Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST)

Accessibility Policy and Plan for Sir James Smith's School

Mission Statement
Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) holds a deep-seated belief in education and lifelong learning. Effective collaboration, mutual support and professional challenge will underpin our quest to ensure that all of the students and adults we serve are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed in life.

Person(s) responsible for updating the policy:	Marc Cooper (Headteacher) Cameo Woudberg (SENDCo)
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WeST Core Values
WeST holds four core values which underpin the engagement, motivation and retention of employees, no matter what their role in the organisation.

- **Collaboration**

Creating a shared vision and working effectively across boundaries in an equitable and inclusive way to skilfully influence and engage others. Building and securing value from relationships, developing self and others to achieve positive outcomes.

- **Aspiration**

Having high expectations, modelling the delivery of high-quality outcomes. Showing passion, persistence and resilience in seeking creative solutions to strive for continuous improvement and excellence.

- **Integrity**

Acting always with the interests of children and young people at our heart, and with a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles. Communicating with transparency and respect, creating a working environment based on trust and honesty.

- **Compassion**

Recognising need in others and acting with positive intention to promote well-being and improve outcomes.

Providing Accessible Formats
If you require this policy in accessible format, please contact the Director of Inclusion.

1. Introduction

1.1 Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) aims to ensure that all pupils, regardless of disabilities or learning needs, have equal access to Sir James Smith's School. We have high expectations of all of our pupils, and we strive to ensure that each and every pupil can take part in the whole school curriculum. We value the diversity of our school community and celebrate inclusion for all.

1.2 **Definition of 'disability'**

The Equality Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities. This has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014), but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa. 'Disabled pupils', for the purpose of this policy, refers not only to those pupils with physical disabilities but could include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

1.3 **Expectations of staff**

Staff have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that they do not treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the person's disability
- Not indirectly discriminate against a pupil with a disability by failing to make a reasonable adjustment when a disabled pupil is placed, or is likely to be placed, at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled
- Implement reasonable adjustments
- Ensure that if a pupil discloses a disability, the member of staff should request their permission, where appropriate, to share this information with relevant colleagues

1.4 This policy covers three aspects:

1.4.1 **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's curriculum**

This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers entry into the school.

1.4.2 **Improving the accessibility of written information**

This will include planning approaches by which the school will make written information (e.g., handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about School events) more accessible to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The delivery of such information should be in ways which are determined after taking into account the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents and be within a reasonable timeframe.

1.4.3 **Improving the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the School**

This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

1.5 The school is committed to meeting legislative requirements, providing access as defined above and nurturing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness. The school will not treat disabled pupils less favourably and will take reasonable steps (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage in matters of admission and education. As a result, the school has regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for the implementation of this policy.

1.6 This policy is written under the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (updated May 2015) ('the Code') and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) ('the Act') and sets out the school's strategy relating to improving access for disabled pupils, including those with learning difficulties. It draws upon the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014).

1.7 This policy is closely linked to the school's SEND policy and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

- The Admissions Policy
- The Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- The Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety
- Security Policies

2. Reasonable Adjustments

2.1 **The 'Reasonable Adjustments' duty**

The duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' does not include a duty to change physical features. It does include a duty 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide auxiliary aids … where a disabled person would, but for the provision of the auxiliary aids, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled'.

2.2 The term "auxiliary aids" found in the Act cover both auxiliary aids and services but there is no legal definition for what constitutes auxiliary aids and services. Examples of what may be considered an auxiliary aid could be hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software. There is no generic definition of what constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment'; the key test is reasonableness, which will always be specific to the pupil and context[1].

3. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's curriculum

1. When planning, teachers will need to set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed, including pupils with disabilities. They should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively. To create effective learning environments this will include:
   - valuing all contributions
   - ensuring pupils feel secure and able to contribute appropriately
   - ensuring that all forms of bullying will be challenged

2. Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use as part of their daily life (e.g. a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision). However, teachers must take account of potential barriers to learning and, where necessary, ensure in their planning that they make provision to support individuals or groups of pupils to enable them to participate as fully and effectively as possible in the curriculum and assessment activities. This may include adapting / modifying resources and / or making them more accessible. For example, providing soft copies / printed copies of teaching material, ensuring font sizes and reproduced materials are fully accessible, etc. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work. Also, during assessments, teachers should bear in mind that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to support individual pupils.

3. Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with SEND must take account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Disabled pupils may need access to specialist equipment and approaches or to alternative or adapted activities, consistent with school-based intervention augmented by advice and support from external specialists. Teachers should work closely with the SENDCO and, where appropriate, representatives of other agencies who may be supporting the pupil.

