



## **The Catholic High School, Chester**

### **Accessibility Policy 2024-2026**

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## Statement of Intent

The Catholic High School, Chester is committed to taking all steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage and works closely with pupils with disabilities, their families and any relevant outside agencies in order to remove any potential barriers to their learning experience. The school is active in promoting an inclusive, positive environment by ensuring that every pupil is given equal opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy school life. The school continually looks for ways to improve accessibility within the school through data collection, parent questionnaires and discussions.

This policy must be adhered to by all staff members, pupils, parents and visitors.

## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- DfE (2015) 'Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years'

This policy will be used in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures:

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Equality Statement objectives

Admissions Policy

Behaviour for Learning Policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Health and Safety Policy

## **2. Definition**

A person is defined as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Equality Act 2010 means that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

Staff members will act in accordance with the school's Accessibility Policy at all times.

The headteacher, in conjunction with the governing board or select committee, will create an Accessibility Plan with the intention of improving the school's accessibility.

The governing board, or a select committee, will be responsible for monitoring the Accessibility Plan.

The full governing board will approve the Accessibility Plan before it is implemented.

All staff members are responsible for ensuring that their actions do not discriminate against any pupil, parent or colleague.

The headteacher will ensure that staff members are aware of pupils' disabilities and medical conditions where necessary.

During a new pupil's induction, the headteacher will establish whether the pupil has any disabilities or medical conditions which the school should be aware of.

The headteacher is responsible for consulting with relevant and reputable experts if challenging situations regarding pupils with disabilities arise.

The SENCO will work closely with the headteacher and governing board to ensure that pupils with SEND are appropriately supported.

Designated staff members will be trained to effectively support pupils with medical conditions.

#### **4. Accessibility Plan**

All our pupils, staff and visitors should feel valued, cared for, listened to and encouraged to challenge themselves to be the best they can. It is our aim to reduce and eliminate barriers to the curriculum, fuller aspects of school life and the school environment for pupils and prospective pupils, staff, parents and visitors with a disability. Whilst we are aware that our building is over 60 years old and presents certain restrictions and constraints with regard to disability access, it is our aim to be as inclusive as possible. The Catholic High School, Chester has adopted this Accessibility Plan in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy with the aim of ensuring that our school is socially and academically inclusive, that all pupils have access to a full curriculum and that all pupils are appropriately challenged.

Here, we outline how we will endeavour to promote disability equality for all disabled pupils, staff, parents, governors and visitors to our school, over the next three years.

The Accessibility Plan will be structured to complement and support the school's Equality Statement objectives, as well as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy.

The school's Accessibility Plan demonstrates how access will be improved for pupils with disabilities, staff, parents and visitors to the school within a given timeframe.

The plan has the following key aims:

- To increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum
- To improve and maintain the school's physical environment to enable pupils with disabilities to take advantage of the facilities and education on offer
- To improve the availability and delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities

The intention is to provide a projected plan for a three-year period ahead of the next review date, which will be in July 2026.

If it is not feasible to undertake all the plans / works during the lifespan of the Accessibility Plan, some items will roll forward into subsequent plans.

The Accessibility Plan will be used to measure the necessity of making reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities where practicable.

The Accessibility Plan will be used to advise other school planning documents and will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes.

Both the Accessibility Policy and the Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website.

The school will provide adequate resources for implementing plans, ensuring pupils are sufficiently supported.

## **5. Equal Opportunities**

The school strives to ensure that all existing and potential pupils are given the same opportunities.

The school is committed to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness.

Staff members will be aware of any pupils who are at a substantial disadvantage and will take the appropriate steps to ensure each pupil is effectively supported.

The Accessibility Plan will detail any barriers which are hindering the opportunities for pupils with SEND. The aim of the plan is to take appropriate measures in order to overcome these barriers, allowing all pupils equal opportunities.

Wherever possible, teaching staff will adapt their lesson plans and the curriculum to allow all pupils to reach their full potential and receive the support they need.

The school will ensure that all extra-curricular activities are accessible to all pupils and make reasonable adjustments to allow pupils with SEND to participate in all school activities.

## **6. Admissions**

The school will act in accordance with the Admissions Policy.

