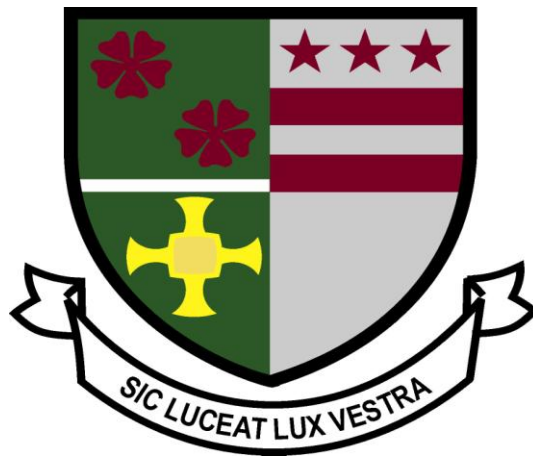


St. Robert of Newminster Catholic School
and
Sixth Form College



Disability Equality Scheme

2010-2011

Next Review November 2011

Disability Equality Scheme

Our Vision

All individuals are children of God, created equally in his image to share an eternal future. We promise to play our full part in their education and formation.

Our Mission

We strive to meet the academic, moral, physical, social and spiritual needs of all pupils so that they may take their place as caring, committed, aware and self-confident adult members of society.

Our Aims

In striving to create the school climate, which will nurture this mission statement, the school aims:

- *To offer to all students a broad, balanced, appropriate, relevant and flexible curriculum.*
- *To develop as an integral part of the local community and in particular the local Catholic community; to develop and maintain the partnership between school and parents, parishes, primary schools and the wider community.*
- *To develop a worshipping community, in which prayer and liturgy are encouraged as part of faith development.*
- *To encourage all members of our school community; students, parents, staff and governors to follow the example of Christ in their daily work and relationships; to treat one another with justice and dignity, tolerance and respect and to be aware of and respond to each other's needs, hopes and aspirations.*
- *To provide and maintain an attractive, happy, secure, safe and healthy school environment.*

Professional Requirements of Staff

In the light of our mission statement:

*All members of staff have a professional responsibility to meet the **academic, moral, social and spiritual needs of all students.***

To enable this to happen:

- *We will strive to provide an excellent teaching and learning experience for all students.*
- *We will encourage students to come to a fuller understanding of the difference between right and wrong. To be good citizens of the school community the students have to follow school rules, which are enforced by every staff member.*
- *The students will be given every opportunity to develop healthy lifestyles inside and outside the curriculum time. The school has a responsibility to encourage healthy eating and exercise during the school day.*
- *The Gospel values of respect and value for others will be made explicit to all students in their interaction with every member of the community. All members of the community have a responsibility to live out Gospel values in their work relationships.*
- *Opportunities will be provided for all community members to develop spiritually. The growth of the whole person must be implicit in the ethos of the school.*

School Motto

Sic Luceat Lux Vestra: Let Your Light Shine

The Purpose and Direction of St Robert's Disability Equality Scheme

Duties under Part 5A of the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) require the Governing Body to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: students, staff, parents, carers and others who use the school or may wish to; and
- Prepare and publish a disability scheme to show how they will meet these duties.
- Acknowledge good practice

This scheme and the accompanying action plans set out how St Robert's will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

Duties in Part 4 of the DDA require the Governing Body to plan to increase access to education for disabled students in three ways:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum,
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services,
- Improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

This scheme incorporates the St Robert's school's plans to increase access to education for disabled students.

Definition of Disability under the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial ("not trivial") and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. (Part 1, paragraph 1:1)

To fall within the Act, a person must be substantially affected by their disability in one of the following capacities:

- Mobility
- Physical co-ordination
- Manual dexterity
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing, eyesight
- Memory or ability to learn, concentrate or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger

In 2005 the Disability Amendment Act amended and broadened the definition:

- It included all those with cancer or surviving cancer.
- It included those with HIV or Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- Mental impairment no longer needs to be clinically recognised.

Involvement of Students, Staff and Parent/Carers with Disabilities.