4. Teachers will need to plan for pupils' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities through:
   - using specialist aids and equipment
   - providing support from adults or peers when needed
   - adapting tasks or environments
   - providing alternative activities, where necessary

5. Teachers should also take specific action to enable the effective participation of pupils with disabilities, for example by:

- planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for the satisfactory completion of tasks, for example by:
    - taking account of the very slow pace at which, some pupils will be able to record work, either manually or with specialist equipment, and of the physical effort required
    - being aware of the high levels of concentration necessary for some pupils when following or interpreting text or graphics, particularly when using vision aids or tactile methods, and of the tiredness which may result
    - allocating sufficient time, opportunity and access to equipment for pupils to gain information through experimental work and detailed observation
    - being aware of the effort required by some pupils to follow oral work, whether through use of residual hearing, lip reading or a signer, and of the tiredness or loss of concentration which may occur.
- planning opportunities, where necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum, for example by:
    - providing adapted, modified or alternative activities or approaches to learning in physical education and ensuring that these have integrity and equivalence to the curriculum and enable pupils to make appropriate progress
    - providing alternative or adapted activities in science, art and design and design and technology for pupils who are unable to manipulate tools, equipment or materials or who may be allergic to certain types of materials
    - ensuring that all pupils can be included and participate safely in fieldwork, local studies and visits to museums, historic buildings and sites, etc.
- identifying aspects of the curriculum that may present specific difficulties for individuals.

3.6 **Sports**

The Physical Education department will need to make plans to consider provision for disabled pupils. Specifically, for disabled pupils who cannot access an activity, teachers will need to provide one or all of the following:

- adapted, modified or alternative activities that have integrity and equivalence to the activities followed by other pupils and that enable the pupils to make progress
- specific support to enable the pupils to participate in certain activities or types of movement
- careful management of the pupil's physical regime to allow for specific medical conditions

3.7 **Drama**
The school halls, where drama lessons and other activities often take place, have access difficulties. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled pupils to enable them to access drama activities.

3.8 **Recreational activities and School clubs and societies**
Most recreational areas for break and lunchtimes are accessible

3.9 For further information about the school's curriculum, co-curricular provision and approaches to teaching, please see the Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policies.

4. Improving the accessibility of written information

4.1 Written information provided to pupils in school covers a wide range of areas. Most obviously there is the curriculum material provided through visual presentations (including, for example, textbooks and worksheets). This can be complemented by written information on white boards, flip charts or interactive technologies. Accessibility issues are considered when new equipment is acquired by the school to ensure that the current and future needs of all pupils are met as far as is reasonable.

4.2 In addition to curriculum information there is the wide variety of other information provided by the school to its pupils (e.g. the class timetable, homework diary, a letter about a class excursion, the school's weekly newspaper, etc.). Where reasonable, this information will be provided in an accessible way to pupils with disabilities, recognising that different pupils are likely to require different arrangements in different situations.

4.3 Accessibility for all learners is considered when introducing and setting up new ICT hardware.

5. Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school

5.1 Although the duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' does not include a duty to change physical features, the school has a planning duty which includes physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services. The school will continue to work towards improving access for the disabled and intends to make alterations to the physical features of the school as part of its long-term planning process.

5.2 **Wheelchair users**
Portable ramps are available to enable access to some additional area

6. Support for Specific Areas of Need

6.1 **Examples of implications of the reasonable adjustment duty for specific subjects** It is important for teachers to make adjustments to help disabled pupils overcome difficulties. For example, by:

- using approaches to enable hearing-impaired pupils to learn about sound in science and music
- helping visually impaired pupils to learn about light in science, to access maps and visual resources in geography and to evaluate different products in design and technology and images in art and design
- providing opportunities for pupils to develop strength in depth where they cannot meet the particular requirements of a subject, such as the visual requirements in art and design and the singing requirements in music
- adjusting or discounting these aspects in appropriate individual cases when required to make a judgement or academic attainment.

6.2 **Access Arrangements**

The school's policy and procedures with regard to Access Arrangements in Entrance Examinations and Public Examinations are outlined in the following policies:

- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Exams Policy

6.3 **Working with external advisors**

The Inclusion Department and School Nurse can be contacted by parents in relation to assessment of and on-going work with pupils. Where appropriate, the school will make use of external advisors (e.g. medical practitioners and Educational Psychologists) and has access to advice and support through WeST.

6.4 **Health and Safety**

The school's health and safety procedures, including the procedures for evacuation of disabled pupils in the event of an emergency (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)), are described in the relevant policies, which are reviewed and revised where appropriate to incorporate the needs of disabled pupils.

6.5 For further information about provision for pupils with SEND, please see the SEND Policy.

7. Staff Training

7.1 It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that skills are more specifically developed to enable teachers to provide effectively for pupils with a range of disabilities. Staff training and development will take place to ensure that curriculum access is further enhanced.

7.2 Examples of training which may be sought by and provided to teachers include:

- ensuring access to text and supporting delivery of information in the three main areas of impairment (physical, hearing and visual), including through the use of different media
- differentiation and / or scaffolding
- developing ICT-based resources / templates which can provide a basis for effective teaching and learning. Training will be provided on new ICT equipment to allow teachers to use special features to make teaching / resources more accessible to pupils with SEND.