ST JOHN FISHER
HARROGATE

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Designated Teacher: Headteacher / SENDCo
Adopted: November 2026
Review Period: 3 years
Review Date: November 2029

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

St John Fishers Catholic Academy is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming and accessible environment in which all pupils, students, staff, parents, carers and visitors are treated fairly and with dignity.

The school recognises its responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and remove barriers that may prevent disabled pupils and students from accessing education, facilities, information and the wider life of the school.

This policy applies to all pupils and students aged 11–18, including those in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 (sixth form).

The school will take appropriate steps to ensure that disabled pupils and students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled.

We recognise that accessibility is an ongoing responsibility and that individual needs may change throughout a pupil's or student's time at school.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Schedule 10.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Education Act 2002.
- Relevant health and safety legislation.
- Applicable statutory guidance relating to school accessibility and disability discrimination.

The school will comply with its legal responsibilities to prevent disability discrimination, make reasonable adjustments and promote equality of opportunity.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Pupils in Years 7–9 (Key Stage 3).
- Pupils in Years 10–11 (Key Stage 4).
- Students in Years 12–13 (Key Stage 5 and sixth form).
- Teaching and support staff.
- Parents, carers and visitors.
- School activities, educational visits and extracurricular provision.

It covers accessibility in relation to the curriculum, physical environment, communication, information and participation in school life.

4. Aims and Objectives

The school's aims are to:

1. Increase access to learning and the curriculum for disabled pupils and students.
2. Improve the physical environment to support accessibility and independence.
3. Ensure information is available in accessible formats.
4. Make reasonable adjustments to teaching, assessment and school procedures.
5. Promote positive attitudes towards disability and inclusion.
6. Identify and address barriers to participation.
7. Consult pupils, students and parents/carers about individual accessibility needs.
8. Ensure staff receive appropriate training and guidance.
9. Support successful transitions between Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
10. Enable disabled sixth-form students to access post-16 education, enrichment and progression opportunities.

5. Access to the Curriculum and Learning

The school is committed to ensuring that disabled pupils and students can participate as fully as possible in all aspects of teaching and learning.

Appropriate support and adjustments may include:

- Differentiated teaching and learning strategies.
- Accessible teaching materials and learning resources.
- Assistive technology and specialist equipment.
- Adaptations to classroom seating and layouts.
- Additional time, rest breaks or other appropriate examination arrangements.
- Alternative methods of recording and presenting work.
- Support from teaching assistants or specialist professionals where appropriate.
- Individual support plans and provision outlined in EHC plans.
- Appropriate arrangements for practical subjects, including science, PE, design technology, art and vocational learning.

Teachers will consider accessibility when planning lessons and selecting resources.

6. Sixth Form Accessibility (Key Stage 5)

The school recognises that sixth-form students may have different accessibility requirements as they develop greater independence and prepare for adulthood.

The school will seek to ensure that disabled sixth-form students can access:

- A-level and vocational courses.
- Classroom teaching and independent study.
- Sixth-form study areas and common rooms.
- Examinations and assessments.
- Careers education and guidance.
- University, apprenticeship and employment preparation.
- Work experience and placements.
- Enrichment activities and educational visits.
- Leadership opportunities and student representation.

Individual adjustments may include accessible study spaces, assistive technology, adapted learning materials, appropriate examination arrangements and additional support.

Students will be encouraged to develop independence and participate in decisions about their learning and support.

7. Physical Accessibility

The school operates within an existing building and site that present a number of physical accessibility challenges. The age, design and layout of the premises mean that some areas are not fully accessible to individuals with mobility difficulties or other physical disabilities.

The school acknowledges these limitations and recognises that achieving full physical accessibility across the entire site would require significant structural alterations and substantial financial investment. Some modifications may therefore be impractical or disproportionate within the context of the existing building, its structure and the resources available to the school.

The school is committed to making reasonable adjustments, within its legal responsibilities, to reduce or remove barriers wherever possible. This will include:

- Identifying and addressing accessibility barriers where reasonably practicable.
- Prioritising essential improvements to facilities and access routes.
- Considering individual needs when allocating classrooms and teaching spaces.
- Exploring alternative arrangements where particular areas of the building cannot be accessed.
- Making reasonable adjustments to enable pupils and students to participate in lessons, examinations and wider school activities.

- Providing alternative accessible spaces or arrangements where necessary.
- Considering accessibility as part of planned maintenance, refurbishment and future building improvements.
- Seeking specialist advice where appropriate when assessing individual requirements and potential adjustments.

Where physical access to a particular area cannot reasonably be achieved, the school will consider alternative ways of providing equivalent access to teaching, learning, facilities and activities. Decisions will be considered individually, taking account of the needs of the disabled person and the school's legal duties.

The school will continue to review the accessibility of its premises and identify improvements that are achievable and proportionate. The limitations of the existing building will be recognised within the school's Accessibility Plan, alongside the actions that can realistically be undertaken.

The school remains committed to ensuring that its physical environment does not unnecessarily prevent disabled pupils and students from accessing education and participating in school life.

8. Access to Information and Communication

The school recognises that pupils, students and parents/carers may require information in different formats.

Where reasonably practicable and appropriate, the school will provide:

- Electronic documents.
- Large-print materials.
- Accessible digital resources.
- Alternative communication formats.
- Clear and appropriately structured written information.
- Support for pupils and students with hearing, visual or communication impairments.

The school will consider accessibility when producing letters, reports, policies, learning materials and information published on its website.

