



St. Francis' College

Disability Policy

Introduction

The 'College' refers to all the staff and pupils of the Prep Department and Senior School which includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Pre-Prep (Key Stage 1), Prep (Key Stage 2), and Senior School (Key Stages 3-5)

Legal Framework

St. Francis' College is committed to the principles of the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>, n.d.) and the Equality Act 2010.

The latter Act defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment', which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. 'Impairment' covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental illness where the condition is recognized by a respected body of medical opinion.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and information to parents, pupils and prospective pupils and staff on how the College plans to integrate the principles and practices of the legislation in all aspects of College life.

The College's Policy is to apply its admissions criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligations to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage because of her disability compared with any pupil who is not disadvantaged.

Admissions

St. Francis' College welcomes all pupils who are able to benefit from its balanced and well-rounded education and to make a positive contribution towards the life of the College and who can flourish in its caring environment. Applications from all who have the ability and aptitude to access the academic curriculum are welcome. This includes students with special educational needs, physical or mental, provided that the College may make those reasonable adjustments necessary and is able to provide the individual needs help and support required.

As an academically selective organisation (the selection criteria are described in the College Admissions Policy) the College must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop every pupil throughout their time at the College to the best of her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge well-educated and well-rounded.

The College hopes that parents of students with a physical or learning disability or other special education need will discuss their daughter's requirements with the College before their daughter sits the entrance exam or assessment, so that adequate provision may be made on that day. Parents may be asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report to support their request, for example, for large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements.

The College also asks parents to provide information about any disability in respect of a prospective pupil at the time of application. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the College may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the College will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

Barriers to Learning

The College recognises that social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning can be associated with some disabilities and that mental illness or learning difficulties can cause behavioural issues. The College aims to work together with families to overcome or minimise these as far as is possible.

Since pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) have very different needs, the College recognises the importance of communicating closely with parents with regards to learning assessments for their daughter(s) and related targets for improvement. The College shares targets with pupils and parents through Individual Education Plans, reports, Parents' Evenings and, when needed, one-to-one meetings with the aim of enabling improvements to be achieved.

Individual Needs and Learning Support (refer to the Individual Needs Policy)

The College is able to support pupils with specific learning difficulties including: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalcula, Asperger's Syndrome and emotional and behavioural problems, but as an academically selective College the individual support is provided at a level consistent with pupils meeting the entrance requirements.

Some disabled pupils may also require specialist support, which would normally be discussed with parents before their daughter enters the College. Pupils with identified or suspected learning difficulties will be assessed at their parents' expense by a specialist so that the areas that require support can be identified. Specialist lessons and help with study skills are offered outside the normal curriculum. The College is keen to work closely with pupils and their parents and to help overcome the barriers that their difficulties present.

The College's Head of Individual Needs Co-ordinator has an important role working closely with the Deputy Head and other pastoral staff, in determining the development of the College's Individual Needs Policy and provision in the College in order to cater for the individual needs of pupils with SEND.

Teachers at St. Francis' differentiate within the curriculum and take into account pupils; learning difficulties (as well as the needs of gifted and talented pupils). The Individual Needs Co-ordinator liaises with teaching staff about the most appropriate means of meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and learning difficulties. The INC plays an important role in ensuring consistency of approach by teachers in providing, for example, extra support, or extra time in exams.

Other Adjustments

The College's aim is to help each pupil reach their maximum potential, and to provide the appropriate adjustments that can give full access to the curriculum and facilities of the school to the greatest extent possible. Depending upon need, children may use laptop computers in class, and can be given large print or documents printed on coloured paper, if required.

Menus may be devised to cater for special dietary requirements.

The College will be pleased to provide auxiliary aids and services which, where these amount to reasonable adjustments, will not be charged to parents. Whether or not it is reasonable to levy any further fees for additional support for individual pupils will be considered on a case by case basis, on the basis of what is reasonable.

Physical Accessibility

The physical layout and age of the buildings does pose significant difficulties for pupils with impaired mobility.

The **College's Accessibility Plan**, which outlines the ways in which the College is improving the accessibility of its education to pupils or prospective pupils with disabilities by means of reasonable adjustments, may be obtained on request.

Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Carers

Pupils with Education, Health and Care plans from their local authorities who are suited to the College's educational offer are welcome. If a pupil with an EHCP requires their dedicated carer with them during the school day, for example, to assist with personal care, writing, etc the College will be pleased to accommodate this, provided that the carer has an enhanced DBS check arranged by the College and complies with the child protection regulations in force at the time. The College would require a carer to sign a written agreement undertaking to comply with the its child protection policies and to attend the child protection induction briefing that is given to all new members of staff before working unsupervised on site.

(A pupil's dedicated carer is not a College employee and the pupil's parents would be asked to provide a written undertaking indemnifying the College from any legal responsibility or cost connected with the provision of their services to their daughter.)

Pupils' Behaviour and Discipline

The College takes pride in its well-developed system of pastoral care of pupils. The College's intention is to ensure that a pupil with SEND does not suffer less favourable treatment as a result of discrimination. Consequently, **its Behaviour and Discipline Policy** and school rules make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that victimisation, bullying and harassment are prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Partnership with Parents

The College's hope is that all parents will feel able to share any concerns about their daughter(s) with the pastoral staff in order that a healthy partnership for the care of their daughter(s) can be developed. The Head of Individual Needs, Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Head of Prep, Head of 6th Form and Deputy Head who are involved with the care of their daughter are always happy to discuss any parental concerns. A member of staff will always ask to see a parent if they felt that an adjustment to the curriculum or individual education plan followed by their daughter might be in

their best interests, or if there was a specific concern.

St. Francis' College hopes that parents will not feel that they have cause to complain, but the College of course recognises the right of pupils or their families to express concern where they feel that this may not be the case.

The normal mechanisms of raising concern by way of Form Tutors, Heads of Year, or the Deputy Head may be used, as detailed in the College's Complaints Procedure, a copy of which can be provided on request, or may be found on the College website. Additionally, all parents of children with SEND have the legal right to seek redress from the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if they believe that their daughter has been discriminated against.

Related Documents and Policies

Admissions Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Accessibility Plan
Behaviour and Discipline Policy
Equality Policy
Individual Needs and EAL Policy
Pastoral Care Policy

Reviewed By	Bursar
Authorised By	Head
Effective From	September 2022
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