

# St Joseph's Catholic High School

## Accessibility Plan

*"Living, loving, learning – through Christ"*



Document Control	
Author	Business Manager
Version	1.0
Status	Approval scheduled September 2020
Publication Date	Annually
Approved by	Headteacher
Approval Date	
Distribution	Please note that, if printed, this may not be the most up to date copy and may not contain the latest updates.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities will be under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through a statement of SEN.

As in previous legislation a school must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

Direct discrimination  
Indirect discrimination  
Discrimination arising from a disability  
Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled pupil, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

## 2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Equality Act 2010: a person has a disability if:

they have a physical or mental impairment  
the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

'substantial' means more than minor or trivial

'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)

- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

#### **Progressive conditions considered to be a disability**

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

#### **Conditions that are specifically excluded**

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wide Range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a pupil is disabled but rather it is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

### **3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils:

- When something we do places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to other pupils, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage the pupil faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

There is as yet no clarity on what may be 'reasonable' although the Code of Practice will include factors that should be taken into account. It will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEN route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing special educational needs statement provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a statement details that provision. When a disabled pupil does not have a statement of SEN (or the statement does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

#### 4. AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The planning duties on schools and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

In St Joseph's Catholic High School, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled pupils and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school to enable any disabled person (pupil, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Single Equality Scheme, and the operation of the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the School, which is undertaken regularly by the Local Authority. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

St Joseph's Catholic High School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and

treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

## 5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
  - setting suitable learning challenges;
  - responding to a pupil's diverse learning needs;
  - Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

## 6. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

*St Joseph's Catholic High School is situated near the Town centre of Workington. The school is built on a small compact site and has buildings built in 1921, 1960s and new extensions, including a Sports Hall have been added. The main building consists of a four storey block, two storey block and three single storey areas. There is an All Weather Pitch on the main school site. The grounds are small with a large tarmacked area. There is some grass around the perimeter of the site. A hard landscaped area lies at the front of the building providing seating and area to play on.*

*The school is situated on Harrington Road which is a main road surrounded by residential areas. It is within walking distance of transport i.e. bus services, Library, shops.*

*St Joseph's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic School and falls within Our Lady and St Michaels Parish which comes under the Lancaster Diocese. We have approximately 700 pupils aged between 11 and 16 attending the school.*

*The children come from our main Catholic feeders and from another 8 local schools in Workington. Approximately 37% of our students are Catholic we have few students from ethnic minorities and pupils with SEND. We are a fully inclusive school. However, if students have severe disabilities and are in a wheel chair they are unable to access our facilities beyond the ground floor of the main building. Currently there is a nominated school with a Strategic facility in Workington where all facilities can be accessed and St Benedict's Catholic High School in Whitehaven is the nominated Catholic school in West Cumbria.*

*The school works closely with a wide range of local business, local organisations and agencies in the area as well as having close links with our feeder schools, Secondary schools, Colleges and Universities.*

## 7. DEVELOPMENT

### 7.1 The Purpose and Direction of the School's Plan: Vision and Values

*St Joseph's Catholic High School:*

- has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;
- is committed to identifying and then removing barriers to disabled students in all aspects of school life;
- values the individual and the contribution they make to all aspects of school life;
- will strive to ensure that its disabled pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources so as to develop fully in their education;
- acknowledges a commitment to embrace the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement;
- will continue to focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;
- Is committed to embracing equal opportunities for all members of the school community.

## 7.2 Information from Pupil Data and School Audit

When planning any building development the Governors ensure that the Consultant working on the project is aware that the buildings /areas should be accessible by all students including Wheel Chair users. The current accessibility plan is the starting point. This plan is reviewed on an annual basis. The school population are currently able to access all areas although we have two students who need additional time to move between lessons.

The future intake from our feeder primary schools indicate that there may be one students with disability issues who may want to come to St Joseph's.

Audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses working with disabled pupils:

- The staff are aware of equalities legislation through staff CPD.
- The disabled students do participate in the full life of the school which includes accessing the curriculum, school visits, after school clubs etc. We make adjustment where we can but there are significant building issues that prevent full access.
- The physical environment of the school is on-going and we make improvements whenever possible taking in to account the needs of its disabled students.
- We adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs for example in Physical Education, Science, Life skills.
- We have information on our school system for staff to access on health plans, medical needs, and any other information on a student.
- The outcomes of disabled students are monitored, reviewed and acted upon in the same way as any other students in school. We have a system of data trawls throughout the year which is the same process for all students.

*Key starting points for the school's plan:*

- Our annual development plan takes into account the needs of our diverse student population as well as the needs of its wider community.

In order to ensure that our data is up to date and accurate we will:

- liaise with the Local Authority so as to identify and therefore plan a response to students with a disability well before they arrive;
- improve the information dissemination from our Learning Support Facility;
- implement a system that allows parents to inform us if they themselves have a disability;
- identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of disabled students;
- use all available data to inform the planning of individual student learning patterns;
- Use information supplied via previous LA Asset management/Accessibility Audits to assist us to develop an action plan to reduce obstacles for the school community.



