



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

**Approved by:** PWG **Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023

**Last reviewed on:** May 2022

**Next review due by:** March 2025

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2010, The Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools.
- 1.2 The Act makes it unlawful for St George Catholic College and the College's Governing Body, which is the responsible Body of the College, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to:-
  - Admissions;
  - The way we provide education for pupils;
  - The way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
  - Exclusions and other sanctions.
- 1.3 The protected characteristics are:
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Race
  - Disability
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy or maternity
  - Being married or in a civil partnership
- 1.4 There is still a requirement to have an Accessibility Plan outlining how we intend to improve access for disabled pupils to the physical environment, the curriculum and written information.
- 1.5 The Equality Act applies to all independent schools in England and Wales. (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10, Paragraph 3 and Disability Discrimination regulations 2005). Furthermore, as proprietors St George Catholic College are required to draw up equality objectives under the Specific Duties Regulations 2011 so that we meet the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Accessibility Plan is reviewed every three years.
- 1.6 Any person such as staff in schools who act on behalf of the proprietor, St George Catholic College and any governance committee, are responsible for their own discriminatory actions and the Proprietor (St George Catholic College and the governance committee) is also liable unless it can prove that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the staff member from doing the discriminatory action, or from doing anything of that kind.
- 1.7 The College's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the College, but relates also to events afterwards such as the provision of references, or old pupil networks.

## **2. Disability Discrimination Act**

The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:

- The definition of disability is less restrictive;
- Direct discrimination can no longer be defended as justified;
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified;
- From September 2012, we are under a duty to make available auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments, where these are not being supplied through an EHC plan from September 2014 or from other sources.

## **3. Definition of Disability**

3.1 The Act defines disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3.2 Some specific condition such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV are considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.

3.3 Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last for at least twelve months.

## **4. Reasonable Adjustments**

4.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a College places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

4.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.

4.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN/D system (i.e. via a EHC Plan), there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.

4.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software.

4.5 Our SEN/D policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our College. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our College, given the circumstances of each individual case.

4.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of College, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision, eg hearing aids.

- 4.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 4.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in College life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be reasonable. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the Trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils.

## **5. Our Vision**

- 5.1 We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, loved, valued and respected, and to have high aspirations for their future.
- 5.2 Inclusion is the process of taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy College life.
- 5.3 Our aim is to set challenging targets for all pupils and to deploy staff and resources to enable children to achieve their full potential.

## **6. Our duty around accessibility for disabled pupils**

- 6.1 Our accessibility plan focuses on the following areas for implementation:
- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
  - Improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
  - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.
- 6.2 Our plan also includes the resource implications of implementing the Plan.
- 6.3 Our approach includes:
- Access, audit and review (i.e. the nature of the College population, context, future pupil numbers, staff training needs, impact of anti-bullying strategies, timetabling, trips, medicines, clubs, outcomes for SEND in external exams, views of parents/carers, pupils, voluntary sector, symbols, signage, font size, etc).
  - Identification of actions.
  - Setting of goals and targets.
  - Inclusion of a range of stakeholders in devising the plan, both formally and informally. As appropriate, the views of pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors have been taken into consideration in the development of the plan.
  - Regular reviews take place with support services to evaluate needs and provision, such as specialist teaching colleagues for visual impairment.
  - Encouragement to parents/carers in arranging to see staff if they have any particular concerns or complaints. Pupils are also regularly consulted through personal reviews, student voice and school council. Individuals are free to approach staff to talk about their needs and views anytime.

- Publicising the plan.
  - Implementation and evaluate the plan's effectiveness.
- 6.4 Our Accessibility checklist and Action Plan is outlined in Appendices 1-3.

## **7. Discrimination Claims**

- 7.1 Claims for discrimination on the grounds of disability against our school must be heard by the First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) in England.
- 7.2 Such claims of discrimination or harassment which would be brought by a parent of a pupil against our College would be brought to the Tribunal by the parent. This must be brought within six months of the act to which the claim relates. Any remedy will not include compensation.

## **8. Monitoring & Evaluation**

- 8.1 The named person in our College who is responsible for this plan is an Assistant Headteacher responsible for SEND.
- 8.2 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this Plan is implemented and to ensure that it is fair and equal to all.
- 8.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor the success of this Plan by ensuring that the priority areas are addressed by them in the classroom, particularly with regard to the provision of information and curriculum access.
- 8.4 Our Accessibility Plan and any updates are available on our website.
- 8.5 Any failure to meet target deadlines are reported to the Governors Committee meeting and thereafter reported by exception to UK Compliance Committee.

