




Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Accessibility Policy Statement

Signed by the Chair	
First Date Approved by Local Governing Committee	November 2023
Statutory Policy	Yes
Required on Website	Yes
Review Period	Annual
Reviewed by	Local Governing Committee
Review Date	November 2025
Next Review Date	November 2026

Preamble

The Governing Body of St Leonard's Catholic School takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act very seriously and believes that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing and celebrating diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relations between all. The Governing Body recognises that all staff and governors share responsibility for the implementation of our Public Sector Equality Duty with regards to discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

I. Responsibilities

I.1 Governors are responsible for:

- I.1.1 ensuring the school adopts and reflects the relevant equality legislation;
- I.1.2 ensuring that the school Public Sector Equality Duty and its procedures are followed.

I.2 The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- I.2.1 ensuring the Public Sector Equality Duty and its procedures are followed;
- I.2.2 ensuring the Public Sector Equality Duty is readily producing regular information for staff and governors about the School Equality Objectives and how they are working;
- I.2.3 ensuring that all staff know and carry out their taking action in cases of harassment and discrimination against members of any protected group.

I.3 All staff are responsible for:

- I.3.1 challenging racist, homophobic and other hate-incidents;
- I.3.2 the recognition and tackling of bias and stereotyping;
- I.3.3 the promotion of equal opportunities; the avoidance of discrimination against anyone.

Attitudes that promote discrimination are challenged and staff seek to achieve equality for all by both example and active promotion. Examples of this are the teaching of issues surrounding bullying, celebrating diversity, praying and reflecting on social justice. The school deals with discriminatory incidents seriously and parents are informed of the action taken.

2. Inclusion Aims

2.1 To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not:

St Leonard's is an inclusive school. All staff work hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all protected groups. The school strives to improve equal opportunities. Examples of this work can be seen in our Aims statement, the School Development Plan, regular monitoring of teaching and learning, staff/ governor training, Citizenship Education, assemblies Identification is seen as a key element to ensuring equality of opportunity. The school employ regular analysis of data to screen for any issues with particular pupils. Intervention is targeted in response to this identification.

2.2 To foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not:

St Leonard's fosters good relations between pupils through its collective worship, promotion of tolerance,

PHSE curriculum, emphasis on respect and understanding. The school has developed strong links with the local community and seeks to involve families from the start of their connection with the school and this work is continued throughout the school. Relationships are also developed beyond the local community to other parts of the U.K. and abroad.

3. The Equality Act 2010¹

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous discrimination law. It has simplified the law and extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

School must adhere to the following:

- protection against discrimination is extended to pupils who are pregnant or who have recently given birth, and pupils who are undergoing gender reassignment;
- it is now unlawful for employers to ask health related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work;
- new positive action provisions will allow schools to target disadvantage experienced by pupils with particular protected characteristics;
- it is now unlawful to victimise a pupil for anything done in relation to the Act by a sibling or parent;
- the Act will extend the reasonable adjustments duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils;
- the previous specific duties on schools have been combined into the new Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED);
- the duty applies to all maintained and independent schools, maintained and non-maintained special schools, and Academies;
- there is still a requirement to have an Access Plan to improve access for disabled pupils

3.1 Protected characteristics:

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating him/her less favourably because of his/her:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy/maternity

A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, but this does not apply to pupils in schools.

3.2 Unlawful behaviour:

- Direct discrimination – treating someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular protected characteristic
- Discrimination arising from a disability

¹ Further information about can be found in the School's Equality Policy

- Harassment – ‘unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person’.
- Victimisation – when a person is treated less favourably than they might otherwise have been, because of something they have done in connection with the Act (for example, making an allegation of discrimination, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence).

