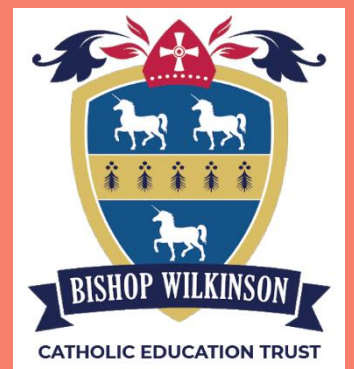


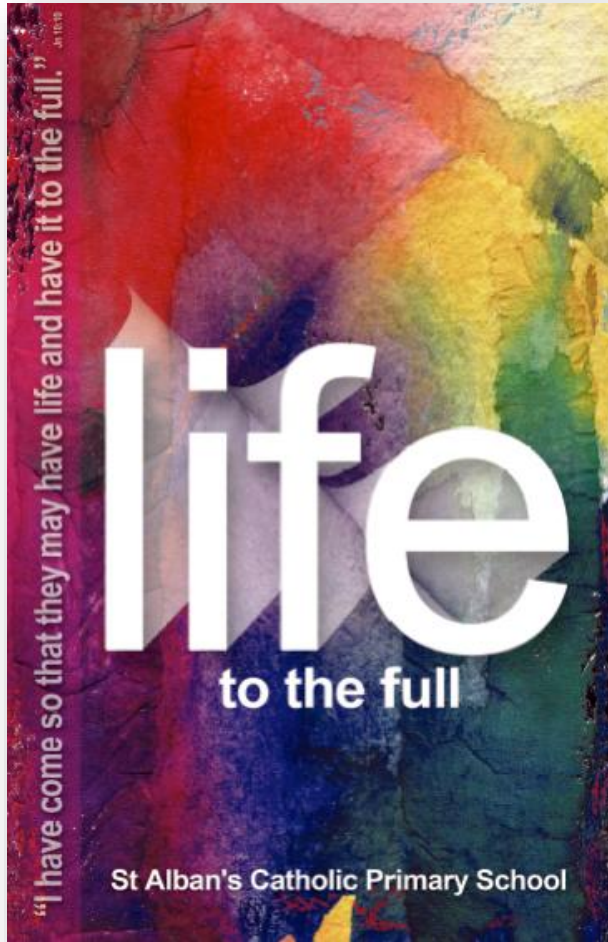


Equality and Accessibility Strategy

November 2025



Statement of intent



St. Alban's, Pelaw, takes the health and wellbeing of its pupils very seriously. As described in the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school aims to support pupils with physical disabilities and illnesses to enable them to have a full and rich academic life whilst at school.

The local governing committee recognises its duties and responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010, which states that any pupil with an impairment affecting their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities must not be discriminated against.

Pupils will always be treated with care, sensitivity and respect when intimate care is given, and no pupil will be left feeling embarrassed or as if they have created a problem.

Disability & Equality Scheme/Accessibility Plan

Aims:

Our main aim is to offer an education appropriate to each individual pupil's needs, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or religious beliefs.

- We aim to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all our pupils, and the opportunity to reach levels of attainment appropriate to their ability. We regard all our pupils as being of equal value and to ensure that the needs of all pupils are identified and met, and that they are able to achieve their full potential, helping to raise standards across the Trust.
- We aim to ensure that active encouragement is given to all pupils in order to enable them to fully develop talents and personal skills for co-operative interaction and academic excellence. No one person has the right to deny another person their educational opportunity.
- We aim to ensure that everyone at the schools, (staff, pupils, parents, carers, contractors and visitors) are afforded the basic rights of freedom and access to opportunity, including freedom from all forms of harassment or bullying.

Where contractors are working on-site, measures will be taken to ensure, as far as possible, that their employees operate according to the school's policies.

We aim to challenge in a positive way any form of prejudice, racism or sexism, whether overt or covert, which contradicts the school equality objectives. This means adopting a consistent and unambiguous stand, from which we strive to overcome prejudice and ensure equality of opportunity for all, thus protecting the rights and liberties of every individual.

We aim to create and retain a workforce that is valued for its diverse contributions and represents different perspectives, ethnic backgrounds, experience and skills. To achieve this, the schools will maintain strong community/parental links, and governors will give support to the schools and all their stakeholders, to ensure an effective educational delivery.

Vision, Values and Ethos:

An Accessibility Plan has been drawn based upon information historic 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 is structured to complement and support the school's Equality Objectives, and will similarly be published on the school website. We understand that the LA 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.
- We are 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. We are 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.