## **9. Other Associated Policies & Procedures**

- Special Educational Needs
- Equality & Diversity
- Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff
- Safeguarding children including child protection
- Health & Safety

## APPENDIX 1

### IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS: A CHECKLIST

This list helps us identify barriers to access that exist in College. This list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of our College.

<b>Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?</b>		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers & teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	X	
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?	X	
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	X	
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	X	
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	X	
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	X	
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort extended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	X	
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	X	
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	X	
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for pupils with disabilities?	X	
Are College visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	X	
Are there high expectations of all pupils?	X	
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	X	
<b>Section 2: Is your College designed to meet the needs of all pupils?</b>		
Questions	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities, classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all pupils?		X(a)
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the College without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		X(a)
Are pathways of travel around the College site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		X(d)
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities, including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		X(c)

Are non-visual guides used to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		X(d)
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	X	
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	X	
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?	X	
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	X	
<b>Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?</b>		
Questions	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of print?		X(e)
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities eg by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	X	
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	X	
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	X	

## Appendix 2: Accessibility audit

Feature	Description	Actions to be taken	Person responsible	Date to complete actions by
Main Hall	Access through internal entrance to ramp and further removable metal ramp down to seating area	Ensure ramp is unimpeded with no obstacles Ensure quick access of the ramp to facilitate wheelchair access through fire exit	Site staff	On-going
Corridor access	All corridors are wide enough for wheelchair access	Ensure corridors are kept free of clutter and do not restrict width	HOD and duty staff	On-going monitoring
Parking bays	Two disabled parking bays for blue badge holders outside Doyle Block	Ensure the two disabled parking bays are relocated during the building phase, if no longer usable.	Site staff	On-going monitoring
Entrances	All entrances are double door width or oversized to facilitate wheelchair access	Ensure doors are not locked and are able to be opened fully to allow access. Reinforce regularly to staff members. Ensure the temporary reception area is accessible during the building phase.	Site staff	Termly
Ramps	Ramps to aide wheelchair accessibility, found in Main Hall	Make sure ramps are clear and in good working order	Site staff	On-going monitoring



Toilets	Disabled toilets located in Doyle Block, Guadeloupe on the first floor and in main building by medical room and in the PE Department	Make sure disabled toilets are only used by necessary parties and that it is clear to students and visitors on how access can be gained.	Site staff, Relevant teaching staff	On-going monitoring
Reception area	Easily accessible with a slope to access and double doors as well as a wide reception area. Part of the reception counter is lower down. Ensure the temporary and new reception are easily accessible.	Make sure there are no obstacles to getting into and through the reception area.  Liaison with contractors of building work	SLT, Receptionist, Site staff	On-going monitoring
Internal signage	Clear and obvious signage at the correct height dotted around the school	Signs should be up to date and in large enough print for all to see	Site staff	On-going monitoring
Emergency escape routes	Escape routes are clearly signposted and explained to all staff and students on arrival	Make sure fire doors are clear and closed or have appropriate automatic closing mechanisms. All staff are to be aware of PEEP's and special arrangements. Appropriate student faces to be shared to staff.	All staff	On-going updates and monitoring
Computer Suits	Majority computer suites located on the upper floors. There is a computer suite on the first floor in Guadalupe, which is fully accessible via the lift.	Ensure timetabling for ICT on an accessible floor for students with mobility problems or provide laptops as necessary	ICT staff, SENCO, Senior Leader in charge of timetabling	Amendments to timetables and rooming's as and when required

Canteen	Multiple points of access, wide corridor but tables in close relation to each other	Arrangements to be made to have cleared area for wheelchair user if necessary at the reception end of the hall where the room is widest and less congested. Extension of dining facility to improve access and usage for those with a disability.	SLT in liaison with contractor, Catering staff and SLT	On-going monitoring
Library	No current school library	Alternative provision made in Trinity with a large selection of books available. Book share scheme available on iPad for downloadable books. Construction of new library recently delayed	Inclusion Lead, Support team and SENCO	Adjustments made as appropriate when a need arises. Completion of new library by 2026
Science and Technology Block	Fully accessible building due to internal lift	Lift regularly maintained as per service guidance	Site Manager	On - Going
History Department	Housed on upper floor	Timetabling of classes to alternate room to provide access where necessary	Assistant Headteacher in charge of timetabling	Adjustments made as appropriate when a need arises