9. Admissions, Attendance and Participation

The school will ensure that disabled pupils and students are not unlawfully discriminated against in admissions or participation in school activities.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered to enable participation in:

- Lessons and examinations.
- Assemblies and school events.
- Educational visits and residential trips.
- Physical education and sporting activities.

- Clubs and extracurricular activities.
- Sixth-form enrichment and leadership opportunities.
- Careers events and progression activities.

Where necessary, individual arrangements will be discussed with pupils, students and parents/carers.

10. Supporting Individual Needs

The school will work in partnership with pupils, students, parents/carers and relevant external professionals to identify and respond to accessibility requirements.

Support may involve the SENDCo, pastoral teams, subject teachers, specialist teachers, therapists and other relevant professionals.

Where appropriate, individual support plans and EHC plans will inform the provision and adjustments required.

The school recognises that not all disabled pupils and students have special educational needs and that accessibility requirements should be considered individually.

11. Emergency Evacuation

The school will consider the individual evacuation requirements of disabled pupils, students, staff and visitors.

Where necessary, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) or other suitable arrangements will be developed and reviewed.

Staff will be made aware of their responsibilities, and evacuation procedures will be implemented in accordance with the school's health and safety arrangements.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body / Trust Board

- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
- Approve and monitor the Accessibility Plan.
- Review progress and ensure appropriate resources are considered.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

- Lead the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure accessibility is embedded in school improvement planning.
- Promote an inclusive school culture.

SENDCo

- Coordinate support for pupils and students with SEND and disabilities.
- Advise staff on reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice.

- Liaise with families and external professionals.
- Monitor the effectiveness of individual support arrangements.

Sixth Form Leadership Team

- Ensure accessibility is considered in post-16 teaching and provision.
- Support transition into and through sixth form.
- Monitor access to enrichment, careers and progression opportunities.

Teaching and Support Staff

- Identify barriers to learning and participation.
- Implement agreed adjustments.
- Use inclusive teaching strategies.
- Report accessibility concerns.

Premises and Site Team

- Monitor the accessibility and safety of the school environment.
- Identify and report physical barriers.
- Support the implementation of agreed premises improvements.

13. Accessibility Plan

The school will maintain a separate written Accessibility Plan in accordance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The plan will address three statutory areas:

1. Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils and students.
2. Improving the physical environment to increase accessibility.
3. Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils and students.

The plan will include identified priorities, actions, timescales, responsibilities, resources and success criteria.

It will be monitored, reviewed and revised as necessary.

14. Consultation and Complaints

The school will encourage pupils, students and parents/carers to raise accessibility concerns.

Concerns should initially be directed to the SENDCo or relevant member of the senior leadership team.

Where concerns remain unresolved, the school's formal complaints procedure may be followed.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body / Trust Board will monitor the implementation of this policy and the associated Accessibility Plan.

The policy will be regularly where changes in legislation, guidance or school circumstances require it.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Secondary School and Sixth Form (Ages 11–18)

School: St John Fishers Catholic Academy
Plan period: 2026–2029
Responsible body: Governing Body / Trust Board
Lead responsibility: Headteacher / SENDCo
Monitoring: Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body

Aim 1: Increase access to the curriculum

Priority	*Action*	*Responsibility*	*Success criteria*
Inclusive teaching	Review teaching strategies to ensure accessibility across all subjects	SENDCo / Heads of Department	Lessons reflect individual accessibility needs
Staff development	Provide training on disability awareness and inclusive teaching	SLT / SENDCo	Staff demonstrate improved understanding
Assistive technology	Review availability of specialist equipment and digital support	SENDCo / Network Manager	Appropriate equipment is available
Examination access	Identify and arrange appropriate examination access arrangements	Examinations Officer / SENDCo	Eligible students receive agreed arrangements
Sixth form	Review accessibility of A-level and vocational courses	Head of Sixth Form	Disabled students can access their chosen courses
Educational visits	Review accessibility arrangements before trips and visits	Trip Leaders / SENDCo	Barriers are identified and addressed
Transition	Provide appropriate transition arrangements from Year 11 into Year 12	SENDCo / Head of Sixth Form	Students receive appropriate transition support

Aim 2: Improve the physical environment

Priority	*Action*	*Responsibility*	*Success criteria*

Building access	Review entrances, corridors, ramps and lifts	Operations Manager	Access routes are maintained
Accessible facilities	Review accessible toilets and changing facilities	Operations Manager	Facilities remain suitable and available
Classroom access	Review classroom layouts, furniture and circulation space	Heads of Department	Learning spaces meet identified needs
Sixth-form facilities	Review access to study rooms, common areas and social spaces	Head of Sixth Form / Operations Manager	Sixth-form facilities are accessible
Sensory environment	Review lighting, acoustics and quiet spaces	SENDCo / Operations Manager	Identified sensory barriers are addressed
Emergency procedures	Review individual evacuation arrangements	Health and Safety Lead	Appropriate arrangements are documented and tested

Aim 3: Improve access to information

Priority	***Action***	***Responsibility***	***Success criteria***
School communications	Provide alternative formats where required	Administration Team	Families can access important information
Website accessibility	Review website and digital communication accessibility	Network Manager	Information is easier to access
Learning resources	Encourage accessible formatting of teaching materials	Heads of Department	Resources meet identified needs
Parent communication	Identify communication preferences and accessibility requirements	Year Managers	Parents/carers can engage effectively
Sixth-form information	Ensure course, careers and progression information is accessible	Head of Sixth Form	All students can access relevant guidance