



St Margaret's School for Girls Accessibility Strategy 2021-2024

Background and Introduction

St Margaret's is an all-through school for girls aged 3-18; boys aged 3-5 are admitted to the nursery. Entrance to St Margaret's is by assessment and the school is academically selective.

This plan aims to improve access to St Margaret's School for all present and prospective members of the community. It is the practical tool for ensuring the staged, funded and well developed implementation of the pupils' staff's and council's wish to be part of a school which removes all barriers caused by disability, affording equal opportunities as far as possible within its resources. The plan builds on the considerable progress made during the previous six phases of the accessibility strategy from 2003-2021.

The school welcomes and is committed to implementing all relevant legislation. It recognises that this strategy must be owned by all members of the community and that it must permeate all of the attitudes, thinking and work of the school. Building on consultation previously undertaken, this plan has been formulated following an updated audit of the physical access to the building by the Facilities Manager, discussion with the parent forum, staff and analysis of the outcomes of pupil focus groups.

Targets which have been fulfilled in last phase of the plan (2018-2021)

Improving physical access to the building

Planning permission has been granted for a fully accessible dining facility for pupils, staff and visitors although this was put on hold in 2020.

Further work has been undertaken on new soft surfacing in the playground.

Further work has been undertaken on LED lighting throughout the school.

Additional signage has been installed around school as appropriate.

The support for learning department has moved to a new classroom, which has been designed for the purpose. Access to the new facility is much improved with access now from the junior school ground floor corridor or from the playground.

Improving Access to School Information and Communication

Use of “alt text” when displaying images on the website is now in use allowing the user to hover over an image to receive text.

Pupil and staff virtual hubs were created in spring 2020 and can be accessed through the chromebooks which have been purchased for all teaching staff and pupils.

In the nursery and junior school Google Classroom is routinely used to share information with parents about their daughters’ homework and learning.

Google Meet and School Cloud have been used during the pandemic to provide virtual parents’ evenings at a time when parents have not been able to enter the building. The webinar platform GoToWebinar has given parents all over the world access to school open days and has also been used for information events for existing parents.

Work has been completed for the new parent portal through HUBmis to go live in August 2022.

Improving Access to the Curriculum

Staff induction and training. Staff have been provided with regular training about GIRFEC, the UNCRC and in handling wellbeing concerns.

The learning support policy has been reviewed annually and staff have been given regular updates on referral processes.

A new system of recording observations and evidence for SQA Alternative Assessment Arrangements is now embedded and quality assurance of AAA has been strengthened.

The school's WiFi was replaced in July 2020 and in session 2020-21 the school implemented a 1:1 device strategy: all teaching staff and pupils have been allocated the same model of Chromebook on which Read Write Gold is installed. Training in the use of this software is ongoing and monthly webinars are circulated to staff.

Considerable investment in infrastructure has supported considerable progress in the creation and use of digital resources and assessment.

Through periods of remote learning, self-isolation and recovery to access lessons through Google Classroom and Google Meet.

The school has held a number of virtual and in-person wellbeing events for pupils and mental health awareness events for parents.

The support for learning department regularly places articles in the newsletter to inform the whole school community of wider accessibility issues.

The school has continued to work with Aberdeen based educational psychologists who have provided staff training and advised the senior leadership team and head of support for learning.

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

| IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Goal: To improve wheelchair access to various areas of school | | | | | | |
| | ACTION What will we do? | LEAD PERSON Who is responsible | OUTCOME/IMPACT What will this achieve for disabled persons | TIMESCALE When will we do this? | EVALUATION How will we measure our success? Links with other planning processes | COST Financial Implications? |
| <u>Long term</u> | | | | | | |
| Installation of stair lift from ground floor (by dining room) to first floor with access also to nursery | Specialist stair lift contractor was contacted and indicative costs received. – no further action meantime but monitor requirements | Facilities Manager | This would increase accessibility | Ongoing monitoring – could be revisited if the dining room was to be upgraded and included in any quotes for that work. | We will have established the optimum means of facilitating access for wheelchair users. | c£20k installation and ongoing maintenance costs. Loss of space which is at a premium |
| Passenger lift to provide access to the upper floors of the school | Monitor and consider when other major works being undertaken | Facilities Manager | Improve access for users to the upper parts of the school | Could be considered if the main hall was to be refurbished | Through feedback from users | Tbc – cost may be prohibitive |

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|--|--|--------------------|--|----------------|---|-----|
| <u>Intermediate/Short term</u> | | | | | | |
| Access to music, GP room/main hall and lower ground floor rooms could be made more accessible with short ramps | Approach specialist company for advice and costs | Facilities Manager | Wheelchair users would be better able to access facilities | By August 2022 | We will measure success based on feedback from those who use the facilities | tbc |

| IMPROVING ACCESS TO SCHOOL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| Goal: To make the school website more accessible to visually impaired users | | | | | | |
| | ACTION What will we do? | LEAD PERSON Who is responsible | OUTCOME/IMPACT What will this achieve for disabled persons | TIMESCALE When will we do this? | EVALUATION How will we measure our success? Links with other planning processes | COST Financial Implications? |
| <u>Intermediate/short term</u> | | | | | | |
| Audit of website to ensure site is accessible and compatible with screen readers | Undertake audit | Marketing team | Website accessible to visually impaired users | By May 2022 | We will have established a system that meets the requirements of visually impaired website users | None – in-house |
| Ensure that new parent portal is accessible and compatible with screen readers | Discuss with software provider | IT team | Website accessible to visually impaired users | By August 2022 launch | We will have established a system that meets the requirements of visually impaired website users | None – part of current upgrade to cloud based MI system |

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM**Goal: Assistive technologies and appropriate software/apps are deployed across all age groups to provide additional and/or differentiated learning for students with additional support needs**

| | ACTION What will we do? | LEAD PERSON Who is responsible | OUTCOME/IMPACT What will this achieve for disabled persons | TIMESCALE When will we do this? | EVALUATION How will we measure our success? Links with other planning processes | COST Financial Implications? |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <u>Intermediate/short term</u> | | | | | | |
| Audit current practice in order to identify whole school, departmental and individual development priorities for session 2022-23 | Use the Digital Schools Award self-evaluation tool to carry out this audit | Head of Computing Science, Head of Support for Learning with working group | Learners will have access to appropriate digital resources, devices and software to meet individual needs. | Summer term | Through observation of individual pupils, though staff and pupil feedback | Cost will be in staff time. |

| IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Goal: Staff are trained and confident in meeting the needs of pupils with wide range of disabilities | | | | | | |
| | ACTION What will we do? | LEAD PERSON Who is responsible | OUTCOME/IMPACT What will this achieve for disabled persons | TIMESCALE When will we do this? | EVALUATION How will we measure our success? Links with other planning processes | COST Financial Implications? |
| <u>Intermediate/short term</u> | | | | | | |
| An annual programme of training is maintained and developed in response to evolving needs of pupils and good practice is shared. | Continue to incorporate this training into staff induction and annual professional learning plans | AT/LG/LH | Staff will be fully informed and trained to meet the needs of disabled pupils. | Ongoing | Through staff self-evaluation and pupil/parent feedback | c. £1000 annually |