

**ST JOHN'S SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
A CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

Accessibility Policy



Accessibility Policy

Vision & Values

St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy is a Learning Community guided by Gospel Values. We value each person, respecting and supporting one another, embracing diversity and celebrating each other's talents and successes. We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all our employees, students and any others involved in our school community, with any form of disability, ensuring that we create and provide a safe and healthy community which is attentive to the needs of all.

St John's School and Sixth Form College, a Catholic Academy will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment.

What do we understand by "disability"?

"Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (DDA 1995 Part 1 para. 1.1.) This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 under the 2005 Disability Amendment Act:-

- People with cancer or surviving cancer are now included, as are people with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- For a mental impairment the need for it to be clinically well recognised has been removed.

The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all students with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all students with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy uses the social model of disability throughout our work which states that most barriers and problems are a result of the way society is organised rather than being caused by an individual's disability. We believe that negative attitudes and a lack of awareness are two of the main barriers to disabled people achieving full equality. We understand that the definition of disability under the Act is different from the eligibility criteria for special educational needs provision. This means that disabled students may or may not have special educational needs.

St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy expects all students to be able to participate and achieve in every aspect of the life of the school.

As a school we are committed to inclusion and to equal opportunities for all of our students in respect of access to the requirements of the National Curriculum and entry for examination courses.

The school will set suitable learning challenges for all students in response to their diverse needs. We recognise the varying needs of students and we will seek to

identify and implement appropriate strategies to overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of students.

The General Duty

We will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons –This means not representing people in a demeaning way, and it also means not pretending they don't exist and not representing them anywhere at all.
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life -It is also important to respect the wishes of disabled children in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take part in.
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

(DDA 2005 S.49A)

Information regarding Disabilities of Students and Staff

All of our students have full access to the mainstream curriculum with specialist support in specific cases.

Close liaison takes place with all of our feeder primary schools so that we are aware of any disability issues and can make plans accordingly. The introduction of a nurture group in September 2008 addresses the needs of the most vulnerable students in the incoming Year 7 cohort and throughout Key Stage 3.

All students are encouraged to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

All of the disabled students are making good progress in their subjects (please see the relevant data from the school's system).

Views of the Students

Students are able to make full access to the curriculum (see Departments' student voice evidence). Those students with hearing difficulties are seated near to the staff and in the most severe case where a student requires hearing aids, staff make use of a radio mike when delivering their lessons.

Parents/carers

Consultation takes place with all parents/carers during Progress Evenings. In addition there are review meetings with the parents/carers of all of the students who are statemented. These discussions help to inform our planning within school.

There is also liaison with external agencies and the Local Authority where appropriate.

Improving Access to the Physical Environment

The school environment is able to accommodate physically impaired students to enable them to access the curriculum. The lift is used by both students and staff as the need arises. The school continues to address the priorities raised in the Accessibility Plan (ongoing) and regularly reassesses the environment to ensure that the needs of all students, staff and those working within the school community are catered for.

Improving Access to Resources

In order to improve the delivery of the curriculum to all students, the school will consider such issues as:

- the layout of worksheets/handouts
- use of different coloured paper
- use of enlarged texts, including exam papers where appropriate
- the layout and size of timetable information; use of pictorial timetables
- the suitability of text books
- the use of planners (font, text size, layout etc)
- tape recording specific information

Improving Parents/Carers' Access to Information

In considering the access of information by parents/carers St John's will also consider and adapt where necessary:

- the type and size of font used on letters
- the need to possibly translate letters into another language
- the format of reports e.g. the use of Braille

Providing Access to Examinations/Assessments

The definitions of Disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010 as listed in JCQ Document Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties September 2015-August 2016

- The SENDCO, subject teachers and Leadership Team work together to provide appropriate exam courses for students with specific learning needs or disabilities .
- The SENDCO and Exams Administrator work together to ensure that requests for reasonable adjustments such as enlarged type papers, Access arrangements and Special Consideration applications are submitted and backed up with the appropriate documentation and evidence. In compliance with the Equality Act 2010

Management, Coordination and Implementation

The overall responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme lies with the Governing Body of St John's School and Sixth Form College, A Catholic Academy. However, all staff within the school needs to be aware and understand the duties in the DDA and their role within it. These people include the Governors, the Head teacher, the Leadership Team, Heads of Year and Heads of Department, SENDCO and Transition Coordinator, Pastoral and Subject Staff, Learning Support Assistants,

Cover Supervisors, Support Staff (including Site and Administrative staff) and the Catering staff.

The school recognises that the current knowledge, understanding and awareness of the duties associated with the DDA are variable across the school community. Therefore it is our intention to raise staff awareness of their duties in INSET sessions and all departments and year teams will be expected to show clearly within their development planning processes, their schemes of work and pastoral programmes how they are responding to their duties in respect of the DDA.

The SENDCO and Transition Coordinator will continue to review the situation through their liaison with primary schools and parents/carers. They will in turn inform the Head teacher, Governors and Staff of any change in circumstances. Such reviews/updates will be a regular feature of the Governors' sub-committee meetings (Staffing & Students and Curriculum) in order to monitor the situation.

Reviewed April 2016