



## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 On 1 October 2012, 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;
  - By excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.3 The protected characteristics are:
- Sex
  - Race
  - Disability
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy or maternity
- 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 a Statement of Special Education Needs/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 Statement/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 viable, 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.

## **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 the following:
- 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, pupils, voluntary sector, symbols, signage, font size, etc);
  - Identify actions;
  - Set goals and targets;
  - Consult on the proposed plan;

- Publicise the plan;
- Implementation; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

6.4 Our Accessibility Plan is outlined on the attached preformat at Appendix 1.

## **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

**This policy and appendix will be reviewed every three years.**

**Date of next review: May 2019**

**The Governing Body agreed this policy on 18 May 2016.**

## 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
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

Are pathways of travel around the College site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		X
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
Are non-visual guides used to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		X
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 printed .....?		X
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	