

DISABILITY POLICY

Equality of opportunity at New Hall School is based on the Gospel values expressed in the Mission & Ethos Statement:

New Hall, a Catholic boarding and day school, provides
the best start in life, enabling students
to meet confidently the challenges of the wider world.

Here **academic excellence** is achieved in surroundings
where relationships are based on
care, trust and respect.

We **welcome** students from many traditions,
building a Christian **community** that has at its heart
prayer and service to others.

We strive to provide equality of opportunity for all members of our School community, within the context of a selective Catholic independent boarding and day school, making special provision for those with particular needs, including as to ability. We are committed to an inclusive and positive approach in ensuring that there is no unfair discrimination based on individual characteristics. The School expects that students and staff respect those of different backgrounds e.g. race, culture, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sex, transgender, gender identity/fluidity, sexual orientation or disability.

1. Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are:

- to afford opportunity to employees and pupils who are disabled
- to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)
- to have regard to the guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission *What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools*.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2. Policy statement

New Hall School (School) will:

- maintain and drive a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people in all the activities of the School
- train staff to understand the types of disabilities and how to deal with employees and pupils who are disabled. Staff will not be expected, unless medically qualified or trained, to administer medication
- adopt user-friendly procedures for considering admissions from parents of disabled children, and consult with those parents about the reasonable adjustments which can be made to ensure that the admissions process is accessible for their children
- implement and review the Accessibility Plan with the aim of increasing the accessibility of the School's curriculum, improving the physical environment of the School and improving

access to information for our employees, students and prospective students and their parents

- keep under review the School's admission policy, equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies.

3. Disability

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a "*substantial and long-term adverse effect*" on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activity (Equality Act 2010).

By way of further explanation:

- physical disability includes medical conditions for which a person needs to use a wheelchair, for example, cerebral palsy or brittle bones;
- a mental impairment is a recognised mental illness which has been diagnosed, a severe learning difficulty or a psychiatric illness;
- "long-term" means a period of 12 months or longer.

Other disabilities which may amount to disability include:

- severe disfigurements, scarring conditions and birthmarks (but not including tattoos or piercings)
- progressive conditions which will result in a substantial long-term adverse effect on day-to-day activity
- a controlled impairment, i.e. a person with a prosthesis, or a person with drug-controlled epilepsy or diabetes
- a history of impairment, for example a person who used to be disabled and has recovered, for example, a person with a previous mental illness.

Disability does not include:

- hay fever sufferers
- a person with anti-social tendencies such as paedophilia
- a person who has a behavioural difficulty, for a reason other than a disability, for example, arising from social or domestic circumstances
- a person who is addicted to nicotine, alcohol and other non-prescribed substances unless the addiction was originally the result of administration of medically prescribed drugs or other medical treatment.

4. Discrimination

We will not knowingly discriminate against a disabled person:

- in the arrangements for determining admission or employment procedures
- in the terms on which a place at the School is offered
- by refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission or employment
- in the provision of education and associated services
- in the way the School affords access to any benefit, service or facility offered or provided by the School

- by excluding a person on the grounds of his or her disability
- by harassing a person with a disability
- by victimising a person with a disability
- by failing to take steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled persons

5. Admission procedure for students

The School will be open to applications from any prospective student with a physical and / or mental impairment.

Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the student's ability and aptitude.

The registration or admission form will enable the parents to give details of their child's disability.

The School will treat every application from a disabled student in a fair, open-minded way.

The School will, if appropriate, request from the parents or previous School full details in the form of medical reports, educational psychologist reports and any other report which assesses the student's disability so that the School can make an assessment of the reasonable adjustments that would be needed in order to provide adequately for the student's physical and educational needs.

Applications will be considered on the basis that all reasonable adjustments have been made by the School in order to cater for the student's disability (see definition below).

The School will not offer a place if, after all reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately or appropriately for the student's physical and educational needs.

The School will inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are prepared to make or give reasons why the offer of a place will not be made.

6. Education and associated services

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of the education and associated services provided by the School. This is a broad expression that covers all aspects of school life. The range of activities that are covered by the expression include:

- the curriculum
- classroom organisation and timetabling
- access to school facilities
- school sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the serving of school meals

- assessment and examination arrangements
- school discipline and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, educational visits and other activities
- preparation of students for the next phase of education.

7. Reasonable adjustments for students

When providing educational services to a student, the School is legally required to make "reasonable adjustments" in order to cater for a student's disability.

The School shall inform the student and parents of the reasonable adjustments that the School is legally required to make for that student, which may typically include:

- making arrangements for a student in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room
- allowing extra time for a student with a learning difficulty, evidenced by an educational psychologist's report, to complete an entrance examination
- providing examination papers in larger print for a student with a visual impairment
- rearranging the timetable to allow a student to attend a class in an accessible part of the building
- arranging a variety of accessible sports activities

The School is not legally required to make adjustments, which include:

- physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, such as a new library

The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students as part of the duty to make "reasonable adjustments". The School will carefully consider any proposals and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services to be provided.

8. Reasonable adjustments for the public

The School may provide services to the public, for example at:

- open days
- parents' evenings
- concerts and plays
- exhibitions
- conferences (including residential conferences during holiday periods)
- use of sports facilities

Where a physical feature (for example steps, entrances, exits, toilet facilities) makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access the service, schools are required to take reasonable steps to:

- remove the feature; or
- alter it so it no longer has that effect; or

- provide reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available.

Where an auxiliary aid or service would enable a disabled person to make use of a service, schools are required to take reasonable steps to provide it. An auxiliary aid or service could be something as simple as extra assistance from a member of staff or a large print sign, or it might be a temporary ramp where steps are preventing wheelchair access.

9. Disclosure

Parents will be requested to provide the School with copies of the child's latest medical report, educational psychologist's report and any other information regarding the student's disability.

If, following the offer of the place, it is discovered that the School has not received full disclosure of information relating to the student's disability and the School is not able to make reasonable adjustments for those disabilities, then the School may withdraw the offer of a place, or ask the parents to withdraw a child who is already a student.

The School will have due regard to any request by a parent or student (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of a person's disability as confidential.

Any student who has a disability such as diabetes or epilepsy will be flagged on the School's management information system.

10. Accessibility Plan

The School has prepared an Accessibility Plan, which is available, on request, to all parents and staff.

The Accessibility Plan includes consideration of how the School proposes to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the School's curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School
- improve the delivery to disabled students of information which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled

The Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure that the Plan is up-to-date and covers all aspects of School life.

Complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance *What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools*.