### **Appendix 3:**

#### **Whole School Action Plan**

<b>Objectives</b> (priorities from identifying barriers) Expressed as an outcome for disabled pupils and/or adults in terms of progress and participation	<b>Actions</b>			<b>Evidence</b> What evidence will be collected to measure progress towards objective	<b>Timescale</b> Short term: 1yr Medium term: 2yr Long term: 3yr Give approximate dates
	<b>HOW</b> (How will we get there?)	<b>WHO</b> (Who needs to do what?)	<b>RESOURCES</b> (Who and what do we need to help us?)		
(a)By 2026 we will have a building which allows greater access for students with medical and physical conditions that could potentially impact on their learning.		SLT in liaison with construction team and architects to ensure standards are met	Budget and time allocated to do this, although delayed by SCC for 12-24 months	SLT will have regular meetings with contractors to ensure that deadlines and guidelines are being met	Long term (3 year)
(a) Classrooms to be organised around the students who use them, with layout changes made as most appropriate for those with a disability.	As the timetable is constructed, disabilities are considered with rooming's. Teachers are informed of medical conditions as set up their rooms accordingly	Individual teachers, supported by the site team	Time	Visual evidence around the school	On-going

<p>(b)To ensure the college is better able to meet the needs of all pupils by allowing access to all areas and alternative provision is provided to ensure no student has a barrier to learning due to a disability.</p>	<p>By careful timetabling of classrooms to ensure students with physical disabilities are placed in accessible rooms. Planned construction of new chapel, library and toilets, as well as increased dining capacity.</p>	<p>SLT in liaison with construction team and architects to ensure standards are met</p> <p>SENCO and SLT, including staff member responsible for timetabling</p>	<p>Time as well as support and advice from LA specialist teachers. Time allocated to arrange this</p>	<p>Students are in class with designated group and also accessing facilities, rather than needing to be provided with alternative provision due to accessibility issues</p>	<p>Long term (3 years)</p>
<p>(c)To provide updated training to staff on emergency evacuation procedures in order to support students with SEN and disabilities, as they are diagnosed and join the school roll.</p>	<p>Mandatory training at beginning of academic year and prepare PEEPs for identified students and staff. Liaison with special teacher for VI and HI in regard to devising better solutions to ensure alarms with both visual and auditory components are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Health and Safety officer, SENCO and student to sign PEEP. SENCo/Inclusion Lead.</p>	<p>Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing successful evacuation drills and lockdown procedure drills.</li> <li>• Solutions</li> </ul>	<p>Short term and on-going</p>
<p>(d)To make all necessary adjustments where</p>	<p>Mark all stairs to differentiate edges</p>	<p>Site team in consultation with student</p>	<p>Specialist tape, regular reviews of light efficiency,</p>	<p>Inspection of diversion routes during building work and visual evidence around the school</p>	<p>Long term to cover full building phase (3years)</p>

<p>possible for students with a visual impairment to move around the school, both before and during the construction of the new front of school.</p>	<p>Well-lit rooms and corridors Larger printed maps around the school Update the buddy system to facilitate easy movement and reduce risk whilst moving from class to class. Students with visual impairment and physical disability leave classroom early to avoid high traffic times and have a location to wait on arrival.</p>	<p>and with specialist in physical disability and visual impairment, SENCO/Tutors</p> <p>All teaching staff</p>	<p>appropriate equipment</p>		
<p>(e)To ensure that visual impaired students have full access to differentiated materials as necessary To Ensure the website is fully assessable to perspective parents and students.</p>	<p>Join RNIB book share Join 'Customeyes' enlarged print book service Provide laptops/iPads as necessary Provide electric and standard magnifiers Provide specific equipment, such as rulers and protractors for VI students</p>	<p>Inclusion team in liaison with SENCO, Specialist teacher for Visual Impairment lead and SENCO to ensure adaptations and reasonable adjustments are made,</p>	<p>Budget put aside for VI aides</p> <p>Time and expertise</p>	<p>Monitor progress and effectiveness through half-termly vulnerable pupil meetings and hold reviews with relevant specialists Electronic prospectus and website navigation experience. Parent feedback and questionnaires</p>	<p>Short term and on-going</p>

	<p>Creation of web-based college prospectus and school information, with necessary accessibility tools. Face to face and phone support available as needed to support access to resources and materials</p>	<p>Website lead and developer to maintain accessibility of the website. Relevant college staff support the communication of resources and material as required</p>			
--	---	--	--	--	--