

**ST. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL**  
(Senior and Prep and Early Years Foundation Stage)

**DISABILITY POLICY**

**Mission Statement**

We are a Catholic School where every student, regardless of her individual faith:

- is valued
- is a member of a thriving, happy community
- is helped to achieve her personal best
- is given a wide range of opportunities to develop her talents
- is prepared for the challenges of adult life
- is helped to understand and fulfil her responsibilities to self, family and society

The School has a legal duty to be non-discriminatory towards disabled students and to provide equal access and opportunity to the curriculum. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 has strengthened the DDA 1995 and the SEN and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 by broadening the definition of a disabled child or adult and placing on schools a more proactive duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled children and adults. The duties falling on the School apply to disabled pupils, disabled staff, governors and disabled people who use services provided by the School. Responsibility for DDA lies with the Board of Governors, which is devolved to the Headmistress.

**DEFINITION OF DISABILITY**

The disability discrimination duties are owed to all pupils who are defined by the DDA as being disabled and under the planning duties the School has a general duty to improve the accessibility of school for disabled pupils. The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. In the DDA 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months. The definition is broad and could include "disabled people" with a wide range of impairments, including mental health conditions learning disabilities, dyslexia, diabetes, cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, hearing or sight impairments, mobility difficulties or epilepsy.

The DDA 1995, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) places a legal requirement on all schools to:

- eliminate discrimination;
- eliminate harassment and bullying related to a disability;
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people
- draw up plans to show how, over time, they will increase access to education for disabled pupils (Accessibility Plan)
- comply with the Disability Equality Duty
- prepare, publish, implement and report on a Disability Equality Scheme

**OUR AIM IS TO:**

- Support the ethos of the school as a Catholic community which respects the rights of disabled students, to have equal access to the curriculum, extra-curricular and other services.
- Equally value and encourage all children.
- Foster positive attitude towards disability within our community.
- Notwithstanding the above, and the School's desire to enrich the lives of all our students by pursuing an inclusive policy towards all students which reflects the diversity of the outside world and our Christian values,

the School places equal importance on ensuring that no student's education and progress is impaired by the behaviour of another student.

### **ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR AIMS**

To achieve our aims, the School has produced this Disability Policy. A Committee (the Disability Action Group) has been established with a brief to:-

- i. Monitor the School's Disability Policy
- ii. Develop a formal Disability Equality Scheme, within which being an Accessibility Plan and monitor at regular intervals
- iii. Review the School's Disability Policy, Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan at least every three years.
- iv. Make recommendations as to the contents of report required annually on the implementation and effect of the Disability Equality Scheme and the Accessibility Plan (to be summarised in the School Development/Action Plan, the School website, and/or Prospectus
- v. Make recommendations with a view to improving the accessibility of its education to students or prospective students with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments, within the parameters of budgetary constraints.

### **ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL**

- Depends upon prospective student meeting the School's entry criteria to maintain and, if possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its students, in keeping with the School's mission statement.
- The School must feel reasonably sure that throughout the student's time at St Catherine it will be able to educate and develop the prospective student to the best of her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the student's peers.
- The School policy is to apply these criteria to all students and potential students, regardless of any disability of which it is made aware by parents. The School has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled student or potential student at a substantial disadvantage compared with other students who are not disadvantaged because of disability.
- St Catherine's School requires parents to inform the School in respect of the disability of a prospective student in the relevant section of the application form for the School.
- In assessing any student or prospective student the School may take such advice and require such assessments e.g.: Ed. Psych. report, and recommendations as it regards as appropriate.
- With prior notification of disability, supported by the recommendation of an Ed.Psych. report, the School will normally allow up to 25% extra time or up to 10% of the candidate's actual marks in the entrance exam for prospective students with a disability, or more if it is agreed between parents and the Headmistress.

### **PHYSICAL ACCESS**

- Under the legislation we are not required to remove or alter physical features but to make "reasonable adjustments" to the premises and/or curriculum.
- Parents should be aware that the School site covers a wide area with some old buildings of more than one storey, some of which do not have lifts (the Science Block, the Prep Block, the Bursary). Like many secondary schools, the School 'policy' of subject areas with designated classrooms, requires students to move around the site, necessitating the use of steps or stairs in buildings to access classrooms. The School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that pupils with disabilities have access to all curriculum areas.
- The Accessibility Plan, to meet the legal planning duties, will seek to further improve physical access within the constraints of local planning permission.

### **EDUCATION**

- Staff will continue to be made aware of students with Disability or Special Learning Needs (by SEN Support, or Pastoral teams).
- Staff will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum (Learning Support Coordinator → HODs for inclusion within Department Handbooks, by discussion at department meetings).

