equal basis with their peers.
- **Access to information** – the School will assess the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access information on an equal basis with their peers.

When conducting the audit, the school will consider all kinds of disabilities and impairments, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Ambulatory disabilities** – this includes pupils who use a wheelchair or mobility aid
- **Dexterity disabilities** – this includes those whose everyday manual handling of objects and fixtures may be impaired
- **Visual disabilities** – this includes those with visual impairments and sensitivities
- **Auditory disabilities** – this includes those with hearing impairments and sensitivities
- **Comprehension** – this includes hidden disabilities, such as autism and dyslexia

The audit should be used as a standalone tool to prompt investigation and review and need not be published with the Accessibility Plan.

The findings from the audit will, however, be used to identify the broad issues to be addressed and the actions to be taken to improve access.

All actions will be carried out in a reasonable timeframe. The actions that will be undertaken are detailed in the following sections of this document.

Planning duty 1: Curriculum

Issue	Action to be taken	Lead	When	Outcome
Inclusive Quality First Teaching	Staff CPD on differentiation, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), adaptive teaching, and use of external agency advice. Regular monitoring.	Headteacher, Teachers, SENCO	Spring 2025	Staff are skilled in personalising the curriculum. Pupil voice and agency inform inclusive approaches. All pupils make progress.
Use of technology to support access	Investment in assistive technology, ongoing training, external interventions and ICT support.	Headteacher, ICT Manager, SENCO	Ongoing	Pupils with SEND make at least similar progress to their peers. Improved independence and engagement.
Support for pupils with EAL	Use of ICT tools, bilingual dictionaries, visuals and tailored resources to enhance understanding.	Headteacher, SENCO, Class Teachers	Ongoing	EAL pupils access all aspects of learning and participate fully in school life.

Planning duty 2: Physical environment

Issue	Action to be taken	Lead	When	Outcome
Physical access for pupils with mobility needs	Awareness of needs during class allocation; ensure ground floor use where required.	Headteacher	Ongoing	Pupils with mobility needs access learning environments safely and effectively.
Accessible drop-off/pick-up arrangements	Maintain clear access to designated disabled spaces and stable yard access.	Office Staff	Ongoing	Parents/carers with disabilities can access the site safely and reliably.
Inadequate auditory environment	Room audits to assess the need for sound-field systems or Phonak speaker technology.	SENCO	Ongoing	Learners with hearing impairments access lessons effectively through supported acoustics.

Planning duty 3: Information

Issue	Action to be taken	Lead	When	Outcome
Staff need up-to-date knowledge of SEND pupils	Ensure accurate, timely updates via internal systems; transition meetings.	SENCO	Ongoing	Staff are informed and can plan for needs promptly and accurately.

Written materials not accessible to EAL families	Translate key materials and signpost alternative support. Develop accessible formats using ICT tools.	SENCO, ICT Manager, Business Manager	Autumn 2025	Written and digital communication is accessible to all stakeholders regardless of language or need.
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Appendix 1

Accessibility Audit

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is a legal requirement for schools to provide equal opportunities for all pupils, including equal access to the physical environment, information, and the curriculum without hinderance. The school must also accommodate the needs of staff and visitors Lead have disabilities, both inside its buildings and on its grounds.

How to use this audit

The audit will be carried out at least once every **3** years. It comprises three sections: **access to the curriculum**, **access to the physical environment**, and **access to information**. Guidance notes are attached at the end of the audit to help prompt enquiry. Actions should be collated into broad issues for carry over to the Accessibility Plan.

An audit for all types of disability

While conducting this audit, schools should consider all kinds of disabilities or impairments, which may include:

- **Ambulatory disabilities** – this includes pupils who use a wheelchair or mobility aid.
- **Dexterity disabilities** – this includes those whose everyday manual handling of objects and fixtures may be impaired.
- **Visual disabilities** – this includes those with visual impairments and sensitivities, so lighting, glare, contrast and colour should be considered.
- **Auditory disability** – this includes those with hearing impairments and sensitivities, so induction loops, visual signals and acoustics should be considered.

- **Comprehension** – this includes hidden disabilities such as autism and dyslexia. Considerations should also be made for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

Name of school	Date of audit
St. Joseph's Catholic Academy	6/6/25

Audit completed by	Role
Mr Anthony McGeeney	Headteacher

Accessibility Audit

Feature	Description / Comments	Actions to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to complete actions by
Access to the curriculum – See guidance note 1				
Inclusive access to core subjects	Lesson plans are regularly adapted for pupils with SEND to ensure equitable access across all subjects including PE, drama, and music.	Provide CPD on adaptive teaching. Monitor planning and delivery through SENCO reviews.	SENCO, Class Teachers	Ongoing
Access to extracurricular activities	All pupils including those with SEND are encouraged to participate in after-school clubs and trips.	Review risk assessments and offer tailored support for participation.	Educational Visits Coordinator, SENCO	Ongoing
Access to the physical environment – See guidance note 2				

Wheelchair access and movement	Corridors and entrances are generally accessible. Adjustments needed for mobility in some areas.	Ensure appropriate classroom allocation and review layout annually.	Headteacher, Caretaker	Ongoing
Auditory and visual considerations	Some rooms present acoustic and lighting challenges for pupils with hearing or visual impairments.	Install Phonak-compatible speakers and improve contrast and signage.	SENCO, ICT Lead	Autumn 2025
Access to information – see guidance note 3				
Accessible written communication	Key communications are currently not always accessible for EAL or visually impaired families.	Translate materials and provide alternate formats including large print and symbol-based guides.	Business Manager, SENCO	Autumn 2025
Digital accessibility and website	Website partially accessible. Lacks comprehensive translation or screen reading tools.	Audit and upgrade website to include translation features and plain language options.	ICT Lead, Website Administrator	Spring 2026

Guidance Note 1 – Access to the curriculum

1. How does the school enable all pupils to have access to the full curriculum without hinderance including PE, drama and music?
2. How do staff adapt lesson plans so that all pupils can participate and reach their full potential?
3. How does the school ensure that all pupils have access to extracurricular activities and are able to participate in school trips?

Guidance Note 2 – Access to the physical environment

1. How has the school made sure that access routes, entrances (including reception), doors and corridors are wide enough for wheelchair users and those with ambulatory difficulties to have room for manoeuvre? Are ramps and power assisted doors used where appropriate?
2. Are accessible toilet and changing facilities available for people with disabilities?
3. How does the school allow wheelchair users and those with ambulatory disabilities to have access to seating in dining halls, classrooms, staff rooms and offices and to have adequate room to manoeuvre?
4. How has the school made sure that floors & lighting are suitable, and that tactile signs are used for those who are visually impaired or who have physical disabilities?
5. How does the school make sure pupils with hearing impairments are notified when the school bell rings and are induction loops and couplers provided?
6. Are means of escape fully accessible including from upper floors and is the fire alarm visual as well as audible including inside toilets.

Guidance Note 3 – Access to information

1. Are relevant areas of the school clearly signed for those with visual impairments and disabilities, such as autism or dyslexia?
2. Do you have arrangements to provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?
3. Do you have the facilities, such as ICT, to produce written information in different formats?
4. Do you ensure that information is available to staff, pupils and parents in a way that is user friendly for all people with disabilities?
5. How has the school ensured its website is accessible to everyone, such as the incorporation of translation features and audio reading?