Accessibility Plan

St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior School Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be continually monitored and improved where possible for disabled pupils, 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; 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.

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

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with all other school policies, strategies and documents:

- Curriculum Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (including off-site safety)
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Prospectus
- SEND Information Report/Strategy

Our school is committed to the principles of inclusion. We have a caring, supportive ethos that seeks to value all individuals. Our school promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and others who use our school. By promoting a positive attitude towards disabled people we aim to eliminate discrimination and harassment related to disability and thereby fulfil an essential component of our ethos.

We will involve disabled people in informing the direction our school takes to promote equality of opportunity and accessibility to the school environment. We also seek to encourage full participation of disabled people in the school community even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Our school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in a happy, challenging environment where each pupil can develop to the maximum of his/ her potential and feel valued as an individual who can contribute to the life of our school and society in general.

We promote:

- pupil self-confidence so that each pupil develops a sense of personal worth and is confident in his/her ability to succeed.
- positive relationships to help pupils develop good relations with others, based on mutual respect and consideration, and an understanding of, and a tolerance towards various races, religions and cultures.
- co-operation to develop the abilities of pupils to contribute as members of groups and recognising their responsibilities.
- self-discipline so that pupils understand the need for high standards of behaviour and to develop responsibility towards people and property.

Accessible buildings:

- We are dedicated to maintaining an accessible physical environment within our school premises. This includes ensuring wheelchair ramps, accessible parking spaces, and accessible restrooms are available and well-maintained.
- Regular assessments and evaluations of our facilities are conducted to identify and address any barriers to accessibility promptly.
- Any new construction or renovation projects will prioritise accessibility standards and comply with relevant accessibility guidelines.
- Both buildings were built in the 19th century, prior to the Disability Discrimination Act – but both buildings have been modified, budget withstanding to comply with building regulations for the DDA – including: ramp access, single storey plan and doors wide enough for wheelchair access. St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School has accessible toileting facilities.

Accessible communications:

- We strive to ensure that all communication materials, including school notices, newsletters, and website content, are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Alternative formats such as braille, large print, or electronic formats will be provided upon request.
- Communication technology and platforms used by the school will be chosen with accessibility features in mind.

The Legal Context:

The SEND Code of Practice (2014 DfE and DHSC) and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995) sets out a general duty to promote disability and a specific duty to publish a disability equality scheme alongside an Accessibility Plan. It requires schools to be more proactive in their approach to promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination. Our definition of disability defines a disabled person as someone who has:

'a physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

This definition covers a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments: such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, only if the effect is on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The duty puts greater focus on approaches to policy development and management of issues in relation to disability.

Part 4 of the DDA requires that the governing body increase access to education for disabled pupils. Our school has produced, with this scheme, an Accessibility Plan, which identifies actions based on our self-evaluation that will promote opportunities for participating in the curriculum; accessing the building and services and delivery of information to pupils and adults.

From this, the following key guidelines emerge:

- All pupils should be encouraged to value their own cultural heritage and the culture and lifestyles of others, and to show respect for self and others while at the same time finding common ground to talk to one another and valuing living together in a community.
- Every member of staff needs to accept responsibility for establishing a reasonable climate for debate and extending opportunities for controversial discussion. They must address widely held misconceptions to avoid the risk of pupils with limited experience arriving at consensus views of doubtful validity.
- The provision of genuine equality of opportunity must be inherent in the education the schools offer. The curriculum opportunities must be open to all. The schools must challenge any gender stereotyping, which leads to constraints on the development of pupils' abilities and aspirations and should include the opportunity to study multicultural issues as an intrinsic part of all programmes and teaching.
- The schools should clearly demonstrate the unacceptability of attitudes, incidents, taunts or remarks that offend, intimidate, devalue another's view or opinion, or undermine another's self-esteem.

More specifically, this means the following codes of practice for governors and staff, pupils, parents/carers and visitors and contract staff.

Governors and Staff:

- Staff will treat each other and all pupils with respect.
- Staff will examine the ideas and images in books and other resources, and will challenge negative images and give all pupils positive images.
- Policies on displays, notices, meals, uniform, etc in the schools will reflect their multi-racial population.
- Attendance at in-service training courses on equal opportunities will be encouraged. Staff will make every effort to understand the origins and nature of racism, disability, sexism and other forms of prejudice to recognise their own prejudice where it exists.