## 6.1 Views of those Consulted during the development of the Plan

St Joseph's Catholic High School will:

- ensure the development of the plan involves coordination with the Local Authority in line with the LA Accessibility Strategy and ensure that St Joseph's Catholic High School provides the best choices for students wanting to enrol here;
- Consult the full governing body/SEN governor/, pupil support, health and safety committee.
- Consult staff including specifically SENCO, heads of year/department, pupil support, and behaviour and safety committee.
- set up a structure to allow the views of students, both able and disabled to be taken into account;
- survey parents/carers to ascertain their views on our provision for disabled students and any developments they feel would be of use to the students and also offer parents alternative ways of answering the survey;
- involve outside agencies who already exist to assist disabled students in their education and future careers;
- ensure the views of ALL those consulted are taken into consideration and the plan modified where reasonable to meet the needs of stakeholders.

## 7. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

### 7.1 Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

- to investigate how the access to those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for disabled students to access can be improved;
- to further investigate what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of disabled students;
- To investigate alternative provision/routes and collaboration that will assist disabled students to learn including liaison with the LA Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Statementing and Provision Team.

The school plans to increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. 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 the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts.

Appropriate training and development is given to staff who specific issues encountered by students to help the student access the curriculum. Equipment is purchased depending upon the specific needs of a student. This work is undertaken by the staff responsible for Pupil Support.

*The school plans and prepares to meet the needs of individual students through:*

- Ensuring that out of school activities are appropriate for all students including those with physical and behavioural challenges. This will be done by using appropriate staff to accompany the students and through risk assessments
- The support given to students through Teaching Assistants/Senior Teaching Assistants either in the classroom or working with students in a small group/one to one.
- Ensure the class sets are organised in such a way to ensure that all pupils achieve an increased levels of school success.
- Identifying a class that requires additional in line with the 4 broad areas of need in the SEN code of practice in all years. Additional support is placed in these classes.
- Working in partnership with the student's families/ Carers so that they actively support the children's education.

- Having a Pupil Support team of staff who support students or know where to refer students to outside agencies
- To continue to develop our work with external agencies where appropriate to support and enhance pupils' access to the curriculum
- To ensure that we identify staff training needs in order to effectively meet the diverse abilities and disabilities of all pupils.
- Pupil voice is heard through form representatives who are elected through their forms. All pupils are eligible to stand. Pupils can ask their representatives to bring up issues at meetings.
- The whole school community fully support disabled members and provide positive role models to encourage success and achievement at all times.

## 7.2 Which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

- in consultation with the LA (where necessary and appropriate) investigate various improvements to the site;
- improve accessibility points to different curriculum areas;
- Investigate ways of making the site more accessible to both disabled parents and adult users.

The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. This is required regardless of whether the school has pupils or visitors with disabilities and is preparation for a situation when they do.

St Joseph's was not designated as a Strategic school and therefore was not eligible for grants in the past like other schools in this area. However the Governors have insured that in any remodelling, refurbishment or new build that we have a building/ area that is accessible by all. The building plan is prioritised to meet the needs of the students and the curriculum. The Business Manager reports to the Finance and Buildings Committee on an annual basis and the building development plan is updated and costed accordingly.

Physical aids to access education are purchased as they are required by a student. The SENCO will work with the Business Manager, Parents, student and the subject teacher involved to identify the correct aid. This may be undertaken through the framework although more often funded through the school budget. As a general measure we would put up appropriate blinds, have handrails etc in school. The Governors will undertake to access any funding available for improving the access and movement within their buildings.

## 7.3 Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are disabled

**St Joseph's School will strive to:**

- produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- Investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

The school plans to improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested. The staff from the Pupil Support Department will provide information in an appropriate format for pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. This will be done based on need.

- Pupils will difficulty accessing language - Meetings are held with pupils and their parents where any issues around accessibility will be highlighted. Where there is a language difficulty the school will try and bring in a translator for the meeting.

#### **7.4 Financial Planning and Control**

The Head teacher with Senior Management Team, together with the Finance Committee will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time School Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Development Plan.

St Joseph's Catholic High School will finance the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.

### **8. IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **8.1 Management, Coordination and Implementation**

**St Joseph's School** Leadership Team will undertake a disability audit using a cross section of staff; pupils and parents (refer to Section 7.3).

As a result of the audit, we shall:

- produce action plans, with definite time scales for the implementation of the actions implicit in the plan;
- plans to provides workshops so staff can understand and buy into the Accessibility Plan and not see it as a bolt on;
- present the plan to the governing body for their approval;
- modify the plan based on the views of stakeholders;
- Review the plan and the associated action plans to see if milestones are being met. This plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary on an annual basis. A new Accessibility Plan will be drawn up every three years.