3.3 Required actions:

- Schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Schools must have due regard to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Schools must have due regard to the need to foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

What having ‘due regard’ means in practice has been defined in case law as giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For schools this means:

- (a) decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have ‘due regard’ when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics;
- (b) schools must consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis
- (c) the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process
- (d) Schools cannot delegate the responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else

4. Accessibility Plan

- 4.1 The St Leonard’s School Accessibility Plan has been drawn based upon information supplied by the Local Authority, and in conjunction with pupils, parents, staff and governors of the school and will advise other school planning documents. The Accessibility Plan will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes, and provide a projected plan for the four years period ahead of the next review date.
- 4.2 The Accessibility Policy statement is structured to complement and support the school’s Equality Objectives, and will similarly be published on the school website. The Governing Body will monitor the school’s activity under the Equality Act 2010 (and in particular Schedule 10 regarding accessibility) and will advise upon the compliance with that duty.
- 4.3 The school is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. The school is committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.
- 4.4 The St Leonard’s School accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled students, staff and visitors to the school in a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable. The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant and timely actions to:

- increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits- it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;
- improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary-this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

4.5 The Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written format.

4.6 Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

4.7 The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policy
- Equality objectives (required from April 2012)
- Equality Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Plan/ suitability Survey
- School Prospectus and Vision Statement
- Complaints Procedure

4.8 The Accessibility Plan for physical accessibility relates to Access Audit of the School, which was originally undertaken by the Local Authority and subsequently updated by the school and remains the responsibility of the Governing Body. It may not be feasible to undertake all of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. An accessibility audit will be completed by the school prior to the end of each period covering this plan in order to inform the development of a new accessibility plan for the ongoing period.

4.9 Equality Impact assessments will be undertaken as and when school policies are reviewed. The terms of reference for all governors' committees will include the need to consider Equality and Diversity issues as required by the Equality Act 2010. The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority (and Diocesan authority where appropriate) in developing and implementing this accessibility Plan and will adopt in principle the County Durham Accessibility Strategy when it is has been made available. The Accessibility

Protected Characteristics	Aims of the General Duty		
	What evidence do we hold that we eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	How do we advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?	How do we foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?
RACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achievement levels are in line with school achievement or better; ▪ exclusions are below the average for the school. ▪ racial incidents are rare and dealt with according to County policy. ▪ attendance levels are in line with whole school rates. ▪ surveys show pupils happy with school life. ▪ participation figures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assemblies, ▪ PSHE ▪ Citizenship Education, ▪ Modules in History, English, Geography, RE. ▪ School Aims ▪ Approach to trips and extra-curricular activities. ▪ Use of visitors. ▪ Staff/ Governor training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ positive examples by staff. ▪ inclusive nature of school. ▪ use of workshops e.g. Show Racism the Red Card, SAFC ▪ prayers and reflections on Racial Justice. ▪ emphasis on respect and understanding. ▪ assemblies. ▪ celebrating diversity. ▪ visits in the community.
DISABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achievement data shows that pupils with disabilities achieve in line with others of similar ability ▪ pupils are represented in extra-curricular activities, trips etc. ▪ Needs of staff dealt with swiftly and sensitively. <p>Policies in place: Anti-Bullying, Recruitment, Admissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bullying statistics. ▪ Pupils feel integration effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through education for awareness and tolerance. ▪ PSHE – awareness of respect/ tolerance. ▪ Accessibility planning. ▪ Adjustments made in school ▪ Risk Assessments ▪ School Aims. ▪ Promotion of equal opportunities. ▪ Staff/ Governor training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusive ethos. ▪ Links with Feeder schools. ▪ Use of outside agencies. ▪ Assemblies. ▪ Work with EHNT
SEX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the progress of all pupils is better than that nationally as shown in EPAS data however boys progress further than some groups of girls – this is an area of focus for all in school but not a weakness. ▪ both sexes represented in activities offered in school. ▪ lack of stereotyping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular item at all meetings in school at all levels. ▪ Staff research ongoing. ▪ Teachers fair and balanced ▪ Opportunities available to all. ▪ Staff/ Governor training ▪ CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catch up clubs. ▪ IAG

