



**Mission Statement:**

The Sacred Heart is a Community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic Christian ethos, where each person is invited to serve God and others in faith, hope and love.

**Aims:**

- To foster spiritual growth in Christian faith and values
- To value, appreciate and enjoy learning
- To work for excellence
- To further curiosity and creativity
- To aspire to high ideals
- To stimulate generous service of others

***Equal Opportunities***

## **Equal Opportunities and Disability Policy and Three Year Accessibility Plan**

**The Sacred Heart School is a Catholic Christian School which seeks to express gospel values of respect for each person made in the image of God.**

**The Trustees, the Daughters of Divine Charity are a group of Sisters living in Community who have equal opportunities in a male dominated society.**

**Aim:**

To ensure that within the law the school is free from unlawful discrimination, as far as is compatible with our religious foundation.

We aim to make the school a place that all its members feel valued and are proud to belong. Learning is the entitlement and responsibility of every member of the school community and we all have the right to

- Feel comfortable, safe, secure, equally valued and respected
- Grow and change, free from responsibility, stereotyping, harassment, bullying, and negative discrimination
- Object to and reject bad language or behaviour which is offensive or intimidating
- Equal access to a curriculum that meets everyone's needs, within the available resources

Every member of the School has responsibility to:

- Treat others with respect
- Report any incidents of disrespect within the School

According to the law it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of gender, race or disability The Sex Discriminations Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discriminations Act 2005

**The curriculum and pastoral care system** provides opportunities for teaching about equality and cultural diversity. It has an important role in promoting equal opportunities and countering racial or sexual prejudice.

**Harassment** such as name calling, victimisation and stereotyping are absolutely unacceptable and in conflict with the schools values

**Sexual harassment** (sexual jokes, homophobic jokes, insults and gestures) must be treated in a serious but sympathetic manner

Pupils must feel safe in reporting harassment to a teacher

Staff are required to deal firmly with the pupil / pupils over this matter

**Racist behaviour** is indefensible

Racism may be exhibited in jokes, caricatures, isolation or intimidation and physical contact

Staff are required to deal firmly with the pupil / pupils over this matter

**Disability and Accessibility Plan**— see Appendix 1, **Recruitment of Ex-offenders** – see Appendix 2

**The role of the teachers** is in explaining and transmitting school values

There will be opportunities for discussion of issues, such as cultural diversity and disabilities in lessons and assemblies

**Religious Ethos**

- The purpose of the school is to offer to all the experience of living in a Catholic Christian community.
- All persons are seen as special are treated without bias, regardless of sex, colour, race, nationality or ethnic origins.
- All parents seeking their child's admission to the school accept the Catholic ethos of the school and its teachings.
- Assemblies are Christian based but there are opportunities for pupils and families of different denominations and religions to share their beliefs and culture with pupils and staff.
- The Church of England vicar and his deacon are willing to provide confirmation classes after school for the Anglican Community
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in traditional Catholic practices, i.e. Lenten activities for chosen

charities, receiving a blessing from the priest during Mass

### **Cultural and Linguistic**

The School positively encourages overseas visitors.

- Placements are available for older children and Sisters from the international congregation.
- Sisters and older students work in the school and boarding house acting as role models to the pupils, encouraging speaking of foreign languages and widening pupils and staff cultural experience
- Gap Year students are employed in the school from a variety of destinations

### **Curricular**

- The Lower School and the Senior School are co-educational. Pupils are encouraged to stay until the age of 16 but some leave earlier.
- The School provides an environment of learning that encourages the intellectual development of each pupil within a curriculum that is both demanding and supportive of individual needs.
- The school is committed to working with parents and outside agencies to ensure equality of opportunity.
- All activities and sport are open to both boys and girls.
- Ensuring that financing and planning outings is inclusive (Day trips planned at same time as trips abroad)
- The ethos of the school creates a safe environment in which to participate, learn and develop where self confidence builds a sense of worth.
- There is accessibility for the curriculum for disabled pupils in all areas except the French Room and the Library

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN) - for information on SEN Code of Practice please see SEN policy**

#### **Disability – see also appendix**

Pupils and staff with disabilities are accepted or employed as long as they are able to cope with our present buildings. The Boarding House is a listed building and cannot be radically changed, therefore pupils and staff with severe mobility problems would have restricted access to areas of the Boarding House.

#### **Staff Employment**

- Teaching and non-teaching posts are offered to both male and female staff. Male staff may not be employed in the Boarding House where dormitory supervision is required.
- All staff are treated with equal respect.
- Posts of responsibility lay within the school, with the Deputy and Head of Lower School receiving an enhanced allowance.
- The Heads of English, Science and Mathematics receive an allowance and with the Deputy Head and Head of Lower School form the Academic Policy and Progress committee.
- All other members of the Teaching staff are paid on the Basic Pay Spine for Teachers.

