

St Francis Catholic Primary School



Disability Equality Policy

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

Our school Mission Statement is:

Jesus said 'Love one another as I have loved you'

St Francis School is a loving community, respecting every child and adult and caring for God's world, as we help each other to do our best and grow together in Christ.

St Francis Catholic Primary School is an inclusive school celebrating and promoting a culture of inclusion and diversity.

We recognise that all children are made in the image of Christ and as a Catholic school; we aim to actively remove barriers to learning and participation that may hinder pupils or groups of pupils, from fully accessing the curriculum and school life. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for everyone in the school community, adults and children alike.

The aims of this policy:

- To enable all children to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of gender, colour, race, religion, domestic background, ability or disability
- To develop a culture of understanding and respect and to promote positive attitudes towards those different to themselves.
- To develop a culture in which difference between people is recognised and celebrated
- To create a sensitive and caring environment in which all children and staff feel safe and secure
- To recognise and treat people as individuals in all areas of school life taking the steps necessary to ensure that their needs are met.
- To provide equal opportunities for all members of the school community irrespective of abilities or background
- To ensure there is equality of opportunity for professional development of staff
- To prepare children for life as part of a diverse, pluralist society
- To actively promote and develop community cohesion

DEFINITION OF “DISABILITY”

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995-amended 2005) describes a disabled person as someone who has **‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.’**

At St Francis we do not interchange the term ‘disabled’ with the phrase ‘special educational needs’ although we appreciate that many pupils with SEN will also have disabilities.

We use the DDA definition of impairment to include hidden impairments such as severe dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as:

- Physical impairment’ which includes sensory impairment;
- Mental impairment’ which includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness.

We believe that impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the pupil’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered. In relation to normal day-to-day activity the test of whether impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- perception of risk of physical danger

We recognize that individual cases need to be judged and responded to.

St Francis Catholic Primary School will actively:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others.
2. Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the act
3. Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
4. Promote positive attitudes towards those with disabilities
5. Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life
6. Take steps to meet disabled people's needs even if this requires more favourable treatment

1. Promote equality of opportunity between children with disabilities and others.

- Through raising awareness of related issues and relevant staff training
- By monitoring and assessing impact of this and other policies and adjusting policies as necessary.
- Through raising expectations of children with disabilities.
- Through increasing awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can help to support their learning.
- By ensuring that the talents of children with disabilities are recognized and identified through the Gifted and talented registers.
- By ensuring that children with disabilities are encouraged to join after school clubs.

2. Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the act

- By ensuring that all school written communications including the newsletter are available in larger print for Parents/Carers and staff, if requested.
- When launching our new website, offering a range of modifications to allow easy access of information for those who have disabilities such as sight impairment.

3. Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities

- By raising awareness amongst staff and pupils of disability-related harassment.
- By recognizing and addressing bullying and harassment
- Through involving pupils themselves in combating bullying.
- In reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- In ensuring that disability-related harassment of disabled staff, parents, carers and other users of the school is identified and addressed.
- Through using circle time, story time or assembly to explore issues related to bullying of those with disabilities.

4. Promote positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.

- by staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled pupils, staff and parents;
- by challenging negativity;
- through the curriculum – PSHCE/RE;
- by ensuring that disability is represented positively in posters, displays and learning materials;
- by inviting members of the community/organisations with disabilities to talk to children to explain and challenge stereotypes.

5. Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

- Encouraging participation in public life through where possible, disabled pupils, staff and parents being represented in senior, responsible and representative roles;
- Ensuring that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events and on the school council.
- Encouraging people with disabilities to work in our school in a paid or voluntary capacity.

6. Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment such as

- Additional coaching or training for disabled pupils, staff or parents;
- Analyzing the needs of pupils with disabilities during breaks and lunchtimes and adapt staffing where necessary for these pupils.
- A policy of interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum requirements for a job.

