

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Voluntary Academy



Disability and Discrimination Policy

'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'

John 10:10

The Ethos of St Peter and St Paul

"Our school is a community where Jesus Christ is our role model and his message the guiding principle behind all we do.

Every member of our community is responsible for creating an environment that is caring, fair and respectful of each individual.

We develop our potential, celebrate our talents and go forward together in faith."

Christ is the foundation of everything we do and the Gospels provide us with our influence and inspiration. We are therefore committed to promoting:

The uniqueness of the individual

We believe that every person is a unique individual, created in God's image and loved by Him. We are therefore committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.

The search for excellence

We are called to seek perfection in all aspects of our lives. We celebrate the enrichment of the total community, which flows from diversity of age, gender, racial and social origins, abilities, culture and religion. We are therefore committed to ensure that all are to be given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

The education of the whole person

We offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values and working in harmony. Through this and a variety of educational experiences and interactions we aim to prepare young people for a life working with others in communities which maybe diverse socially, culturally and religiously. We recognise that it is also important to help pupils to understand their own ethnic identity and cultural heritage as well as helping them to understand that of others irrespective of whether the school serves or is located in an ethnically diverse community.

The education of all

We have the duty of care for all to ensure that we provide for those who are socially, academically, physically, emotionally or financially disadvantaged.

Moral principles

Our belief in the Gospel message commits us to be in the forefront of the movement for social and racial justice and harmony. We believe this is fundamental to the common good. We aim to prepare our young people to serve as witnesses to these moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

Consequently, we still strive to ensure that:

Any person recruited to the service of the school, whether as a member of staff or as a volunteer, is made fully aware of our aims and objectives and required to support them;

Children who are admitted to the school and their families are fully aware of our aims and objectives and undertake to support them;

All of our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under constant review in order to see that no individual is subject in any way to unlawful discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, and to ensure that all are enabled to reach their full potential.

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Introduction

Our academy's commitment is to value the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

It's against the law for a school or other education provider to treat disabled students unfavourably. This includes:

- ⊘ direct discrimination, for example refusing admission to a student because of disability
- ⊘ indirect discrimination, for example only providing application forms in one format that may not be accessible
- ⊘ discrimination arising from a disability, for example a disabled pupil is prevented from going outside at break time because it takes too long to get there
- ⊘ harassment, for example a teacher shouts at a disabled student for not paying attention when the student's disability stops them from easily concentrating
- ⊘ victimisation, for example suspending a disabled student because they've complained about harassment

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities and to improve access in all areas of life. Since 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and Local Education Authorities to discriminate against pupils with disabilities in admissions and exclusions, in education, and in associated services.

From 1st October 2004 it is unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by preventing them from having access to premises. Along with all other public buildings, our academy is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable access.

Our Accessibility Plan details the changes required to our buildings and to other aspects of our academy, so that we fulfil our legal requirements, and remove barriers to inclusion for all pupils and staff with disabilities.

What is disability?

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 describes a disabled person as someone who has:

"a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers pregnancy, maternity and breastfeeding and certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives; autistic people are likely to fit this description. You do not have to have a diagnosis to be considered a disabled person.

Some disabled pupils may also have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Additional Special Needs (ASN), and similarly a child may have SEN or ASN, but not be disabled according to the Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023. The disability discrimination duties are not intended to replace those which provide extra help in school. They should work alongside each other to ensure support is provided for pupils when necessary.

Aims

Our academy aims to be an inclusive academy. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all our children, and this of course includes pupils with disabilities.

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides.

We will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than others because of the nature of his or her disability.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage.

We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before he or she joins the academy.

Reasonable adjustments

Schools and Academies have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled peers.

This applies to:

- provisions, criteria and practices eg school policies
- auxiliary aids and services eg supportive equipment or a member of staff.