The school will apply the same entry criteria to all pupils and potential pupils.

The school will support pupils with SEND by making any reasonable adjustments necessary during entry exams, e.g. publishing exam papers in a larger font.

The school will strive not to put any pupil at a substantial disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments prior to the pupil starting at the school.

All pupils, including those with SEND, will have appropriate access to all opportunities available to any member of the school community.

Information will be obtained on future pupils in order to facilitate advanced planning.

Prospective parents of pupils with an EHCP and other identified SEND students have an enhanced transition programme.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or when new legislation or guidance concerning equality and disability is published.

The governing board and headteacher will review the policy in collaboration with the SENCO.

## The Catholic High School Accessibility Plan 2024-2026

### 1. Improving access to the curriculum

Current good practice:

- There are established procedures for the identification and support of pupils with SEND in place at the school
- Within our school, teachers deliver lessons that are varied in pace and content and suited to the needs of the students
- Students follow a broad and balanced curriculum where possible, taking into account their SEND needs and support requirements
- Academic progress is tracked for all pupils, including those with a disability
- Teacher knowledge and understanding about supporting students with SEND is good, with continued CPD for all staff
- Pupil passports for specific students outlines areas of need, support strategies and targets for students. This is shared with teaching staff
- Pupil voice is used for students with SEND to gather information about specific needs and support strategies
- Pupil support plans are written where appropriate, which are reviewed on a termly basis
- Resources are tailored to the needs of pupils who require support to access the curriculum, for example large print reading books, enlarged worksheets, access to coloured overlays, specialist resources such as subject specific equipment for VI students
- Excellent pastoral care, including effective SEMH provision enables pupils to access the curriculum
- The school offers a range of supportive interventions within Trinity including ELSA, Social Skills and a Social Emotional Learning Programme
- Educational activities are attended by all students in school, including those with SEND
- Use of ICT resources to support specific curriculum areas e.g. Reading Plus and Heart Math
- Classrooms are organised so that they promote the participation and independence of all students
- An alternative learning environment is provided for students with specific needs, for example the Autism Resource Centre and the Nurture Provision
- Students who have attendance barriers can access the Nurture Group at the start of each day
- Advice from outside agencies is followed, where appropriate, to allow all pupils to reach their full potential
- Physical Education lessons will be adapted, wherever possible, to allow pupils with disabilities to participate in lessons
- Teaching Assistants are deployed to work primarily alongside the classroom teacher to support students with SEND, although will implement specific literacy, numeracy, speech and language and social skills programmes to suit the needs of students
- Effective, well established communication links promote positive parent - school relationships

Objectives – what needs to be done	How will this be achieved?	Person responsible	When	Cost	Success criteria	Review date
Curriculum is reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all students	<p>Curriculum review by CLLs to ensure that it is accessible for all students</p> <p>Department meeting and planning time</p> <p>Sharing good practice from SEND INSET within department meetings and to enable planning</p> <p>Consideration of alternative curriculum e.g. Gateway qualifications</p>	<p>SENCO CLLs AHT</p>	By July 2026	Medium	<p>Curriculum continues to meet the needs of all pupils</p> <p>SLT and teaching staff are aware of the accessibility gaps in the curriculum</p> <p>Specific tracking of SEND students to monitor progress to ensure students make progress in line with their abilities</p>	July 2026
Examples of curriculum resources including people with disabilities	<p>New resources developed to incorporate examples of people with disabilities or with consideration of disability</p> <p>Assessment of curriculum plans</p> <p>Development of displays within Trinity to promote equality</p> <p>Whole school assemblies on SEND e.g. autism awareness week</p>	<p>CLL SENCO</p> <p>ARC lead</p>	By July 2026	Low	People with a disability are represented as equal throughout school	July 2026
A CPD programme is regularly reviewed to ensure that all staff have an awareness of a range of SEND needs and the impact of these conditions on	<p>Whole school staff awareness training as appropriate</p> <p>Induction programme for new staff to inform school specific procedures to support students with SEND</p> <p>Pupils with healthcare needs will continue to be supported with an Individual Healthcare Plan in</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>SENCO</p> <p>SENCO</p>	Ongoing	Low – medium	<p>Pupils and their families feel supported and their needs understood</p> <p>Pupils with SEND continue to achieve in line with their ability</p> <p>Teachers and support staff are confident in meeting the needs of pupils with healthcare needs</p>	Annually