#### **8.2 Monitoring**

St Joseph's Catholic High School recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

Governors will review the access plan on an annual basis and will record their comments on the website including any success in meeting identified targets, improvements to the physical access to the building during the year. It will also include findings from questionnaires that have been completed by parents/pupils relating to access. The Governors will also report on increased levels of achievements.

#### **8.3 The role of the LA in increasing accessibility**

The Governors will also report on the website any training that staff have attended run by the County Council. Any Specialist help provided by outside agencies, which increase the inclusion of all pupils. Any sharing of expertise between Special schools and mainstream schools.

## 8.4 Accessing the School's Plan

*This will be done through:*

- *presentation in a section on the school website open to all visitors to the site;*

*We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested.*

*The school will achieve successful implementation of the accessibility plan with continued support in the areas of:*

- *providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, Governors and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;*
- *providing targeted training for particular groups of pupils/staff;*
- *promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;*
- *encouraging liaison between other local schools including special schools;*
- *seeking support/advice from outside the school, from services, other agencies and organisations;*
- *ensuring that St Joseph's Catholic High School is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools and staff.*

## 9. RELATED POLICIES

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policies
- Single Equality Scheme, Policy/Objectives
- Staff Training and Development Plan
- Governor Training Plan
- Health & Safety
- Inclusion
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- Whole School Behaviour
- School Development Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Complaints Policy

Awaiting Approval

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2018 - 2019**

**IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM ACCESS AT ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Audit of all staff in connection with training needs for working with students with a disability	Audit to be carried out by SENCO	Training needs identified	Spring 2020	Training is undertaken and students are included in all aspects of life in school
Plan and calendar CPD as a result of audit and invite the appropriate staff. Identify specialist person to deliver training	SENCO to liaise with Assistant Head with responsibility for CPD	Training delivered	On going	Training is undertaken and students are included in all aspects of life in school
All out of school extracurricular activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of students.	Review current provision to ensure compliance with legislation	All activities are inclusive and comply with current and future legislative requirements	On going	Increase in access to all school, activities for disabled students
Classrooms are organised to promote the participation and independence of all students	All teachers to review and implement the layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process for all students	Lessons start on time without having to reorganise classrooms for individuals	On going	Increase in access to the National Curriculum and use of all lesson times so more productive.
Whole school training to raise awareness of disability issues	Provide training for staff, Governors and students to raise awareness. Information on the website for parents.	Whole school community are aware of issues relating to Access	Spring 2020	More inclusive school community who are more aware on inclusivity outside of the school environment.
Review Pupil support staff deployment	In review meetings with Pupil Support staff establishes when they are available to support children. Adapt their hours accordingly	All students are supported when necessary	Reviewed termly	Students who require support receive it.

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2020 - 2021**

**IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ACCESS AT ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>AMP Report Ref. (if relevant)</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost £</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
	4 storey block not accessible to Wheel chair users or people with mobility issues	Install lift	When block is redeveloped / grants available	Upwards of £100,000	Business Manager
	2 storey block not accessible to Wheel chair users or people with mobility issues	Install lift	When block is redeveloped / grants available	?	Business Manager
	Music department not accessible to Wheel chair users or people with mobility issues	Install access paths all around school to avoid steps. Install ramp	Under review with consultant		Business Manager
	Art Block not accessible to Wheel chair users or people with mobility issues.	Install ramp	Under review with consultant		Business Manger
	Access from Main school to Banklands (English Block)	Students would have to access from Road. Look individual students requirements at transporting students from and to Banklands	Under review with consultant		Business Manager
	Toilets for Boys and Girls. Lockers	Students can access disabled toilets and Lockers must be placed in accessible places for students			Business Manager
	Steps leading to Founders Way and up to Locker room, not accessible to Wheel chair users or people with mobility issues.	Students have to use disabled toilets and other locker areas	Whenever the block is redeveloped	Part of larger project	Business Manager
	Parking for disabled during the school day	Parking is available outside the school day.	In place		Business Manager
	Reduction of noise on corridors and stairs	Ensure that all floor coverings used absorb the noise	To be done whenever new floor coverings are purchased		Business Manager
	Redecoration of buildings	Consult with SENCO and pupils re colour schemes for different areas.	On going		Business Manager

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2018 - 2019****IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF WRITTEN INFORMATION AT ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats	Review all current publications and promote the availability in different formats.	All school information available for all	On request	Delivery of school information improved.
Review documentation with a view of ensuring accessibility for pupils with visual impairment	Get advice from Hearing and visually impaired service alternative formats and use of IT software to produce customised materials.	All school information available for all	September 2020	Information for students and parents improved.
Survey parents/ carers as to the quality of communication to seek their opinions as to how to improve.	Send out survey to parents regarding quality of communication	For school to more aware.	On going	Parental views taken and acted upon.
Raise awareness of staff in at and for the school on the importance of good communication systems	Arrange training courses	Awareness of target group raised	on-going	
The school moves to communication via email and electronic reporting and Classcharts	Information gathered and methods are explored	Communication improved	Now in place	Improved communication



Awaiting Approval