Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

Policy Title:	**Accessibility Policy**
Date of Approval:	**December 2025**
Approved by:	**Trust Board**
Date of next review:	**December 2028**
Applies to:	**All school & Trust settings**

Change log:

Version	Author	Date	Approved by	Change
1	COO	Dec 2021	Trust Board	Original
1.1	COO	Nov 22	Trust Board	Formatted and slight amendments
1.2	HoG	Dec 25	Trust Board	No changes

Accessibility Policy

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1. Principle

1.1. The Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of every school for all of the young people who attend one of the Trust's schools. We want everyone within every one of our schools to feel welcome, valued and included in the school community. We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment to enable this to happen.

1.2. The Equality Act 2010 (The Act) places a legal obligation on schools which makes it unlawful to discriminate against students, staff and other stakeholders with a disability. This Act brings together several different equality laws including the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The Act also places an anticipatory duty on schools to consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to improve access to the schools' services for any stakeholder with a disability, including students, staff, parents, and carers and any other visitors to school, without waiting until the adjustment is actually needed.

2. Definition of Disability

2.1. A person is disabled under The Act if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to undertake normal daily activities.

2.2. Substantial is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would, or is undertaken in a significantly different way, to complete a daily task such as getting dressed.

2.3. Long-term means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

2.4. People with progressive conditions can be classed as disabled. A progressive condition is one that gets worse over time. However, someone automatically meets the disability definition under The Act from the day that they are diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

2.5. Some conditions are expressly excluded from the definition of disabled by The Act. These are:

- addiction to, or dependency on, alcohol, nicotine, or any other substance (other than in consequence of the substance being medically prescribed);
- the condition known as seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hayfever), except where it aggravates the effect of another condition;
- tendency to set fires;
- tendency to steal;
- tendency to physical or sexual abuse of other persons;
- exhibitionism;
- voyeurism.

2.6. The exclusions also apply where these tendencies arise as a consequence of, or a manifestation of, an impairment that constitutes a disability for the purposes of the Act.

2.7. The Act states that, except for the provisions in Part 12 (Transport) and section 190 (improvements to let dwelling houses), the provisions of the Act also apply in relation to a person who previously has had a disability as defined above. This means that someone who is no longer disabled, but who met the requirements of the definition in the past, will still be covered by the Act. Also protected would be someone who continues to experience debilitating effects as a result of treatment for a past disability.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy relates to any young person who attends one of the Trust's schools and members of staff employed by The Trust.

4. Adjustments

4.1. Where someone meets the definition of a disabled person in The Act, the Trust will make reasonable adjustments to any elements of a job, or site, which place that person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled person.

4.2. Every BBCET school must show how it is:

- identifying pupils and staff with disabilities to enable it to give reasonable assistance to them and without discriminating against them,
- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum,
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities.

4.3. Reasonable adjustments in relation to students and parents / carers might include:

- removing movable barriers like furniture, teaching and holding meetings in a different, wheelchair accessible room;
- allowing a guide or hearing dog into the school;
- purchasing specialist equipment, such as an ergonomic chair;
- discounting disability-related sickness leave for the purposes of absence management;
- providing additional supervisory guidance / support;
- allowing different start and end times to the working day for staff.

4.4. From September 2012 schools have been required to provide auxiliary aids (and services) for disabled pupils to overcome any disadvantage experienced in schools.

4.5. Reasonable adjustments in relation to the school site might include:

- providing step free access to school buildings where possible
- when designing new classrooms or refurbishing old buildings, ensuring that doors are wide enough for wheelchair access
- including a disabled parking space in the car park.

4.6. If it is clear that there the only adjustments that can be made to avoid a disadvantage are unreasonable then they do not need to be made. In such situations the school must document, in detail, how and why it has come to this conclusion.

5. Accessibility Plans

5.1. Every BBCET school must have an accessibility plan.

5.2. Every school's accessibility plan must include:

- how the curriculum is differentiated, and at Key Stage 4, what alternative accreditation is offered
- how information for pupils, parents and the community is available in different formats such as Braille, larger font or reduced / simplified language,
- actions to improve the signage in the buildings and grounds where needed,
- arrangements that could be put in place if a disabled parent needed support to attend a school event,
- plans to make the school's site more accessible for disabled learners, their parents / carers and staff.

5.3. Accessibility plans should cover a period of 3 years and then be reviewed again at the end of that period with an updated plan for the next 3 years.

5.4. An example template for an accessibility plan can be accessed via the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust's website, www.bishopbewickcet.org.

5.5. The accessibility plan must be published on the school's website.

6. Monitoring and Review

6.1. This policy will be reviewed in three years' from the date of approval.