St Robert's involves people with disabilities in all stages of the development of the scheme: in identifying priorities, how these priorities shall be met in the action plans and how the school should assess its progress.

By consulting with and involving people with disabilities the following benefits are achieved:

- Insights into the barriers faced by disabled students, staff, parents and carers,
- Expertise in identifying ways to overcome these barriers,
- By having clear and open channels of communication and discussion we continue to develop and improve our provision and working relationships.

Identifying Disabled People in our School Community

We acknowledge that this can be a sensitive issue for some who would not wish to have a disability known to us and consequently we appreciate that we may not have the total picture.

It is therefore important that we communicate the following to students, staff, parents and carers:

- The definition of disability
- That any confidential information given to us e.g. about a disability will be kept confidential

Identifying Types of Disabilities Experienced by Members of Our School Community

Student Information

- Annually we update our student's records identifying those who are registered SEN, those who are "anxious", have emotional conditions, illnesses, health conditions and/or disabilities.
- The parents of new students are asked to identify any relevant information in the following ways:
 - * Admission Form
 - * By discussing student's needs etc with relevant staff available at the Year 6 Parents' Information Evening e.g. HoY, SEN, School Based Social Worker/Counsellor, Medical Room Staff, Attendance Staff, Deputy Head Teacher: ECM and Head Teacher
 - *By arranging an appointment with the relevant member of staff
 - *By communicating concerns, issues at the SEN Review in Year 6 which is attended by St Robert's Director of SEN & Inclusion (Earlier if a student has a need which would require more than one years transition preparation)

- The previous school are asked to provide relevant information about the student prior to their attendance at St Robert's and disabilities as well as other needs are communicated in various ways:
 - * A written report
 - * Student File
 - * Discussions during a formal meeting with staff from both schools
- Professionals working with a student provide information and guidance to ensure the school caters for him/her with a specific need e.g. physio-therapy, so the student's needs are planned for and met and s/he is not disadvantaged.

Parent/Carers/Siblings Disabilities Which May Impact On the Student

- The Pastoral Leaders and support staff are often given information about parent/carer's or family member's disabilities (sometimes confidentially and sometimes openly). This can enable us to support the child at school e.g. homework club or time in the library after school, for a student who may not be able to concentrate at home because his/her autistic brother/sister is demanding a lot of parent/carer's time and there isn't a quiet room in which to study. We can modify our method of communication to cater e.g. a parent who is deaf/hard of hearing or blind. We can support a child who is a carer, anxious and upset because a family member has been diagnosed with cancer. This kind of information is not coldly requested on a form but communicated to staff as a result of mutual trust and genuine concern, the information is received sensitively and for the sole purpose to enable us to support the student and his/her family.
- As part of the parents/carers confidential questionnaire they all have the opportunity to make comment on current systems and provision and may suggest how we could improve our service to cater for their or their children's disability.

Staff Disabilities

- Staff may be employed with a disability or develop one whilst employed and so staff are encouraged to inform the Head Teacher promptly to ensure they can be supported and where possible their working conditions can be modified to enable the individual to function and progress without prejudice.
- The school is not required to do anything under its scheme that is unreasonable or impracticable.

Information Gathering

To achieve the following:

For Students

- Increase the extent to which students with disabilities or who live with parents/carers or siblings with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum,
- Improve the environment of the school to increase the extent to which students with disabilities can take advantage of education and associated services,
- Improve the delivery to students with disabilities, information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

For Parents and Carers

- To strive to ensure our systems, environment and protocols accommodate parents/carers with disabilities.

For Staff

- To ensure that potential staff and employed staff with disabilities are not disadvantaged or prejudiced because they have a disability.

