



## Accessibility Policy

Approved by the Directors: October 2024

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### **School Mission Statement**

***“To create and sustain, with God’s help, a learning, caring and serving community where all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ.”***

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

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St Bede's Inter-Church School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Students should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

#### **The definition of disability is:**

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

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on students' everyday lives.

This document meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools on the Equality Act (2010).

The Equality Act (2010) defines an individual as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day to day activities.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015), 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. The definition includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Schools are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act (2010), to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a pupil with disabilities faces in comparison with a pupil without disabilities. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

#### **We recognise:**

Our duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended by the SENDA (2001) *“from September 2002, it will be unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services”*<sup>1</sup>

Schools and Local Authorities must:

- not treat disabled pupils less favourably

- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty)
- that Local Authority and school directors have the duty to publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans

<sup>1</sup> Preparation for entry to the school, the curriculum, teaching and learning, classroom organisation, timetabling, grouping of pupils, homework, access to school facilities, activities to supplement the curriculum, school sports, school policies, breaks and lunchtimes, the serving of school meals, interaction with peers, assessment and exam arrangements, school discipline and sanctions, school clubs and activities, school trips, the school arrangements for working with other agencies, preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.

## Scope of the Plan

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

### 1. **Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services.**

This strand of the planning duty covers aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture. Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems. Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

In maintained schools the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through the SEN framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which applies to all schools. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school.

For example, a student with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

### 2. **Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum**

This strand of the planning duty will help to improve access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum. It covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training.

St Bede's aims to improve progressively access to the curriculum for all disabled students although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and may be provided through the SEND framework. The accessibility strategies and plans will help to ensure that St Bede's is planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual students.

### **3. Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities**

This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled students. This may include alternative formats such as Braille, audio formats and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT.

This information should also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the students' disabilities and students' and parents' preferred formats.

Other related school policies: Equality for disabled students is included as an explicit aim in all of the school's policies and is supported by the school's other policies, including:

- Teaching and Learning
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions policy / criteria
- School improvement plan
- School Development Plan including Asset Management
- Policy for school visits
- SEND policy
- Exclusions

#### **Aims**

St Bede's Inter-Church School aims to include all students, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this will include:

- having high expectations of all students
- finding ways in which all students can take part in the full curriculum including sport, music, and drama
- planning out-of-school activities including all school trips and excursions so that students with disabilities can participate
- setting admissions policy and criteria which do not discriminate against students with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for students with disabilities
- planning the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of students with disabilities
- raising awareness of disability amongst school staff (teaching and non-teaching) through a programme of training
- by providing information for students with disabilities in a form which is user-friendly.
- by using language which does not offend in all its literature and make staff and students aware of the importance of language.
- by examining our library and reading books to ensure that there are examples of positive images of disabled people.

## **Actions to ensure equality for pupils with disabilities**

1. St Bede's SEND Department will undertake a disability audit during the winter of 2024-25.
2. As a result of the audit, the SEND Department will produce an action plan with targets to address key areas for improvement. This policy and associated targets will be published on the school's website [www.st-bedes.org.uk](http://www.st-bedes.org.uk) by the end of the summer term in 2024-25.
3. The success of the plan will be monitored by the SEND Department and reported to the Senior Leadership Team by the school SENDCO, as a standing agenda item each term in the following academic year.

## **Monitoring**

St Bede's Inter-Church School recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that students with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning. (Essentials are in bold type)

We will monitor:

- **Admissions**
- **Attainment**
- **Attendance**
- Punctuality
- Effects of pastoral strategies
- Rewards
- Sanctions
- **Exclusions**
- Response to teaching styles/subject
- SEN Register
- Setting/groups
- Extra-curricular activities
- Homework
- Homework clubs
- **Selection & recruitment of staff**
- **Board of directors representation**
- Parents attending consultation meetings
- Parents' and carers' involvement in the life of the school by a variety of mediums and including attendance at parents' evenings, school productions, sports day and representation of PTFA fundraising activity events