#### **Staffing:**

The school aims to recruit staff on a basis of fairness

Applicants are not discriminated against if they are not Catholics

The Headteacher and Head of Religious Education need to be practising Catholics (Footnote\*)

For some other posts such as Head of the Lower School and Deputy Head, the School would seek a Catholic but would appoint a non-Catholic if suitable

#### **See separate policies on Staffing**

#### **Monitoring and Review**

This will be regularly reviewed by the SMT

**\* The school is designated as a Roman Catholic School within the meaning of the 2002 Act.**

*This means that when considering the appointment, promotion or remuneration of teachers, the school may give preference to individuals:*

*Whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, who worship in accordance with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church or who are willing to give religious education in accordance with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.*

*The Roman Catholic foundation of the school affects the employment of the Head and RE teachers and we will seek to employ Roman Catholics in these positions*

*When considering terminating the employment of a teacher, the school may consider any conduct on the part of the teacher which is incompatible with the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.*

(Reviewed March 1998 Sr. F, HK, April 2000 HK, SR. F, MY, 2002, Oct.2006 HK, MY; August 2008 DPW;)  
(Appendix 2 added to this policy 05/02/09)Reviewed: Jan 2011 SG /HK/PP, Sr F, HK March 2012 To be reviewed March 2113

## Appendix 1 – Disability and Accessibility Plan

### Aim:

To support the ethos of the school as a Catholic community which respects the rights of disabled people

### Admission for disabled pupils:

- The school must feel reasonably sure that throughout the pupil's time at the Sacred Heart School, that it will be able to develop the pupil to the best of his / her potential
- Parents must inform the school of the disability of a pupil

### Physical access:

Legislation requires only reasonable adjustments to the premises. Fortunately there is access to most areas of the school and there is a lift in both the Barn and the Boarding House

### Education:

Staff will make the appropriate arrangements to cater for any disabled pupil during their lesson and ensure his / her integration with others

An Individual Education Plan will be drawn up by the Special Needs Co-ordinator

Every effort will be made to include disabled pupils in Sports, outings and other activities which enrich the curriculum

### Awareness

Appropriate Staff INSET will be provided to promote understanding of disability

Staff and pupils will be made aware of disability

### Monitoring & review

By the Senior Management Team

### Accessibility:

Boarding House	Access to Dining Room & Junior Common Room Access by Lift for upstairs room, although there are staircases to rooms that are inaccessible
Lower School	Access adequate
Middle School	Access through front door – two small steps
Senior School	Access through front door (low step) and to Gym and to most classrooms (Not French or Library)
Sports Hall	Access adequate
Barn	Access adequate and lift to first floor
Pool	Access – one deep step

### Disability and Accessibility Plan

Jan 2011 – Jan 2013

January 2011	
a. Participation in curriculum	Option subjects tailored to Lower Group by providing non GCSE subjects – Access Spanish and Level 1 Cookery
b. Improving provision	Rapid Reading Scheme (speaking programme) on computer system
c. Improving the environment	Safer access to Middle school
January 2012	
a. Participation in curriculum	Continued LSA and improved support for deaf / cerebral palsy pupil Questionnaire to all pupils regarding their learning
b. Improving provision	Reading overlays provided Book buddy system – Seniors helping Lower school
c. Improving the environment	Internal ramp from Library area to English room in Senior School Training for teaching staff to use the disabled lift in the Barn
January 2013	
a. Participation in curriculum	More activities for boys – sport, technology Purchase more software – Word Shark, Interactive Maths programmes
b. Improving provision	Provide Kindles for assisted reading Use of large print produced on appropriate coloured paper, diagrams
c. Improving the environment	Easier access to swimming pool for physically disabled

### Introduction

The SENDA Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a “substantial and long term

adverse effect on (the individual's) ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

Special Educational Needs (SEN) refer to any circumstances resulting in an individual pupil requiring additional or different help in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to pupils of the same age. These difficulties include physical, emotional, behavioural and specific learning difficulties and can also refer to gifted and talented pupils.

The act requires us to examine all aspects of our provision of educational and associated services and to ensure that appropriate responses are made to meet the needs of those with disabilities or special needs. Sacred Heart School is guided by these principles in planning its educational provision and is committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to learning and to the curriculum.

### **Admissions**

Sacred Heart School aims to provide an intellectually challenging and safe educational environment in which all pupils are able to access the curriculum, make a positive contribution to the life of the school and achieve their potential. The school is particularly aware of the needs of those children with disabilities and is keen to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are not treated less favourably.

Admission to the school is based on the premise that we will be able to educate and develop the pupil to the best of his or her potential; to emerge confident and well-educated, able to take advantage of the higher educational opportunities to which they are best suited. These criteria are applied to all potential pupils, regardless of any disability or learning difficulty of which the school is aware. The school's policy is to make any reasonable adjustment to ensure that pupils with a disability or learning difficulty are not disadvantaged because of his or her disability, now and in the future.

When a parent applies to the school for their child's admission, they will be interviewed, during which time they will be asked whether their child has any particular need or disability. (The school therefore fulfils an anticipatory duty as defined by the Act. A failure of a parent to divulge SEN/disability at this time constitutes a justification under the act for discrimination). Where a parent requests confidentiality regarding a SEN/disability this request may limit what the school could provide in making reasonable adjustments. Under these circumstances the school has the right to decide the balance of confidentiality and possible and reasonable adjustments for inclusion.