- Staff will need to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns of all the students according to their abilities and needs (HODs → Schemes of Work for department and by lesson observation and Equal Opportunities Policy).
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations, should not prejudice the progress of other students, nor their Health and Safety (e.g.: labs, workshops, sports equipment).
- Staff will continue to support disabled children through their IEPs as drawn up by Learning Support, when appropriate.
- The School, as an independent school, is not required under legislation to provide auxiliary support such as a classroom assistant, or auxiliary aids e.g.: laptops or hearing loops. The plan will be agreed for each student in consultation with parents, the student and an appropriate specialist.

### **SPORTING & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- The School aims to provide equal access to all School activities for disabled students by making reasonable adjustments to the premises and/or activities.
- Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for disabled students engaged in school trips or visits.

### **WELFARE AWARENESS**

- Staff and students are to be made aware of disability and understand its effects and accept and support disabled students as part of School life (e.g.: PSHE, Assembly).
- Appropriate Staff INSET will be provided on a regular basis to enhance understanding of disability, the need for making reasonable adjustments in compliance with our legal duties and to improve our educational provision.
- The School's Equal Opportunities Policy, Bullying Policy, Code of Conduct, student and staff handbooks, will be updated to reflect inclusiveness and the difficulties faced by disabled students, thereby improve understanding and integration.
- The School will agree with parents appropriate regular means of communication with regard to the student's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.
- *Up-to-date information on pupils will be maintained through the Pupil Information Form which is updated annually.*
- *Up-to-date information for staff will be maintained through the Health and Safety Information Form which is updated annually.*

### **DISABILITY POLICY: "REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS"**

#### **Central Issues (for all Subjects):**

- To ensure equal access to education as per those without disability.

#### **To Achieve this:**

- "Reasonable Adjustments" to be employed by teachers in and out of classroom to prevent substantial disadvantage to the disabled student.

NB: We are not legally obliged to provide auxiliary aids (laptop, hearing loop) nor particular services (designated classroom assistant) as an independent school.

**So what are the "reasonable adjustments" which can be made within the classroom to accommodate those students with disability without prejudice to other students' education and progress?** (e.g. by covering the syllabus more slowly at the pace manageable by the disabled student, this may be detrimental to other students' educational progress). These will be different in each case and an IEP will be agreed between parents, the student and the School.

#### **MINOR BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS (all students)**

- Listen to students – give them time to explain their misbehaviour

- Handle misbehaviour quickly and calmly to minimise disruption. Do not over react
- Move round the classroom, constantly scanning the class for misbehaviour
- Avoid confrontation. Change the subject, defuse the situation, use humour and negotiate
- Display classroom rules. Phrase the rules positively, refer to them regularly and be consistent
- Condemn and criticise the misbehaviour and not the child
- Catch the student being good. Emphasise the positive
- Reprimand the student privately. Do not humiliate her publicly
- Reward good behaviour instantly with praise and encouragement.
- Gain student attention by stopping talking mid-sentence. Say something unexpected; say the student's name, make a joke or say 'Look at me'; 'Listen to me', or 'Excuse me'
- Use non-verbal cues: raising eyebrows, frowning, being silent, making direct eye contact, moving near the student, moving the student to the front of the class
- Give the student a classroom responsibility
- Ensure that lessons are well structured. Give clear and concise instructions and explanations

### **ADHD (ADD)**

- Give the student stimulating curriculum materials to sustain interest.
- Accept use of laptop, word-processor in lesson and/or for homework
- Test via multiple-choice, ask for the student's ideas and input
- Allow less homework to be done by that student, signed by parent. Ensure homework is recorded correctly
- Worksheets. Useful for structure to break up tasks into smaller bits
- Use visual and diagrammatic approach to learning, mind-mapping
- Set short structured and active tasks over shorter period of time
- Allow extra time to complete work and allow breaks between sections of work
- Seat next to 'study buddy' as good role model, at front of class and away from distractions of doors and windows
- Use student's name as a key or cue for response
- Only call upon when hand is up as needed, then praise for not calling out
- Arrange a common cue system for student to stay on task (it is important that other students are unaware of the system (e.g. place a hand on the desk whilst walking past)
- Praise to raise feel-good factor and thus focus on lesson
- Allow doodling (pad) and fidgeting, humming, whistling if not distracting others
- In labs/sport (where safety is paramount): give warning by cue and name, explain 1:1 immediately that next time the student is out of the activity for 5 minutes
- Care with group work and unstructured and/or long tasks
- Keep instructions short and clear, preferably written, and positive
- Set lesson goals and week goals, e.g. report card or in homework diary
- Use of colour coding for organisational tasks, e.g. timetable, homework
- Keep to IEP as focus for teaching, learning and progress. Set achievable tasks and give regular feedback about progress.
- Working with home is very important

### **IMPULSIVE**

- Ignore minor inappropriate behaviour
- Only call upon when hand is up or conforms to required behaviour
- Keep instructions short
- Increased speed of reward and consequence

### **HEARING IMPAIRED**

- Seated at front of the class where student can see the teacher clearly
- Back to the window to avoid silhouette effect

