St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust

"At St Joseph's, with God's guidance, we love, learn, respect and forgive."

<u>Accessibility Policy</u>

Implementation	Whole Staff
Monitoring	Mrs Clair Dedman
Written	24.09.24
Signed (Head Teacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Reviewed	11/11/25
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Accessibility Policy – Disability Discrimination in Education

St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

1. Introduction

St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with disabilities, have full access to a broad and balanced primary education. The school has developed an Accessibility Plan outlining modifications to curriculum, physical access, communication, and support to remove barriers to learning and participation.

This policy reflects current legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, which places a duty on schools to anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

2. Vision and Values

The school aims to uphold a positive, non-discriminatory approach to disability, as part of its commitment to equal opportunities. We will focus on:

- Removing barriers in all areas of school life;
- Ensuring disabled pupils have equal access to learning, activities, and facilities;
- Promoting disability equality among pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

3. Definition of Disability

A disabled pupil is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

4. Legislative Framework

The school complies with:

- Equality Act 2010, which consolidates previous disability legislation (DDA 1995, SENDA 2001);
- DfE guidance (updated September 2023) on reasonable adjustments, accessibility planning, and inclusive practice;
- Technical guidance emphasizing anticipatory duties, ensuring schools act proactively rather than reactively;
- Local Authority accessibility strategies.

Reasonable adjustments may cover:

- Physical access to the school environment;
- Curriculum delivery, classroom layout, and teaching methods;
- School routines, homework, break times, and extracurricular activities;
- Communication with pupils, parents, and stakeholders;
- Behaviour and exclusion policies to prevent indirect discrimination.

5. Admissions

- Admissions are determined by the Governing Body and follow LA procedures.
- No child with a disability will be discriminated against.
- Reasonable steps will be taken to provide effective educational provision and modifications to buildings or facilities where necessary.

6. Pupil Data

- The school maintains records of pupils with disabilities to support planning and provision.
- Consultation with local nurseries and feeder schools ensures advance information on children with statements or other recognized disabilities.
- Individual folders document participation, needs, and adjustments.

7. Exclusions

- Exclusions (fixed-term or permanent) are applied in accordance with Trust and LA procedures.

- The school ensures that disabled pupils are not discriminated against and that reasonable adjustments are considered before exclusion.

8. Curriculum and School Life

- Disabled pupils are supported to ensure equal access to curriculum, routines, extracurricular activities, and school facilities.
- The school anticipates needs and implements reasonable adjustments, considering current and future pupil requirements.
- Adjustments may include:
  - Differentiated learning materials;
  - Learning support assistants or interventions;
  - Adapted equipment or furniture;
  - Changes to teaching strategies or classroom layout.
- The school promotes disability equality for pupils, staff, and service users through an effective disability equality scheme.

9. Good Practice and Policy Links

The school follows good practice guidance and integrates accessibility considerations across policies, including:

- Admissions Policy
- Equality Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Curriculum Complaints Procedure

10. Accessibility Plan

- The school uses an "Identify Barriers to Access" checklist (Appendix 1) to audit provision.
- Findings inform the Accessibility Plan (Appendix 2), which is reviewed annually to ensure improvements in physical access, curriculum, and communication.
- The plan is linked to SEND provision, equalities objectives, and governance monitoring.

11. Complaints Procedure

- Complaints regarding provision for disabled children are addressed initially by the Headteacher.
- If unresolved, the Chair of Governors or Chair of the Executive Board may be involved.
- Further appeals may be made to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Governors regularly monitor the policy and Accessibility Plan to ensure:
  - No pupils are placed at a substantial disadvantage;
  - Disabled pupils are not treated less favourably;
  - Accessibility improvements are effective and measurable.
- Feedback from parents, staff, and pupil participation informs ongoing evaluation.

13. Legislative & Guidance Updates

- The school adheres to updated guidance from the DfE and EHRC on disability equality, accessibility, and reasonable adjustments (2023).
- Anticipatory planning, monitoring outcomes, and adjusting policies ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- The Accessibility Plan and policy are reviewed continuously in line with legal updates, best practice, and pupil needs.