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is a high rate of staff returning to work, often part-time, following maternity leave. pregnant pupils dealt with sensitively. help and advice offered. ▪ Health and Safety policies followed for pregnant pupils and staff. ▪ Risk assessments in place. ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ home schooling offers if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Aims Statement
AGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ staff work well beyond “retirement age” in some cases. appointments are made on a quality basis. Recruitment Policy ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age never used as a contributory factor in any school situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Aims Statement
RELIGION & BELIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a Catholic school we require that all staff and pupils respect the Catholic faith (and every other faith). This is evident in day to day life. ▪ Respect and tolerance promoted in curriculum eg RE, English, Citizenship, PE 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Masses and Liturgies celebrate diversity. ▪ Visits/Assemblies recognise significant events in history.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attention is paid to issues of bullying in PSHE and individual instances are rare. ▪ Anti-Bullying Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All participate in all activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tolerance promoted. ▪ Aims and ethos of school. ▪ PSHE promotes good relations.

Equality Objectives 2023/25

- (i) to close the gap between the achievement of those pupils in receipt of pupil premium compared to those not in receipt of pupil premium;
- (ii) to review the PSHE Programme to ensure those protected characteristics are properly addressed focusing especially on Gender Reassignment & Sexual Orientation
- (iii) to develop and maintain an accessible approach to all documentation ensuring the documents for both parents and pupils are fully accessible as far as is reasonably practicable.

Aim 1: To increase the extent to which SEND pupils can participate in the school curriculum			
Targets	Strategies	Timescales	Staff Responsible
To plan and support transition	Liaise with previous educational establishments (primary or secondary as appropriate) To identify pupils who may need additional to or different from provision	Upon transition	SENDCO Year Leaders Transition lead
To review all statutory policies to ensure that they reflect inclusive practice and procedure	To comply with the Equality Act 2010	Annual review of policy	SENDCO
To establish close liaison with parents	To ensure parent and pupil voice is documented in collaboration between school and families	Ongoing	SENDCO Year Leaders
To establish close liaison with outside agencies for pupils with additional needs	To ensure collaboration between all key personnel. Sharing information about the child where necessary	Ongoing	SENDCO Year Leaders All staff Outside agencies
To ensure full access to the curriculum for all pupils	Seek advice from specialist advisory teachers; CPD for staff and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adapted curriculum with alternatives offered if practicable • Access to additional intervention through the enhanced curriculum • LSAs are fully trained to support different levels of need • Use of ICT equipment • Access to additional practical aids • Access to alternative assessment arrangements • Access to school counselling if required 	Ongoing	SENDCO Year Leaders All staff Outside agencies
To finely review attainment of all SEN pupils	Regular data analysis to monitor progress and identify any underperformance	½ termly	SENCO Middle Leaders Class teachers

To deliver findings to the Local Governing Body	Accessibility plan review by governors	Termly meetings with SEND governor	SENDCO SEND governor
Aim 2: To improve the physical environment of the school			
Targets	Strategies	Timescales	Staff Responsible
Improve the physical environment of school environment	The school will take account the needs of pupils, staff and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises	Ongoing	SLT
Ensuring all with a disability are able to access the whole school environment	Create access plans for individual pupils as required and risk assessments	Ongoing	SENDCO All Staff
To ensure that the medical needs of all pupils are met fully within the capability of the school	To conduct parent interviews, liaise with external agencies, identifying training needs and establish individual protocols where needed	Ongoing	SENDCO
Ensure parents are involved in key decision-making	Provide disabled parking spaces for disabled to drop off & collect children	Established on main site	SENDCO

Aim 3: To improve the delivery of information to SEND pupils and parents			
Targets	Strategies	Timescales	Staff Responsible
Ensure access to information for parents, staff and visitors	Communicate with parents in a format that is appropriate for them. Regular communication with parents	Ongoing	SENCO
To enable improved access to written information for pupils	Providing in class support such as appropriate font size, overlays, IT support etc, auditing signage around the school to ensure that is accessible	Ongoing	SENDCO Site Manager

Ensure parents are involved	Provide disabled parking spaces for disabled to drop off & collect children	Established on main site	Whole school approach
To review children's records ensuring school's awareness of any disabilities	Ensure information is correct and up to date	Updates provided when required	SENDCO Outside agencies Support staff