- Adequate lighting to facilitate lip-reading
- Background noise in classroom reduced, e.g. windows closed
- A variety of teaching styles, e.g. paired discussion, worksheets
- Reduction in the amount of verbal information and planning so that no need to listen for an extended period which is very tiring, and lessons more accessible
- New vocabulary to be given or displayed in written form prior to lesson
- Copies of OHP to be provided and core lesson notes to help revision
- Salient discussion points on board or repeated to whole class
- Attention to be drawn to the speaker for student to focus on
- Agreed non-verbal signal to indicate student has not understood comment or concept in a lesson
- Bright lights can be a distraction
- TV video should have sub-titles
- Arrange for note-taker to have copies of notes if needed
- Check homework is understood
- Warn the pupil about a loud noise e.g. fire bell

### **ASPERGER'S SYNDROME**

- Sequence activities
- Identify the main idea in new information
- Use prompts to enable the student to commence tasks
- Check that the student understands what she has to do
- Give one instruction at a time
- Introduce choice in tasks gradually to develop decision-making skills
- Show the student what is expected by demonstration
- Use visual or pictorial cues to make a task clear and aid understanding
- Be calm, positive and consistent with the student
- Identify the student's interests and likes and incorporate these into curriculum activities
- Introduce any change gradually to the student
- Need to differentiate pace, content, methodology in classroom
- Take account of social communication difficulties with other students
- Extended writing tasks to be broken up into smaller sections
- Ability levels can be very high and need challenging and stimulating materials
- Concentration span can be short however
- Need to understand someone else's view and respond appropriately
- Helpful to have daily contact with significant adult
- Must have structure and routine to reduce anxiety about change
- Strategies to organise work, timetable, homework, books, times
- Clear lines of behaviour expected and maintained
- Short and long term targets for IEP to be the focus for progress

### **DYSLEXIA**

- Break down tasks, information or instructions into smaller parts
- Ensure that differentiated work matches reading level and is age appropriate
- Display key words / subject vocabulary on classroom walls and provide word banks
- Provide photocopied notes and highlight or underline key words and phrases in the text
- Allow alternative methods of recording, e.g. computer, verbal response, graphical representation
- Give extra time for completing written tasks at home and in class
- Provide support for writing, e.g. writing frames, grids, flow diagrams, brainstorming, model / demonstrate
- Ensure homework is recorded accurately and repeat instructions
- Make use of rhymes, acronyms or visual methods to aid memory
- Mark work on content rather than on spelling

## **DYSCALCULIA**

- Put a list of numbers with their spellings (1-100) on a prompt card
- Give the student a set of mathematics symbol cards with the range of names for each symbol
- Provide an audiotape with multiplication tables on for home / class use
- Provide support materials, e.g. number square, number line, calculator, counters, large decimal point
- Head number columns (Hundreds / Tens / Units) to assist with place value
- Use arrows to help students know which direction to perform a calculation in
- Model a method of calculation and put this in the student's exercise book
- Allow the student to use her own method of calculation if it produces the correct answer consistently and is acceptable within the requirements of examinations
- Break down mathematical problems into smaller steps
- If the student is also dyslexic, audio tape 'wordy' problem solving questions

## **DYSPRAXIA**

- Break down tasks and instructions into smaller parts
- Pair a dyspraxic student with a more coordinated supportive peer in practical activities
- Use pictures, symbols, modelling and demonstration
- Repeat instructions
- Ensure homework is recorded accurately
- Praise effort and attainment, however small
- Provide additional time during practical tasks
- Cut out shapes for students beforehand
- Encourage the student to self-correct her own work or behaviour
- Use colour coding for left and right

## **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

Visual impairment can be classified in many different ways:

- Restrictions in the visual field
- Difficulties with scanning
- Gross distortion of what is being seen and perceived
- Difficulties with visual fixation
- Problems in maintaining and changing focus at long and short distances
- Distortions in colour perception
- Visual fatigue
- Additional time is required to process visual information
- Colour blindness

The implications for learning for students with visual impairment will depend on a number of factors:

- The age of onset of the eye condition
- Parental and family attitude
- Motivation and general intelligence level of the student
- Social and emotional security of the student
- The level of visual discomfort and fatigue
- The pace of learning may be slower, especially in subjects that are highly visual
- Incidental learning and the basic knowledge of everyday objects and experiences is restricted by visual impairment
- Progress may not be an accurate reflection of a student's true ability
- Holding a book close to the eyes will not harm vision, and for some students, it may be the only way of getting the print into focus
- Having a visual impairment does not necessarily mean that other senses, such as hearing, are highly developed

**Strategies to support learning:**

- Encourage the student to use word processing
- Allow the use of a lap top, which has the facility for different sizes of print, in class
- Encourage the use of specialist software like *TextHelp* which provides the facility for all text on the computer screen to be read aloud by a computer voice
- Encourage the student to use a hand-held tape recorder for making notes and also for submitting homework
- A student with visual impairment may qualify for special arrangements for external examinations.

Sr P/IS

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