14. Review

- This policy is a living document, reviewed continuously by staff and governors.
- It will be updated to reflect legislative changes, guidance updates, and the evolving needs of pupils.

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ACCESS – CHECKLIST

St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Purpose: This checklist helps identify barriers to access in school and encourages a proactive, flexible approach to improving accessibility. It is designed to be **reviewed annually** or when school facilities or pupil needs change.

SECTION 1: Curriculum Access

Question	Yes	No	Comments / Actions
Do teachers and teaching assistants have training to support disabled pupils?	✓		
Are classrooms organized to meet the needs of disabled pupils?	✓		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	✓		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	✓		
Do lessons include individual, pair, group, and whole-class work?	✓		
Are all pupils encouraged to participate in music, drama, and physical activities?	✓		
Do staff allow for additional mental effort, e.g., lip-reading?	✓		
Do staff allow for additional time required for equipment use in practical work?	✓		
Are alternative activities provided for pupils unable to participate in certain tasks?	✓		
Is appropriate assistive technology provided (e.g., computers, software)?	✓		
Are school visits, including overseas trips, accessible to all pupils?	✓		
Are high expectations maintained for all pupils?	✓		
Do staff actively remove barriers to learning and participation?	✓		

SECTION 2: Physical Environment

Question	Yes	Partial	No	Comments / Actions
Do all areas (classrooms, hall, canteen, library, gym, outdoor facilities) allow access for all pupils?	✓			
Can wheelchair users navigate doorways, ramps, stairs, toilets, and showers?	✓			
Are travel routes around the school safe, logical, and well-signed?	✓			
Do emergency/evacuation systems inform all pupils (visual & auditory alarms)?	✓			
Are non-visual guides used, e.g., tactile buttons in lifts?	✓			
Could décor or signage confuse pupils with visual impairment, autism, or epilepsy?	✓			
Are all areas well-lit?	✓			
Are steps taken to reduce background noise for hearing-impaired pupils?	✓			
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted, and located appropriately?	✓			

SECTION 3: Communication & Materials

Question	Yes	Partial	No	Comments / Actions
Is information provided in simple language, symbols, large print, audio, or Braille as needed?	✓			
Are group presentations accessible (e.g., reading aloud, describing diagrams)?	✓			
Are ICT facilities available to produce information in alternative formats?	Some			
Are staff familiar with assistive technologies and accessibility practices?	✓			

SECTION 4: Main Entrance & Reception

Question	Yes / N/A	Partial	No	Comments / Actions
Is there level access at the main entrance?	✓			Small threshold step ≤12mm considered level
If there is a ramp, is it suitable for wheelchair users (max gradient 1:12, landing, handrails)?	N/A			
If there are steps, are they suitable for people with walking difficulties (handrails, contrasting edges)?	N/A			

SECTION 5: External Areas

Question	Yes / N/A	Partial	No	Comments / Actions
Do routes between buildings provide independent access for wheelchair users?	✓			
What proportion of building entrances has level access for wheelchair users?	✓			
Is there level access to all outdoor areas (playgrounds, sports fields, seating)?	Partial			Field area has graded slope; KS1 limited access

SECTION 6: Emergency Evacuation

Question	Yes / N/A	Partial	No	Comments / Actions
Are >75% of buildings easy to evacuate for wheelchair users?	✓			
Does the emergency plan include disabled pupils, staff, visitors, and community users?	✓			
Are upper floors safely evacuable for people with mobility impairments?	✓			Not applicable for wheelchairs

SECTION 7: Curriculum & Facilities Accessibility

Area	Total Number of Teaching Spaces	Accessible?	Comments / Actions
Art	n/a	–	
Design & Technology	n/a	–	
Humanities	n/a	–	
Science	n/a	–	
Sport / School Hall	1	✓	
Performing Arts	n/a	–	
Mathematics	n/a	–	
English	n/a	–	
Languages	n/a	–	
ICT	1	✓	
Library	1	✓	
Other (Classrooms + Chapel)	12	–	

