

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended part 4 of the Disability Act (1995) by placing new duties on LEAs and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and association services.

There are three main duties:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility strategies (LEAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (the 'planning duty')

We recognise that school needs to consider the requirements of current and future disabled pupils. This means that we are expected to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school.

Definition of Disability

Pupils falling within the definition of disability will have a range of needs, including mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, AIDS, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

(Tameside Accessibility Strategy 2003-2006)

The Disability Discriminatory Act (DDA) states that ' a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

The Education Act (1996) states that 'children have a special education need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special education provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within an area of the LEA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them

Pupils with a disability must not automatically be considered to have a special educational need.

In drawing up this policy, consideration has been giving to the present situation and future needs under the following heading:

- Physical environment of the school
- The extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- The delivery of information to pupils and parents

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The main issues to be addressed at St. Paul's Catholic Primary School in relation to the physical environment are:

- Improved disabled access to the front of the school

1 Access to the Classrooms

It is the policy of St. Paul's to ensure that access to all classrooms can be made from the exterior of the building. Internally, there are steps from the main reception to the KS1 area of the building. The steps have a handrail on both sides of the stairs to aid accessibility. A lift has now been installed to assist wheelchair accessibility between KS1 and KS2. All classrooms, including library, school hall, dining facility and Breakfast Club, are on ground floor level, this makes them accessible from within the school and no action is required to make classrooms more accessible. However, the main entrance into school is down steps. The steps can be avoided however, by following the path from the Church to the front of the building.

2 School Décor

It is the policy of St. Paul's to:

- Paint the interior of the school in calm, toning colours
- Provide window blinds where necessary and provide each classroom with a carpeted area
- All classrooms have accessibility to a smartboard, making the school suitable for VI and HI pupils
- Keep classrooms cool and comfortable for children and staff
- Give consideration to the heights of counters, layout of classrooms, style and dimensions of new furniture purchases
- Consider classroom layouts on an annual basis taking into account the needs of the particular group of pupils. The layout will be reconsidered if a pupil joins the school after the start of the school year

3 Toilet Facilities

It is the policy of St. Paul's to:

- Provide pupils and staff with toilets that are accessible from their work area
- Disabled toilets are available in reception and in the community room. Changing facilities are also available in reception in the disabled toilet

4 Car Parking for the Disabled

It is the policy of St. Paul's to ensure that disabled visitors can easily gain access to the school. The school does not currently have a designated disabled parking area and the staff car park is usually full. However, accessibility is not an issue as the Church car park is always available and provides easy access to the school.

5 Signage

It is the policy of St. Paul's to provide clear signs in and around the school. Due to the unusual layout of the building this can be difficult but is an issue that is regularly considered.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

It is the policy of St Paul's to:

- Provide accessible displays which are generally appropriate for height of children
- Provide accessible storage
- Plan work/trips/visits etc well enough in advance to cater for visually and/ or hearing impaired pupils
- Provide breadth and balance of learning for all children and strive to make it accessible to all, regardless of disability
- Provide equal opportunities for whole class, group and individual learning activities and encourage children to develop independent skills, irrespective of disability
- Consider the range of equipment available and ensure it is suitable for all
- Involve all children in question and answer sessions
- Provide tasks that are well-matched to pupils' needs and make provision for differing abilities
- Provide a stimulating and motivating learning environment for all pupils
- Make provision for the emotional, physical and social needs of individual pupils
- Give due consideration to the placement of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities
- Encourage a strong sense of equality and fairness

DELIVERY OF INFORMATION

It is the policy of St. Paul's to ensure that communication with parents is regular, clear and concise. At present this is done in writing, verbally through family assemblies, mass etc and through automated services e.g. Truancy Call, Call Parent text service and the school website.