- The school values the fact that many pupils are bilingual and will encourage the teaching and/or use of community languages.
- Positive links will be developed with the homes of pupils and communities from which our pupils come. Preventing and dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse, bullying and intimidation is the responsibility of us all. The school will support victims of such incidents, on or off the premises.

Pupils:

- Pupils will treat each other and staff with respect.
- All pupils are valued for themselves and can expect to have their culture and language treated positively and with respect.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity in the classroom to discuss and to identify and understand racism, sexism, disability and other forms of prejudice.
- If pupils feel they have been abused racially or bullied they should report the matter immediately to their Classroom Teacher / Pastoral Tutor / Head of House. All pupils can expect to be listened to and have their complaints investigated. If a pupil feels their complaint has not been properly dealt with they may take the matter to the Head Teacher.
- Pupils who have suffered racist or sexist behaviour, abuse, bullying or intimidation will be supported by the school and in particular by their class teacher. Anyone who has committed such offences will be managed in conjunction with the Behaviour and Relationships policy.

Parents/Carers, Visitors and Contract Staff:

- Parents/carers are very important to the school and in particular they have much to contribute to the single equality scheme; their views are welcomed and valued at all times. We ask that all parents/carers fully support the school's single equality scheme.
- The school will discuss with parents/carers any incidents of racist, disability, sexist abuse or bullying and harassment incidents in which their children have been involved.
- If parents/carers are aware of incidents of racism, sexism or bullying then they should contact their child's class teacher.
- Any visitors or contract staff visiting or working at the school who become aware of any incidents of racism, sexism, disability or other discrimination should report them to the Executive Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or Designated Safeguarding Lead. They should also abide by the Code of Conduct established by the Trust.

Involvement of pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors, agencies and service providers:

Over the years, pupils in our school, including our school council, have provided their views to the group on accessibility issues and the school provision. From the Annual Review of pupil Education Health Care Plans, we collate pupil and parent views to inform our scheme. Through respectful relationships with disabled pupils, we acknowledge their feelings and respond to their views.

Where we have disabled staff, parents and service providers we will provide a response to suggestions on how we can improve our disability scheme and its priorities. This would inform considerations that may be required to make reasonable adjustments.

We will seek to record views of external agencies, voluntary groups and services we procure to inform our disability equality scheme and make any necessary adjustments.

An annual report, identifying priorities for school action, will be provided by the working group and passed on to the governing body.

Information gathering in relation to the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees:

Our school will follow Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust guidance on the collection of information on disabled employees and the recruitment of new staff. The local authority human resources database has a record of those staff that have indicated whether they have a disability. Other information in school will be analysed to ensure that there is no discriminatory practice and will take into account the following: seniority, TLR payments, permanency of staff, CPD, disciplinary and capability proceedings, harassment and bullying, sickness and those leaving the profession early. Those staff that voluntarily provide information will be assured that it is used confidentially to inform working practice and conditions.

All staff will be supported by Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust agreed policies on sickness and returning to work. Our school would seek to contact the 'Access to work' scheme to explore possible support to staff, if required during their employment.

The educational opportunities available to, and achievements of, disabled pupils:

The school maintains a pupil tracking system, which provides current data on pupil attainment and achievement. This system also provides specific information on pupil disability and attainment. Pupils with a disability will be registered on admission to St Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools or, during their time with us, should their disability develop at a later stage. Information will be collected through the transfer of records from previous schools, the local authority, if required, and parents to ascertain pupil needs and levels of attainment and achievement in order that consideration is given to provision and access to curriculum. Further detail is available in our school's SEND and Admissions Policies.

In order that pupils have full access to the curriculum the school will prioritise aspects of the school Accessibility Plan so that pupils with a disability are ensured greater participation in the curriculum.

Consideration will be given to the management of pupils with medical needs and their care plans to access the curriculum.

We will embrace all disabilities including those due to (please note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- HIV
- Multiple sclerosis
- Hearing or sight impairments
- Mobility difficulties
- Mental health or learning difficulties

Accessibility Arrangements Plan:

The site is built on several tiers. School can be accessed via one step, or on the 'flat' via the main entrance, if required, the school has a refurbished ramp to support any mobility issues. The schools are also able to access the Low Incident Needs Team (LINT) via Gateshead Local Authority's SEND team support. For those pupils who may have a disability (e.g. sight or hearing loss), by way of referral, the LINT team are able to support the pupil and school in promoting inclusion. For example, this may be by suggesting an appropriate radio receiver and amplifier for a pupil who has encountered hearing loss (e.g. Phonak device) or it may be that the Occupational Therapy Team will be able to support the pupil with mobility or seating arrangements should they have a registered neurodisability.

