St Hilary's Prep School Policy

Disability Access Policy
Includes EYFS

Introduction

St Hilary's actively promotes democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

This policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010, including sections 6, 20, 85 and Schedule 10; the Children and Families Act 2014 and relevant SEND legislation and guidance; the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended); and the statutory EYFS framework where applicable. The School also has regard to current inspection guidance and the SEND Code of Practice insofar as relevant to its provision.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disability and special educational needs (SEN) are distinct: a disabled pupil may not have SEN, and a pupil with SEN may not be disabled. The School considers each pupil's needs individually, including needs relating to communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory or physical needs.

St Hilary's seeks to ensure that disabled pupils and prospective pupils can participate in education and school life without substantial disadvantage. Staff identify barriers early, discuss needs with pupils and parents as appropriate, record agreed support and review its effectiveness. The School promotes mutual respect and inclusion in line with its ethos and motto, "Not for oneself but for all."

Documents in support of this Policy include:

- Admissions Policy
- English as an Additional Language Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Plan

This policy and the Accessibility Plan are reviewed annually by the Governors, or sooner if law, guidance or the School's circumstances change.

Admissions Policy

Aim

The Admissions Policy sets out the School's approach to applications, visits and decisions. The School seeks relevant information to understand a prospective pupil's needs, plans any appropriate support and considers reasonable adjustments throughout the admissions process. A disability or SEN disclosure is considered fairly and sensitively, with information shared only as needed.

When an application is made, the School invites parents to share relevant information about disability, SEN and support needs so that it can consider access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. The School may seek appropriate advice or assessment in consultation with parents; it will not assume that a pupil's diagnosis determines their ability to participate.

Admissions are conducted in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Admissions Policy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The School considers each application fairly and sensitively and takes account of reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants.

Pupils and their parents must be prepared to work with us for the good of the school community. They should understand our ethos, rules and aspirations and be prepared to work with the school to achieve and maintain them.

The School will not discriminate against a disabled pupil or prospective pupil in admissions or in providing education, benefits, facilities and services. It will take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage caused by its policies, practices or procedures and, where reasonable, provide auxiliary aids and services. Adjustments are considered in advance where barriers can reasonably be anticipated and reviewed for each pupil. Physical features of school premises are addressed through the Accessibility Plan and applicable legal duties.

The School invites disclosure of disability and SEN during admissions so that needs and suitable arrangements can be discussed. The Headmaster and relevant SENCO will consult parents and the pupil, where appropriate, and seek specialist advice if needed. Decisions, adjustments and any alternative arrangements will be recorded; confidential information will be handled in accordance with the School's data protection arrangements.

Appointment of Staff

The School complies with the Equality Act 2010 in recruitment and employment, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees. Relevant arrangements are set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and recruitment policies. Staff and visitors may raise access needs with the Business Manager so that appropriate arrangements can be considered.

The School expects and places an obligation upon all its Governors, the Headmaster, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff to respect and act in accordance with the content and spirit of the policy.

The School considers its Equality Act duties across all aspects of school life, including:

- Curriculum
- Teaching and Learning
- Timetabling, classroom and school organisation and setting

- Serving of school meals and catering at events
- Interaction with peers, activities and visiting speakers/organisations
- Assessment arrangements
- School discipline
- Exclusion / suspension procedures
- Preparation of pupils for their next phase of education including the transition process

The School assesses reasonable adjustments individually, considering the effectiveness and practicability of the proposed steps, the resources available and the circumstances. Staff must refer uncertain or significant access decisions to the Headmaster and Business Manager; decisions and reasons should be documented and reviewed.

The designated SENCOs for EYFS, Pre-Prep and Prep coordinate SEN provision as described in the SEND Policy. Assessment arrangements are coordinated by the SLT member responsible for assessment and reporting, with Heads of Department and SENCOs. Teachers adapt teaching, resources and staffing arrangements where appropriate so that disabled pupils can access and participate in the curriculum and associated activities.

Curriculum Activities

St Hilary's offers a broad curriculum and activities designed to support and challenge pupils. Teachers consider accessible teaching methods, resources, assessment arrangements and participation in trips and extracurricular activities. The School consults pupils and parents where appropriate and reviews the effectiveness of support. The statutory distinction between curriculum content and its delivery does not limit the School's commitment to accessible participation.

Accessibility: Buildings and Site

The School maintains a separate Accessibility Plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The plan sets out how the School will increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum, improve the physical environment so they can take advantage of education and school facilities, and improve the availability of information in accessible forms. The responsible body will keep the plan under review, consider adequate resources for its implementation and make it available for inspection on request. When considering refurbishment and site improvements, the School will have regard to relevant DfE inclusive education estates guidance.

The site includes existing access measures: mobile ramps for access to the Hall and Link corridor, disabled parking at the front of the School and grab rails at steps. Some first-floor accommodation currently presents access constraints. Where a pupil, prospective pupil, employee or visitor needs access, the School will assess the individual circumstances, consult those concerned and consider reasonable adjustments, use of accessible rooms, timetabling changes, auxiliary support and any appropriate longer-term building proposals. The Accessibility Plan records priorities and progress; no particular future adjustment is ruled out in advance.

The School will consider accessible information for disabled pupils, including large print, accessible electronic documents, visual formats, assistive technology and communication support, according to individual needs. Staff should consult the pupil and parents where appropriate and coordinate arrangements through the SENCO.

Reviewed: June 2019, June 2020, June 2021, June 2022, June 2023, June 2024, July 2025 September 2026
Next review date: September 2027
Persons responsible: Mrs Hannah Wynn (Business Manager); Mr Duncan Sinclair (Headmaster)