<p>health, learning and emotional well-being, including strategies that can be used to support such pupils</p>	<p>line with the 'Supporting Pupils with a Medical Condition' policy</p> <p>Pupil passports and where necessary risk assessments are written and shared with staff as appropriate. This may include advice from external agencies and professionals</p> <p>TAs invited to attend link department meetings to share good practice</p> <p>SISE observations and learning walks focus on SEND progress and support, including the effective use of TAs</p> <p>Continue to regularly update and share the SEND register and Medical Needs registers (combined to form the Disability Register)</p> <p>Regular reminders of how to support students who have suffered from adverse childhood experiences and trauma</p>	<p>SENCO / TA</p> <p>CLLs, TAs</p> <p>SENCO</p> <p>SENCO</p> <p>SENCO</p>			<p>Staff are aware of relevant strategies to supporting pupil progress, including mental health support</p> <p>Updated provision map and resources shared effectively with pastoral staff</p> <p>Use of EBSN toolkit to identify and support students who are at risk of low attendance and to support mental health needs</p> <p>Use of Boxall profile to identify pupil SEMH needs and provide tailored support</p> <p>Students are able to access education confidently and make good academic progress</p>	
<p>All out of school activities need to be planned in advance to ensure that all pupils with a disability are able to take part</p>	<p>Ensure all school staff are aware of the duties on schools set out within the Equality Act 2010 and the need to provide reasonable adjustments</p> <p>Review all upcoming out of school activities ensuring that sites are suitable for all children with a disability wherever possible. Consider any reasonable adjustments required to enable pupils with a disability to take part in the out of school activities, including travel requirements</p>	<p>SENCO SLT</p>	<p>Beginning of each academic year</p>	<p>Low – Medium</p>	<p>No out of school activities are planned without consideration of how pupils with a disability will be included</p> <p>Pupils with a disability have access to all school activities such as trips out, residential visits, extended school activities and sporting events</p> <p>Pupils and their families feel included in out of school activities</p>	<p>Annual review</p>

					Where it is deemed that this is not possible, it must be shown that a thorough risk assessment has been completed and a suitable alternative is offered	
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## 2. Improving the physical environment

Current good practice:

- The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils, staff members, parents and visitors have equal access to areas and facilities within the school premises
- The school has 3 toilet facilities suitable for people with disabilities which are fitted with a handrail and an emergency pull cord
- Where entrances to the school are not flat, a ramp is supplied for access
- Wide doors are fitted throughout the school to allow for wheelchair access
- The corridor flooring and lighting is designed to support those who are visually impaired
- Two disabled parking bays provided
- Highlighting tape has been added on all thresholds and steps and yellow paint on edges of pathways for pupils with reduced vision. There is good lighting throughout school, making use of natural light where possible and reducing glare through the use of blinds in classrooms
- All floor spaces are kept uncluttered where possible
- The plumbing and heating are regularly serviced and are not too noisy
- Structured and supportive break time and lunchtime activities are available for students

Objectives – what needs to be done	How will this be achieved?	Person responsible	When will this be completed?	Cost – low, medium, high	Success criteria	Review date
The environment is adapted to the needs of pupils as required	Continued maintenance of site to allow access by students with a physical disability, including ramp access, paving quality, disabled toilet maintenance, textured staircase surfaces and illumination strips and hazards denoted for the	Site staff	Ongoing	Medium	Increased access for pupils with a disability across the whole school, including specialist rooms where applicable	July 2026

