

# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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## **'Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God...'** *Matthew 6.33*

*At St Patrick's Catholic College our aim is to provide a high quality education based upon the teachings of Christ; where all pupils are valued members of our community and able to develop their talents to the full.*

*True Catholic education is concerned with academic success and is also about helping young people to grow and appreciate their worth and value. It is our responsibility to help pupils realise their dignity and discover their purpose.*

*We acknowledge that each person is a unique individual and strive to respect each individual irrespective of circumstance, gender, race or creed. We will encourage everyone to develop their unique personality and educate the whole person within a loving and caring Christian environment. To this end we will promote a happy and caring environment within which each individual can develop their potential to the full.*

*We will develop a culture of high expectation and high achievement; working to achieve this through a varied and stimulating learning environment rich in opportunity. This is delivered through a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of our pupils and also considers local and national agendas, thus preparing them for life beyond St Patrick's.*

*We also work to establish and maintain close links with the home and the parish; as well as working in partnership with and offering support to organisations and groups in the wider community.*

*We are a welcoming academy, with honest and open communication, that works in co-operation with our parents and carers in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship.*

Our Mission Statement commits us to the education of the whole child (spiritual, physical, intellectual, moral, social, cultural, emotional). Furthermore it states that we will endeavour to raise pupils' self-esteem, help them to grow in knowledge and understanding, recognise the value of all persons and develop caring and sensitive attitudes.

## **Background**

In this policy the Governors and teachers, in partnership with pupils and their parents, set out their intentions showing that they are committed to working together to ensure that the school community remains true to the equal value principle underpinning its policies. Through a series of inter-related policies and procedural guidelines the college supports disability equality in all aspects of school life for students, staff and visitors. All new policies and protocols are carefully examined to ensure access and equality in diversity. As a Catholic Academy, our ethos is characterised by our Christian vision of education.

## **Inclusivity**

The academy is inclusive of all pupils with physical or sensory impairments, communication, learning, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. It addresses each person's unique, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, cultural or social needs. All members of the school community work together to create an atmosphere in which each member can grow and flourish regardless gender, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, socioeconomic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other relevant distinction.

Positive interpersonal relationships are fostered in a climate of high expectations and respect for individual achievement. Every area of college life reflects this attention to individual needs and rights, as all policies are founded on these basic principles of equality, which are embodied in our Mission Statement. Pupils have full and open access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to a range of extracurricular experiences. Detailed attention is given to resourcing and the development of an appropriate environment to meet the needs of individual students and groups within the school community.

The Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires schools to be proactive in promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination, having regard to Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This has now been superseded by The Equality Act of 2010.

## **Statement of Intent**

St. Patrick's Catholic College continues to develop its ability to provide an inclusive, accessible environment for students, staff, parents and members of the local community. It aims to meet the five outcomes of the Children Act (2004) and has regard to the general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate unlawful discrimination

- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes to people with disabilities
- encourage the participation of people with disabilities

### **Role of Key Personnel**

**Governors:** The Local Management Board monitor and review the SEND policy and the Accessibility Plan on a regular basis, which must be at least annually. They ensure the college's inclusion of pupils with disabilities meets all aspects of the law.

**The School Leadership Team:** The Headteacher and other members of the School Leadership Team ensure that all policies, practices, protocols and provision have regard to the Disability Equality Duty and the Equality Act of 2010, which extends protection from discrimination to people with what are termed, 'protected characteristics' in almost every area of life. The Headteacher and SENCO are responsible for ensuring the implementation of all policies and the full development of a strong ethos of inclusion, within all aspects of the life of the school.

**All Staff:** It is the duty of all staff and everyone working in the school to implement the policies and continue to develop inclusive practices.

### **Complaints**

Parents and staff have access to the Trust's Complaints Procedures. Pupils may go through their tutors, Head of Year or through other students, such as the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

### **The Accessibility Plan**

This plan addresses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and refers to individuals who are disabled (both current and prospective) in a wide sense, including those with special educational needs, and with temporary or permanent physical disability. It also deals with access issues for disabled staff and visitors.

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

*"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities."*

The SEN and Disability Act (SENDA 2001) extended the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Local Management Board has three key duties towards disabled pupils under Part 4 of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils, where such improvement to access has been identified.

Should an increase in access be identified, then the college will produce an Action Plan that identifies the action it intends to take over a three year period to increase access for those with a disability in three key areas. This will be published and evaluated annually. The three areas are:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

**In addition, the Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires all schools to:**

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA.
- Eliminate harassment of those with a disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled individuals.
- Take steps to take account of disabilities even if this involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

**This duty requires schools to:**

- Involve those with a disability in producing a Disability Action Plan (DAP).
- Publish the Action Plan
- Demonstrate they have taken action identified to achieve outcomes.
- Report on progress, review and revise the DAP annually

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEND and Disability Act 2011 (SENDA). It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to school for disabled

pupils”, issued by DfES in July 2002. At all times the School will also be equally aware of the needs of disabled staff, parents and visitors.

### **Principles**

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school’s aims, equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school’s SEND policy.

### **Key Objectives**

The key objectives of this Accessibility Plan are to reduce and eliminate the barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils and prospective pupils with a disability. It is to provide a caring and friendly environment where all pupils flourish; to provide resources that meets the needs of individual pupils and supports them towards developing their independence and to promote an understanding of disabilities throughout the school and an awareness of the needs of pupils with a disability.

### **Admissions**

St. Patrick’s Catholic College is an inclusive and caring school. Students with an EHCP can apply for a place at the college via the Stockton LA SEN team. Any request is then passed to the school to consider and advise whether we can meet the pupil’s specific needs. We encourage any parent/carer applying in this way to provide as much current and detailed information to the school/with their application. This will allow the school to fairly assess its ability to meet their individual needs. The college has a well-established process of transition for student from primary schools into secondary as part of the wider transition process.

### **Temporary and Permanent Needs of Pupils**

Existing and emerging health needs of existing pupils are closely monitored and arrangements for individualised support are developed in consultation with their parents and medical or other appropriate professionals. Short term mobility needs are considered and guidance and help given as appropriate. Where it is appropriate, a college Individual Care Plan will be drawn up to support a pupil’s needs for particular periods of time.

### **Staff Recruitment and the Needs of Existing Staff**

Staff recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. This is in line with the college’s Equal Opportunities Policy which specifically states that the Governors are equal opportunities employers and are committed to ensuring that, within the framework of the law, the college is free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of gender (incl. gender reassignment), colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, marital status, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other relevant distinction.

The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have, or have had, a temporary or permanent disability will be reviewed regularly to ensure that whatever reasonable adjustments are possible are made to allow them to enter into, or remain in, school employment. Where new health needs are identified for existing staff, the appropriate staff are informed and every effort is made to support the staff member and promote their safety and well-being. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff can participate fully. Short term mobility needs are considered and, where necessary or appropriate, help and guidance will be given.

### **Education**

The college provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum; differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles in the National curriculum framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Staff work hard to meet the needs of all pupils with regards to accessing the curriculum and are supported by the Senior Leadership Team all aspects of school life. All Subject Leaders review their curriculum regularly to ensure that it is accessible to all pupils.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually at the start of the Autumn term by the School Improvement Committee, on behalf of the full Local Management Board.

Reviewed & amended: **August 2016**

To be 'Approved by Governors': **September 2016**

Review Date: **August 2017 (or sooner if necessary)**