This information is gathered in the following ways:

- Students representing a range of disabilities are asked to participate in a confidential interview with an appropriate member of staff they feel comfortable with, to discuss their disability and how it impacts on their learning, development and well-being, as well as how we can support them or possibly adapt our provision to ensure they are not disadvantaged in any way. The information will be used either to support them personally or generally to improve our systems, environment, resources etc to support students with similar needs.
- Parents/carers are invited, as part of the annual **confidential questionnaire**, to make comment on our current policies, practices and procedures, and may suggest how we could improve to accommodate e.g. a disability.
- As part of the SEN Review procedure we are made aware of difficulties encountered as a result of disabilities and we do our best to put strategies in place to resolve the problem by supporting the individual, adapting or changing our procedures or provision where-ever possible.
- Students who have been absent for a lengthy period, their parents/carers and key staff will meet to discuss the specific needs of a student, including disabilities, and actions will be agreed to ensure the student is supported and not disadvantaged.
- Students and their families who experience emotional trauma, sometimes in addition to a physical illness e.g. they or a family member is diagnosed with cancer, counselling is provided by our School Based Social Worker & Counsellor and mentoring support is provided by our School, Home, Attendance Liaison Team in addition to the help and guidance provided by their Head of Year and Tutor.
- As part of the data cycle we discuss each student's progress and achievement, and consider each individual's circumstances and factors which may impact on the child's development. This would include any disabilities. Sometimes parents with the student are invited to discuss the child's progress and the appropriate guidance and support is agreed, implemented and reviewed to help overcome any disadvantages, if any are experienced by the student.
- The Head Teacher and Governors work within the legal framework with regard to student admissions to ensure no student is disadvantaged as a result of a disability (ref: Admissions Procedures).
- The Head Teacher and Governors work within the legal framework to ensure a potential employee is not disadvantaged or discriminated against as a result of a disability (ref: Appointments Procedures, DRC Code of Practice: Employment and Occupation).

- The Head Teacher and Governors work within the legal framework and with employees' professional representatives, to ensure any employee with a disability can discuss his/her needs and is not disadvantaged or discriminated against as a result of this (ref: various Employer & Employee Procedures e.g. Access to Work, DRC Code of Practice: Employment and Occupation).

Impact Assessment

The main mechanism by which we will assess the impact of our current policies, practices and procedures is by bringing together:

- The issues identified through the involvement of students, staff and parents/carers with disabilities,
- The information that the school holds on the disabled students, staff and parents/carers with disabilities

This will enable us as a school to make judgement about the relevance and significance of policies, practices and procedures to disability equality. This will in turn determine where the school needs to set its priorities and what changes are needed to improve equality of opportunity.

We use this information to adopt a planned approach, for the duration of the three year scheme, to assess the impact of our current policy and practices on disability equality.

The school is not required to do anything under its scheme that is unreasonable or impracticable.

Identifying the Main Priorities for Our School's Scheme and Deciding Our Actions

The priorities and actions for the school's scheme will be identified as a result of:

- An examination of the information that the school has gathered,
- The recommendations that have been communicated by students, staff and parents/carers with disabilities
- An assessment of the impact of current policies on disability equality.
- Effectiveness of information gathering
- The involvement of students and adults with disabilities in the scheme

The General Duty

- Promoting Equality of Opportunity for Students, Staff and Parents/Carers with Disabilities
- Eliminating Discrimination
- Eliminating Harassment
- Promoting Positive Attitudes to Disability
- Encouraging Participation in Public Life
- Taking Steps to Meet Disabled People's Needs, Even if this Requires More Favourable Treatment

Implementation

- The school Scheme identifies our priorities
- It will be supported by an Action Plan showing the steps we are going to take to meet the General Duty
- The Accessibility Plan will also be incorporated

Publication

- The school's scheme will be published and presented to the Governing Body and copies will be sent to the LA and made available on the school website.

Reporting

We will report on the scheme annually to make clear:

- What progress we have made in terms of implementing our action plan and
- What has been the impact of what we have done

Reviewing and Revising the Scheme

The review of the scheme will inform its revision; how the school sets new priorities and new action plans for the next scheme. This process will

- Involve students, staff and parents/carers with disabilities
- Be based on information the school has gathered

Policy Approval

Chair of Governors _____ Mr J Waugh _____

Head Teacher _____ Mr S. G. White _____