No child therefore will be prevented from joining the school due to their individual needs.

Sacred Heart accepts pupils who are dyslexic, dyspraxic, who have other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs), including ADD/ADHD, and EAL. The school will also offer places to pupils who have other difficulties such as physical disabilities, motor co-ordination problems, visual impairment, auditory impairment, Asperger's Syndrome, severe allergic reactions and emotional problems. Suitability of the structure of school buildings and their limitations for each pupil will be considered on an individual basis. This is carried out in consultation with the pupil, parents and with an appropriately qualified person, as necessary. At present there are a number of children in school with specific severe allergies. There are amended menus in place to ensure their safety and specific medical kits are in the canteen and taken on trips for these individuals.

### **Appointment of Staff**

The School is committed to an equal opportunities approach to employment and ensures both in the advertising and promotion of posts and in selection procedures that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that discrimination does not take place.

### **Education and associated services**

The School has a duty under SENDA to ensure that less favourable treatment does not occur in the following areas:

- curriculum
- teaching and learning
- timetabling, classroom and school organization and setting
- homework
- serving of school meals
- interaction with peers, school clubs and activities
- assessment and exam arrangements
- school discipline
- exclusion/suspension procedures
- preparation of pupils for their next phase of education

All of these are bound by the limits of reasonable adjustment as detailed in the DDA 2005.

Sacred Heart School's Special Educational Needs curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and

examination provision is the responsibility of the SENCO staff working together with the Examinations Officer and the SMT. We endeavour to ensure that subjects are available to all pupils but on occasions allow a modified curriculum (such as the omission of foreign language study to GCSE) in response to the needs of an individual's learning profile.

### **Access to out of classroom activities**

Wherever possible we will make reasonable adjustment to allow SEN/disabled pupils to access the full educational and learning experiences that the school provides. However, the school also has to consider:

- financial resources available to the school
- health and safety requirements – SENDA does not override our duties under Health and Safety legislation.
- the interests of the other pupils within the school

In the event that a pupil's co-curricular or recreational activities are limited by their SEN profile, alternative opportunities will be made available wherever possible.

### **Accessibility Strategies: Buildings and Site**

Under SENDA the school has a planning duty to audit access to buildings and facilities. Such access audits will be incorporated in the School's plans for future development.

The school recognises the implication of buildings which are separate. Any child with impaired mobility will face some difficulties in moving between the buildings. Reasonable adjustment will be made for individuals if possible, but the site is not suitable for children with severe physical impairments or disabilities. Access to some rooms could be difficult for pupils with a physical disability, however, every effort would be made, on an individual basis, to support and accommodate a pupil for whom these issues are challenging. There is already a lift to the first floor of the barn theatre complex, the first floor of the boarding house and ramps available for access to the schools. Provision was made in the past for a pupil with a back injury to use a specialist chair in class.

### **Claims of unlawful discrimination**

Any claim for unlawful discrimination under SENDA must come from the parent not the child. In the first instance the complaint should be made to the school and follow the school's Complaints Policy. However, parents have the right to refer a complaint to SENDIST within six months of the date on which they believe unlawful discrimination has taken place.

### **Educational Ethos**

We are an educationally inclusive school, where the teaching and learning achievements, attitudes and well-being of every pupil matter. We recognise that pupils have different educational needs and abilities. They learn and acquire knowledge in different ways and at varying rates. Teaching provision is adapted to the individual's needs, including those with disabilities, those with special educational needs, those from different cultural backgrounds and pupils with English as an additional language. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children, including when special educational provision is made for their child. Appropriate alternative communication methods are implemented if necessary in response to individual need. This includes, for example, access to enlarged print texts and examination papers, modified conditions for pupils with a hearing impairment in oral examinations and in the examination hall, Braille materials etc. Staff are expected to plan their lessons and materials to be used in order to accommodate children with particular needs.

### **Gifted and Talented Pupils**

The school recognises that gifted and talented pupils have specific needs, and individual teachers differentiate their work in response to the needs of this group. The school also runs curriculum enrichment 'Challenge Weeks' to stretch pupils and has a separate policy which supports the interests of the gifted and talented.

Sacred Heart School's SENDA policy is reviewed and updated annually.

### **Making it happen**

#### **a Management, coordination and implementation**

The school has set the following priorities for the management, coordination and implementation of the accessibility plan:

- Major items to appear in the School Development plan and to be discussed by the Governors
- The Headteacher takes a lead on major initiatives
- Class teachers take on day-to-day responsibilities for the pupils in their care.

#### **b Accessing the school's plan: The school has set the following priorities for making its plan available**

- ✧ It is kept on the school system with all other policies
- ✧ A copy will be made available on the school web-site for parents

## Appendix 2 – Recruitment of Ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Sacred Heart School complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The Sacred Heart School is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical / mental disability or offending background.

We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders which is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person with the Sacred Heart School and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows the Sacred Heart School to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about unspent convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in the Sacred Heart School who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

**Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.** This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.