In case of an emergency, any pupil with a registered disability will receive an emergency evacuation plan to ensure that their needs are met in the event of an emergency (for example – fire).

Curriculum adaptation:**The following questions would be considered to identify priorities:**

- Are there areas of the curriculum to which a disabled pupil has limited or no access?
- Are pupils fully participating in extra-curricular activities?
- How are we addressing those areas of the school building that are not accessible to disabled pupils, staff or others?
- What forms of communication can we provide for pupils and adults?
- Does our written information allow greater access to the curriculum and information on our school?
- Are we monitoring policies and practice? (e.g. administration of medicines, staff development on inclusion areas, incidents that may affect disabled pupils)

Impact, reviewing and reporting on our strategies:

The scheme will be monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed annually with the SEND policy and Accessibility Plan. The review of the scheme will cover:

- Information on attainment and achievement for those pupils with a disability.
- Current pupils, staffing and others who are registered with a disability.
- A record of the progress made against the school Accessibility Plan.
- Adjustments that are to be considered in the school SEN policy which would cover staffing and provision.
- Priorities that would be included in the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.

Governors receive an annual report on the school's performance, which contain a summary of the priorities and strategies are overleaf.

There are two designated lead professionals for the disability equality scheme (DES), who in addition to the annual review, will also ensure that disabled school members are involved in discussions about policy or practice changes that occur at times during the year – these are the school's SENDCos (see staff list for further details). These DES staff can be contacted by telephone or via info@stap.bwcet.com

Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Evaluation 2027
Equality and Inclusion				
Ensure children and carers with physical disability have equitable opportunity to access all areas of building.	Liaise with sensory support team, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other relevant professionals to ensure resources and layout of building are optimised to give good access	All members of the school community access all areas of building.	Ongoing	
Ensure children and carers with visual disability have equal opportunity to access information from school.	Highlight on all school documentation that goes to parents that it is available in larger print on request.	Format of documentation altered appropriately.	As required	
Ensure pupils and carers with hearing impairment are able to access verbal communication.	Use of microphones and receivers in use during lessons and acts of worship. Specialist resources purchased in line with Education, Health and Care Plans.	All children and carers are engaged in discussions.	As required	
Review all policies to ensure they reflect our commitment to equality.	Governors to review policies in line with our review timetable.	Policies are just, fair and equitable and are fully embedded in the life of the school.	Ongoing	
To ensure that recruitment does not discriminate against protected characteristics.	Collect information during recruitment process and monitor to ensure equity and fairness.	Recruitment is fair, just and equitable.	As required	
To ensure that all pupils are taught and recognise the importance of protected characteristics and do not discriminate.	To teach regularly as part of Relationship and Health Education lessons.	All discrimination is eliminated from St. Joseph's	Ongoing	
Physical Environment				
Ensure all building work complies with all current equality requirements.	Liaise with architect to ensure that accessibility is paramount in any new developments.	All members of the school community access new parts of the building without barriers.	As required	
Any redecorating work within the school is sympathetic to the needs of those with additional needs or disability.	Advice taken re-lighting and colour schemes before any further decorating takes place.	The school decorates in a way that is supportive of those with additional needs.	As required	
To improve access to and within the school (if needed).	The school will take into account the needs of any pupils and/or staff that may need support accessing the building and or moving around the premises, taking appropriate action as and when required (e.g. Access via ramps and an internal lift).	All members of the school community will be able to access all areas of school.	As required	
Curriculum				
Ensure the curriculum can be accessed by all children.	Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum through quality first teaching. Work with outside agencies to ensure up to date appropriate	All children access all aspects of the curriculum.		

	strategies are used to support learning and development. Individual SEN Support Plans in place to meet the needs of each child and identify the specific support that will be put in place. Specific equipment sourced from outside agencies as required e.g. OT requirements.			
Establish closer liaison with parents around SEND.	Termly meetings between school staff and families to review SEN support plans SEN coffee mornings		Termly	

Equality statement

- The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural, or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice, or stereotyping.
- This policy has been impact assessed by governors to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.

Monitoring and Review.

This policy will be reviewed by the LGC in September 2029