



St.Mary's Catholic Primary School

Part of The Christus Catholic Trust

Disability Policy

Respect Ourselves, Respect Others,
Respect our School, Love God

This school is committed to safe guarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment

Disability Policy

Our Mission Statement **Mission Statement**

Respect Ourselves, Respect Others, Respect our School, Love God.

St. Mary's is a Catholic School which endeavours to develop and support the individual needs and talents of all members of its community and enables them to learn and live through faith and education.

The school aims are:-

- a) To integrate each child's holistic, development through a balanced and creative curriculum which sees God as the centre of the learning process.
- b) To ensure that we lead our children to a greater understanding of the Catholic Faith. Through worship and the development of spirituality and community life, we aim to enable the children to appreciate and respect themselves, their world and the beliefs and cultures of others.
- c) To provide a curriculum that will develop the full potential of each person and educate the whole child in an environment, which encourages growth in self-confidence and the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.
- d) To acknowledge that we are commanded to love God, love one another and to respect ourselves and other people by encouraging the development of meaningful relationships in our school.
- e) To share our aims and beliefs with our children through the "St. Mary's Way"

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Introduction

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School welcomes its general responsibilities under the new Disability Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005)

- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their impairments
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to consider a disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person more favourably than other people.

This scheme sets out the steps the Governing Body will take that will result in improved outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff in all aspects of school life. Monitoring will be the responsibility of the senior leadership team, with input from staff, parents and pupils.

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, supported further by the 2010 Equality Act 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 Equality and Human Rights Commission (ERC) guidance (reference F), produced after the 2010 Act came into operation, states that: "A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

For disabilities requiring medication see Administration of Medication Policy.

In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met.

- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.

Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

The other tests to apply to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- The length the effect of the condition has lasted or will continue: it must be long term. 'Long term' means that an impairment is likely to last for the rest of the person's life, or has lasted at least 12 months or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months. If the person no longer has the condition but it is likely to recur, they will be considered to be a disabled person.
- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience.
- If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home.
- Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids or assistance or adaptations they have, like a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glasses or contact lenses, which is taken into account".

School Ethos, Vision and Values

At St. Mary's Catholic School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and anyone receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against disabled pupils. The achievement of disabled pupils will be monitored and we will use this data in our planning to raise standards of achievement and promote inclusive teaching. We will make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. By "reasonable adjustments" we will take steps to enable disabled pupils are able to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school, such as choosing an accessible venue for a school trip, swapping around classroom accommodation, setting up a buddy system. We will not tolerate the harassment of disabled people, with any form of impairment, by any member of the school community, and will strongly challenge any incidents based on prejudice and stereotyping.

The school has adopted a “social model” of disability, as the basis of its work to improve equality for and tackle discrimination against disabled people. This model says that the world and society create barriers that limit or prevent disabled people from enjoying the same opportunities as people who are not disabled. Our SEN Policy emphasises that we endeavour to remove as many barriers as possible through making reasonable adjustments to our practice.

They can also seek advice from Thurrock’s Parent Partnership organisation. Parents and governors were informed that there was to be a disability equality scheme produced for the school and invited to express their interest. Those who expressed an interest received a copy of the school’s draft disability equality scheme for information and had an opportunity to respond to the contents. Disabled parents and carers had an opportunity to identify any barriers that affect them and give ideas about how those barriers might be overcome.

Facilities for disabled children

In accordance with legislation laid under the Disability Discrimination Act the school has disabled access to the building. Disabled toilet facilities are also available.

The head teacher will discuss with parents/carers how their child can be best supported and integrated into the school. Outside agencies will be contacted for advice and support as necessary. Please see our Accessibility Audit Document (Appendix 1)

Admission arrangements

These follow current school admission policies as agreed by the governing body, local authority and Catholic Schools Commission.

Facilities for disabled staff

In accordance with legislation laid under the Disability Discrimination Act the school has disabled access to the building. Disabled toilet facilities are also available.

Race Equality and Equal Opportunities for Pupils

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals and are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment to achieve their potential.

Race Equality and Equal Opportunities for Staff

In all staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed, according to strict professional criteria. Candidates will not be judged upon any disabilities, race or gender. All staff will demonstrate through their personal leadership the importance of this policy and related practice. The head teacher will ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and understand their role and responsibilities in relationship to it.

Reviewed on: December 2020

Next Review: December 2021