SECTION 8: Enhanced Visual & Sensory Environment

Feature	Number / Coverage	Comments
Areas lit to recommended lux standard	All	Front entrance, corridors
Blinds for windows subject to sunlight	All	
Specialist equipment for visually impaired pupils	0	
Highlighted edges on steps / doors	Inside stairs only	
Glare-reducing surfaces	0	
Tactile trails	0	
Signage to accessibility standard	0	
Multi-sensory room	1	
Colour printers	3	
ICT room	1	
Facility to produce Braille materials	0	
Scanner	1	

Instructions for Use

1. Complete the checklist with **Yes / Partial / No / N/A** for each item.
2. Use the **Comments / Actions** column to note improvements required.
3. Review annually or when significant changes are made to facilities, curriculum, or pupil needs.

4. Integrate findings into the **Accessibility Plan** to inform priorities, responsibilities, and timescales.

Accessibility Action Plan

St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Purpose: To remove barriers to access and participation for disabled pupils, staff, and visitors, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and DfE guidance.

Over time, the focus should shift significantly from planned improvements for individual pupils to embedding accessibility considerations into everything the school does: in school improvement, in curriculum development, in maintaining and improving the physical environment, in professional development and in all planning processes.

1. Physical Access

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Criteria / Monitoring
Ensure safe, accessible routes around school for all pupils	Audit all entrances, corridors, ramps, and toilets; identify improvements	Site Manager / Headteacher	Term 1 annually	All routes fully accessible; risk assessments updated; staff aware of access points
Adapt classrooms for mobility needs	Provide adjustable furniture, clear pathways, and accessible layouts	Class Teachers / SENCo	Ongoing	Disabled pupils can move safely; classrooms compliant with accessibility guidelines
Maintain accessibility for school trips	Assess venues for accessibility before trips; provide transport support as required	Trip Coordinator / SENCo	Per trip	Disabled pupils can participate fully in all off-site activities
Emergency procedures accessible to all	Include evacuation plans for pupils with disabilities; staff trained	Headteacher / Site Manager	Termly	All staff aware; pupils evacuated safely in drills or emergencies

2. Curriculum Access

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Criteria / Monitoring
Ensure differentiated teaching supports disabled pupils	Staff training on differentiated teaching and inclusive strategies	SENCo / Headteacher	Annual	Lesson observations show inclusive practice; pupil progress tracked
Provide targeted interventions	Implement NELI, Nessy, ELSA, and other support programs	SENCo / Class Teachers	Ongoing	Pupils make measurable progress in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development
Support access to ICT and learning resources	Provide assistive technology (e.g., laptops, speech-to-text software)	ICT Lead / SENCo	Ongoing	Disabled pupils can access learning resources independently
Embed accessibility in homework and assessment	Adjust formats and expectations where needed	Class Teachers	Ongoing	Pupils can complete homework and assessments without disadvantage

3. Communication Access

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Criteria / Monitoring
Ensure information is accessible to all parents and pupils	Provide letters, reports, and policies in plain language; offer alternative formats on request	Office Staff / Headteacher	Ongoing	Parents can access all school information; positive feedback collected
Support communication	Use visual supports, signing, or	SENCo / Class Teachers	Ongoing	Pupils can communicate needs effectively;

for pupils with disabilities	technology as required			increased participation in class activities
Staff training on inclusive communication	Training on supporting pupils with hearing, vision, or speech needs	SENCo / Headteacher	Annual	Staff demonstrate effective communication strategies in class

4. Monitoring & Review

Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Criteria
Review accessibility plan and progress	Governors / Headteacher / SENCo	Annual	Plan updated; barriers addressed; outcomes documented
Track progress of disabled pupils	SENCo / Class Teachers	Termly	Academic and social progress reported; interventions adjusted as needed
Gather stakeholder feedback	Headteacher / Governors	Annual	Parents, pupils, and staff provide feedback on accessibility; action taken to resolve issues
Report to Governors and publish updates	Headteacher / Governors	Annual	Accessibility plan and updates available to parents; compliance with statutory guidance