Characteristics of our school

St Francis Catholic Primary School is a single form entry school fed by the Catholic parishes of Maldon, Burnham and the Tiptree part of Kelvedon. Many of our children are brought to school by coach or taxi from varying distances.

Admission to the school is based on the criteria found in the school admission policy irrelevant of ability or disability.

Physical environment - The school site

The school buildings comprise of a Key stage 1 block, a Key stage 2 block, a small building formerly the convent chapel and a listed Edwardian building which was a Convent but is now used by the school.

Both key stage blocks and the former convent have stairs to upper floors. There is no lift on site. All of these buildings are built on a sloping site with a shared drive used by staff cars and pedestrians alike. The school has a field, which is approximately a quarter of a mile away, which is accessed by means of an unmade road.

A toilet for the disabled can be found in the KS1 block and in the Convent building. There is no toilet that is easily accessible to those with mobility problems in the KS2 block. There is a ramp into the Reception area and a mobile ramp giving access to the KS2 block.

We will endeavour to improve the access and provision to those with disabilities by developing the physical environment of the school.

Gathering Information

Information is gathered from a variety of sources:

- Medical registers
- SEN register
- Questionnaires for pupils, parents, and other stakeholders
- School performance data
- School admissions data
- Attendance data
- School council discussions
- Data related to participation in extra curricular and residential visits

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that we monitor aspects of school life to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children with disabilities.

The Curriculum

The curriculum – the planning and assessment of teaching and learning is regularly scrutinized to ensure that the needs of all learners are catered for including those with disabilities. Adjustments are made including differentiation of support materials to ensure accessibility for all. E.g. visual timetables and/or speech activated learning tools (Dynavox) for children with language difficulties.

Personalized Individual Education Plans ensure that children needing extra support have a curriculum tailored to their needs and/or learning style.

Outside learning experiences and/or school trips are planned so that all pupils including those with disabilities can fully participate.

The Pupils

St Francis is an inclusive school welcoming all children that meet the admission criteria irrespective of ability or disability.

When offered a school place, the Head teacher and Inclusion Manager will meet with the parents of a child with a disability, to discuss how best to meet his/her needs.

This may require extra staffing, different resourcing or other adjustments to make the child and family feel welcome and valued.

Where appropriate, the Head teacher and Inclusion Manager will seek advice from external agencies and specialists as to how best to support the child in school. At all times, the parents will be involved in working with the school to meet the needs of the child.

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the named Governor and a designated member of staff (the Inclusion Manager) will be:

- To ensure that St Francis meets the obligation not to discriminate.
- That this Policy and its procedures are followed.

The role of the Headteacher will be:

- To ensure that all members of staff know of this policy and their responsibility towards all those who have disabilities and the need not to discriminate.
- To provide staff training where necessary.
- To make sure the policy is readily available to whoever might ask to see it.
- To make sure the procedures are followed.
- To take necessary action in cases of discrimination and harassment.

The role of the staff will be:

- To ensure that they promote equality.
- To plan and assess teaching and learning to ensure all pupils' needs are met.
- To tackle stereotyping and deal with misconceptions sensitively through circle time, assemblies and whole class/group discussions.
- To report any cases of harassment or discrimination to senior management.

The role of the parents will be:

- To ensure that the school is made aware of any difficulties experienced and work together to come to a resolution.

Monitoring

In line with current procedures, the school tracking systems will continue to be used to identify those groups of children who are underachieving and targets will continue to be set to ensure that all children make the best possible progress. This includes those children with disabilities. Close liaison between staff, parents and Inclusion Manager will ensure that underachievement is identified and challenged.

Monitoring and review:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis with the equality objectives to be reviewed at least every four years.

The Headteacher will report to Governors annually on matters regarding disability discrimination. The Headteacher will implement the Disability Equality policy on a day-to day basis and ensure that all staff are aware of their role in its implementation.

The named governor will liaise with the Headteacher and the rest of the governing body about matters relating to disability discrimination and ensure that the school is informed of any new regulations.