Examples of reasonable adjustments might include:

- Use a 'fiddle' toy or computer software to improve learning. Wear a slightly different piece of uniform to accommodate sensory sensitivities
- slightly different start and finish times to lessons so that pupils can avoid busy and crowded corridors
- have support or make alternative arrangements for assemblies, school events and sports days
- have a 'quiet' area to go to if required
- Consider alternative school trips to those previously arranged and provide additional assistance to enable the disabled pupil to attend. Allow the pupil to attend for just part of the trip.

There may be many other adjustments that need to be made for a pupil and these will be agreed on an individual basis based on need.

When considering reasonable adjustments it is important to consider:

- Is the pupil at a substantial disadvantage without it? eg falling behind with schoolwork.
- Could this be avoided? eg with one-to-one support or specialist teaching.
- Is it reasonable for the school to take these steps?
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The term 'reasonable' is not defined in the Act, but things that are likely to be taken into account are the:

- extent to which the disadvantage would be overcome
- extent the pupil is supported through SEN or ASN legislation
- resources the school has, and the costs and practicality of making the adjustment
- extent to which the disabled pupil will suffer if the reasonable adjustment is not made
- health and safety requirements
- need to maintain academic and other standards
- interests of other pupils and prospective pupils.

When making reasonable adjustments, responsible bodies do not have to alter or remove physical features of the school, but they have a general duty to plan for better access for disabled pupils.

The academy will liaise with specialists to support individual pupils in making reasonable adjustments. This includes physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, the school nurse team, outreach workers, and staff of voluntary and statutory agencies across health and social care.

The curriculum

We use teaching strategies to enhance learning and participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We find ways in which all pupils can take part in sport, music and drama. We plan our out-of-school activities, Aspire Day activities and academy trips in such a way that pupils with disabilities can participate.

We use language that does not offend, and we make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language.

Our library, reading books and other resources contain positive images of people with disabilities.

The academy regularly reviews the way resources are matched to the needs of all the children. If necessary, to improve our provision, adjustments will be made to classroom organisation, the deployment of support staff, timetabling and staff training.

Many of the adjustments we make are dependent upon individual needs, and we are focused on ensuring all adjustments are person centred.

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We seek and respond to guidance from the parents, other professionals and the pupils themselves.

Information

Information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) will be made available in alternative formats that are clear and user-friendly, such as large print, or it may be transmitted orally, or through lip-speaking or sign language, or through a recognised symbol system, or through ICT. The use of Ipads allows for alternative formats to be accessed quickly and easily.

We always take account of disabilities, be they the pupils' or their parents'. For example, communication with a parent who is visually impaired may need to be by telephone rather than by letter.

Staffing

When advertising posts, interviewing applicants, or deciding on appointments, the governors and staff will follow the necessary procedures and will not discriminate against people with disabilities.

Should a member of staff become disabled, the Academy will make reasonable adjustments to that person's employment arrangements, or to the premises, in order to enable them to continue in post.

Health and safety

Members of staff follow the academy procedures both for the storage and for the administration of medicines to pupils.

The academy has members of staff qualified in giving first-aid treatment. Emergency services will be called should they be required.

Policy into practice

The Headteacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities to all pupils without exception.

All members of staff are fully committed to the policy of not discriminating against pupils, parents or staff with disabilities.

Parents and carers are asked to keep us informed about any relevant issues, so that we can work towards resolving them.

Monitoring

We have high expectations of all our pupils. We monitor a range of data to make sure that all pupils are making the best progress possible, and that no groups of pupils are underachieving.

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We monitor:

- admissions;
- progress and attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parental and pupil questionnaires.

Evaluations based on this data are then reported to the Head teacher, and an action plan will be drawn up if necessary.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher implements the academy's disability non-discrimination policy on a day-to-day basis, and ensures that all staff are aware of the details of the policy as it applies to them.

The Headteacher reports to governors on matters regarding disability discrimination.

This policy will be reviewed at any time on a request from the governors, or at least once every two years.