



# Disabilities and Special Needs

*Policies, Procedures and Strategies*

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## Summary

<b>Aim</b>	<p>This Policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out the procedures in place to accommodate disabled staff</li> <li>• set out the procedures in place to accommodate disabled students</li> <li>• set out the procedures in place to accommodate students with special educational needs and disability (SEND)</li> <li>• highlight St Joseph School's ongoing commitment to equality and access for all</li> </ul>
<b>Applies to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Management</li> <li>• Academic Management</li> <li>• Safeguarding &amp; Welfare Officer</li> <li>• Teaching staff</li> <li>• Student Support staff</li> <li>• Activity Leaders</li> <li>• Accommodation staff</li> <li>• Homestay providers</li> <li>• Residence managers &amp; staff</li> <li>• Marketing and Sales staff</li> </ul>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Handbook</li> <li>• Recruitment Policy</li> <li>• Diversity and Equality Statement</li> <li>• Safeguarding and Welfare Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Approved by</b>	Proprietor
<b>Responsibility for update</b>	Deputy Principal
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## Introduction

St Joseph school is completely opposed to discrimination in all forms, and we work hard to ensure that no student, member of staff, representative or sub-contractor is discriminated against on the grounds of disability, illness, or academic or professional need.

To this end, the school undertakes to act at all times in accordance with the appropriate legislation and guidelines.

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## Defining Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, disability is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities<sup>1</sup>.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial. For example, it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task such as getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more. For example, a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be:

- sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing;
- impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy;
- progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, and forms of dementia;
- auto-immune conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE);
- organ specific, including respiratory conditions, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease;
- developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- learning disabilities;
- mental health conditions with symptoms such as anxiety, low mood, panic attacks, phobias, or unshared perceptions; eating disorders; bipolar affective disorders; obsessive compulsive disorders; personality disorders; post traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour;
- mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia; produced by injury to the body, including to the brain.

In addition, a person who has cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disabled person.

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## Diversity and Equality Statement

St Joseph School is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our staff.

To that end we aspire to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnerships), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

As a provider of international education, we must ensure that all principles of equality are also applied to students, and that such principles are promoted in the school at all times.

Our commitment:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, representatives and students are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and representative of the school is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all.
- Every student is entitled to a learning environment that promotes dignity and respect to all.
- No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management.

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## Members of Staff with a Disability

### 1. Existing Staff

Staff are expected to declare disabilities to the school. The St Joseph School Employee Handbook states:

*You should ... inform your manager if:*

- *you are diagnosed with a medical condition that will impact on your ability to carry out a function that is absolutely fundamental to your job.*

*The Equality Act (2010) ensures that employers cannot discriminate against people who are disabled; any medical information you give the school will be treated in strictest confidence, and the school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments for people who disclose a disability or illness which is protected under the Equality Act.*

Once a disability has been disclosed, the school will work with the employee and, where appropriate, the government Access to Work scheme<sup>ii</sup> to accommodate their needs. Such accommodation includes, but is not limited to:

- provision of specialist equipment, such as wheelchairs
- changing working conditions, such as place of work
- flexible or short-time working hours
- extended leave
- regular leave to attend medical appointments

If an employee does not disclose a disability, this will make it harder for them to obtain support. However, the school will take reasonable measures, in line with privacy regulations, to ascertain whether any long-term or repeated absence requires support. The Employee Handbook states:

*In some cases of extended absence, we may ask you for permission to contact your GP to assess:*

- *whether you are disabled, and if so, what reasonable adjustments we can make to help you return to work.*

At all times, the school will act to support the employee, and there will be no discrimination or unfavourable treatment as a direct result of an employee being disabled.

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## 2. Recruitment

St Joseph School undertakes not to discriminate against any candidate for employment on the grounds of disability. All job adverts must contain the following statement:

*St Joseph School is an equal opportunity employer and is determined to ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, age, disability, religion, belief, sexual orientation, marital status, or race.*

Where a successful candidate for a role is disabled, reasonable adjustments may need to be considered depending on their disability and in consultation with them. This should be done as soon as possible after appointment. St Joseph School has a duty to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to working practices, or premises, or to enable access to goods, facilities and services by disabled people<sup>iii</sup>. The candidate may qualify for the Government's Access to Work Programme<sup>iv</sup>. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed these must be recorded in writing. The candidate should also receive written confirmation of whatever adjustments have been agreed.

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## Students with a Disability

Students are asked to disclose any disabilities they may have when booking their course. This is to enable the school to prepare and to make any reasonable adjustments. Such adjustments will be made in consultation with the student or their parent or guardian. Such adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- provision of large print materials
- provision of a wheelchair ramp
- allowance for the attendance of a sign-language interpreter
- provision of accommodation which meets the needs of the student.

Any training that is required for teachers or accommodation providers will be organised by the school in consultation with organisations such as Scope<sup>v</sup> or ELT Well<sup>vi</sup>.

Where the school is unable to meet a student's needs, we will do our best to find an alternative provider through English UK<sup>vii</sup>, the accrediting body for ELT schools in the UK.

If a student becomes disabled while studying at the school, we will where practical take the above steps to try and accommodate them. Depending on their visa status, and in consultation with the UKVI, we will offer them extended leave of absence, or regular absences to attend medical appointments. If the student decides to terminate their course, they will be offered a full refund of their outstanding balance without prejudice.

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## Students with a SEND

Students are asked to disclose any special educational needs they may have when booking their course. This is to enable the school to prepare and to make any reasonable adjustments. Such adjustments will be made in consultation with the student or their parent or guardian. Such adjustments include, but are not limited to:

- provision of large print materials
- provision of copies of materials on coloured paper and/or coloured filters
- allowance of extra time in testing
- liaising with examining bodies to ensure the student's needs are met with regards to external testing.

Any training that is required for teachers or accommodation providers will be organised by the school using organisations such as the UK Government support pages on students with SEND<sup>viii</sup> and DysTEFL<sup>ix</sup>, an organisation specialising in Dyslexia for EFL teachers.

In addition to the above, the school ensures that all materials as accessible as possible. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Notices throughout the school are pictorial in nature, helping students with certain SENDs understand them (this also takes into account the fact that all students have a first language other than English, and so added safeguards to ensure understanding are necessary).
- Teachers are trained and encouraged to use visuals and colour when presenting in class.
- Teachers are encouraged to produce materials in an accessible format, paying attention to aspects such as line spacing, font size and font. Ideally teachers should use Arial as a font when producing materials<sup>x</sup>, though other acceptable fonts may be used.

Where a teacher or accommodation provider suspects that a student may have a SEND, they should speak to the Director of Studies or Accommodation Officer respectively, who will decide on the best course of action in consultation with the Deputy Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the student's academic progress or welfare is suffering as a result of the suspected SEND, the Director of Studies and the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer will hold a meeting with the student to ascertain what support they need. At all times the student's right to privacy is fully respected.

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## References

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- i [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/85038/disability-definition.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85038/disability-definition.pdf)
- ii <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>
- iii <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
- iv <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>
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- vi <http://eltwell.co.uk/index.html>
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- viii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-pupils-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/training-modules-and-resources-for-teaching-send-pupils>
- ix [http://dystefl.eu/uploads/media/DysTEFL\\_Booklet\\_Trainer.pdf](http://dystefl.eu/uploads/media/DysTEFL_Booklet_Trainer.pdf)
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