	<p>visually impaired. Ensure all adjustments to current building is DDA compliant, where achievable</p> <p>Ensure that when future refurbishments are undertaken actions are considered which would improve access for people with disabilities</p> <p>Consideration of lift access to first floor in main building and electronic door pushes</p> <p>Consideration of a kitchen in Trinity to support life skills and preparation for adulthood pathways</p> <p>Staff awareness of seating position, clutter free classroom environment to suit the needs of a student with a physical disability</p> <p>Purchase of specialist equipment to suit the needs of individual students e.g. padded chairs with arm rests and stable padded science stools</p> <p>Evacuation Plans in place for students as appropriate</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>SENCO</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing through professional advice</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Students have equal access to all areas of school</p> <p>Students are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their confidence and independence</p> <p>Staff aware of how to support students with a physical disability within the school</p> <p>All students with a disability have equal access to all subjects where possible</p>	<p>Annually</p>
Continued improvement of the quality of environment to suit students with visual impairments	Continued site improvements as detailed on the environmental audit supplied by the VI team.	Site staff SENCO	Annually	Medium – High	School is accessible for students with a Visual Impairment	Annually

### 3. Making written information more accessible

Current good practice:

- Our website and CMS generated code are compatible with W3C accessibility recommendations
- Modification of materials in large print for students as required
- Regular communication, training and implementation of advice from outside agencies e.g. hearing and vision support services
- Where appropriate, social stories are used to explain school rules to students
- Large print versions of all school information is available by request
- Use of ICT resources to enlarge information and support learning
- Use of 'blue screen' setting on the computer screen where necessary, coloured exercise books, worksheets and overlays for children with visual stress or dyslexia
- Use of reading rulers in class
- Use of dyslexic friendly font by staff
- Visual timetable available for specific students

Objectives – what needs to be done	How will this be achieved?	Person responsible	When will this be completed?	Cost – low, medium, high	Success criteria	Review date
The availability of written information in accessible formats needs to be reviewed, starting with content on the school's website	Audit of delivery information procedures, including website information seeking advice from external professional where appropriate All written information available to pupils and their parents will be considered in detail by SLT, parent links and the school council.	SENCO AHT	Ongoing	Medium	All future written information is designed with the specific needs of disabled pupils, parents, staff and visitors in mind  Provision of 'easy to read' website	July 2026
Ensure that written information is	Provide written information in alternative formats where required using a clear layout, suitable font and colour	Teachers, support staff	Ongoing July 2026	Low Medium	All advice from VI team continues to be actioned with the necessary equipment	July 2026

accessible to students with visual impairments	Install and maintain window blinds to reduce glare in classrooms Use of specialist equipment to support students in lessons	Site staff SENCO, TAs	Ongoing	Medium	purchased and training implemented where necessary Students with a VI make good progress in lessons, in line with their ability	July 2026
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## **Appendices**

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs**

In this policy 'Special Educational Needs' refers to a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision.

The SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 Years (Dfe, 2014) says children have a learning disability if they:

- Have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions; and
- Are under compulsory school age and are likely to fall within either of the definitions above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

### **Definition of Special Educational Provision**

For children aged two years or older, this is educational provision additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision normally available to pupils of the same age.

## **Equality Act 2010**

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination. It provides legal rights for disabled people in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, services and facilities
- including larger private clubs and land based transport services

The Equality Act also provides rights for people not to be directly discriminated against or harassed because they have an association with a disabled person. This can apply to a carer or parent of a disabled person.

For more information, please visit

<http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/>

It is our duty to ensure that:

We do not treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability.

- We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- We will plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils
- We do not discriminate against anyone as explained in the DDA, 1995
- We do not allow any form of harassment of people with a disability
- We will promote positive attitudes towards anyone living with a disability
- We will remove barriers which may discourage disabled people from playing a full part in the life of our school
- We will encourage full participation by everyone in our school activities

## **Principles:**

- Compliance with the above mentioned legislation is consistent with the school's aims and the operation of the school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled pupil by excluding him or her from the school for a reason related to the pupil's impairment
- When recruiting staff, disabled people will not be discriminated against

- We recognise and value parents' and carers' knowledge of their child's disability and seek partnership and consultation
- We provide all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils. Our curriculum endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum (updated 2014), underpinning the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
  1. Setting suitable learning challenges
  2. Responding to pupils' diverse needs
  3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups
  4. Ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures for identifying and monitoring teaching and supporting pupils, young people and adults with disabilities

Approved by the Governing Body

To be reviewed July 2026, unless legislation changes dictate