



## Student Disability Policy

### Mission Statement

We are a Catholic College dedicated to the education and development of the whole person and supporting all students to realise their full potential. As an outstanding learning organisation SJR will have a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to shared values within a Christian community. We will establish a unique, safe and challenging environment where every individual is valued, talents are recognised and nurtured, achievements are celebrated and dedication is rewarded. To achieve this as a community we will:

- Welcome all students who are happy to be educated within a Christian environment
- Value the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Deliver the highest standards of teaching and learning
- All show a commitment to our work, to the Christian values of the College and to the safety of all in our community
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement
- Build and further develop local, national and international partnerships

Core values in daily life at St John Rigby College are expressed as:

- Genuine concern for others
- Support for and challenge of one another
- High standards and expectations
- Consistency and perseverance
- Recognition of talents, progress and achievements.

St John Rigby College is committed to the principles of inclusion and equal opportunities. This document describes St John Rigby College's policy for supporting students with disabilities within the context of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

### Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises, consolidates and replaces previous legislation, consolidating equality legislation with respect to nine protected characteristics, including disability. The Act sets out the types of discrimination, which in the context of disability include direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment.

Further information on College's duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to all protected characteristics is available in the Equality and Diversity Policy.

### Definitions

**Disability** is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long term means it has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months, or it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person. Also covered by the definition are people with a severe disfigurement; HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis. Additionally, people who have had a disability in the past are covered, which may be particularly relevant for people with fluctuating and/or reoccurring impairments.

**Reasonable adjustment** is defined as a decision taken by St John Rigby College to allow students non-standard

arrangements in relation to their experience at College. Adjustments will be made within the parameters of the following factors:

- The nature of student circumstances and needs following consultation with the student and examination of available evidence and relevant assessments;
- The nature of the academic programme of study including the existence of competence or fitness to train/practice standards set by the College or applied by the College on behalf of or recommended by a professional, statutory or regulatory body;
- The likely effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the disadvantage;
- The practicality of the adjustment, taking account of: disruption, health and safety issues, the reasonable expectations of others and external factors (for example, factors in relation to student placements);
- The costs, including the availability of external funding sources to assist in the adjustment;
- Legal precedent.

### **Principles of the Student Disability Policy**

- St John Rigby College acknowledges that the disadvantage and exclusion faced by many disabled people is not an inevitable result of an impairment or health condition but can arise from environmental, social and attitudinal barriers and institutional practices.
- St John Rigby College will not discriminate against disabled students by subjecting them to 'less favourable treatment'.
- St John Rigby College will, as far as possible through reasonable adjustments, change practices or environments to remove any disabling effects or barriers to participation, in order that disabled students can fully participate in the education, facilities and services provided by the College. This may include triggering the College's Support to Study Policy.
- St John Rigby College will endeavour to be anticipatory in making reasonable adjustments and in taking proportionate steps to overcome barriers which potentially impede or disadvantage people with disabilities.
- St John Rigby College will promote a culture of positive attitudes towards disability and endeavour to increase disclosure of disability, as greater disclosure will help the College improve support for disabled students.

### **Policy Application**

- This policy applies to all disabled students.

### **Policy Implementation**

- Staff will be informed about the Policy and its implementation through:
  - The Learning Support Handbook for staff which incorporates this policy and briefings and advice from the **Vice Principal - Students** or the Learning Support Manager.
  - Staff briefings, staff meetings, Head of Department meetings.
  - Departmental meetings of the Learning Support Team.
- Students and their families will be informed about the Policy through:
  - Specialist advice from the Vice Principal - Students and the Learning Support Manager and other additional support specialists in the College at any point of contact.
  - Publication of this Policy on the College website.

### **Responsibilities arising from the Policy**

- All staff and students of St John Rigby College have a personal responsibility to adhere to and to apply this policy in their dealings with others, both internal and external to the College.
- St John Rigby College expects all staff to be aware of this policy and the related legislation, and to treat disabled people in accordance with this policy.

- Any staff member or student in breach of this policy may be personally liable for their actions and may be subject to College disciplinary processes defined by other College policies.
- Students, or their parents/carers on behalf of them, are responsible for disclosing their disability to the College.
- Students have the right not to disclose a disability or to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as strictly confidential and therefore not shared with relevant staff across the College. Requests for strict confidentiality may mean that a less satisfactory adjustment is provided or that no adjustment can be provided.
- Where a disability impacts upon professional fitness to train/practice standards, students are personally responsible for disclosing relevant information about their disability/disabilities or medical condition(s) in line with professional accreditation requirements.
- Students are encouraged to disclose their disability/disabilities and to discuss their support needs as early as possible with the College's Learning Support Department to enable reasonable adjustments to be implemented.
- The College's Learning Support Department will actively seek feedback to ensure that the support needs of individuals are being met. This feedback in turn will help inform the department for future support practices.
- The College will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data in accordance with the **Data Protection Act (2018)**; access to disability-related information will be provided on a need to know basis only, in order for reasonable adjustments to be implemented. Where a student is on a placement as part of their programme, relevant information may be shared with the consent of the student to ensure reasonable adjustments will be provided at the host institution / organisation and to ensure no disadvantage is experienced by students engaged on placements.
- Students will have their support adjustments reviewed and students may request any review of implemented reasonable adjustments, if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.
- The College cannot be held liable for not implementing reasonable adjustments retrospectively (i.e. prior to disclosure of disability).
- All students and staff are aware of the College's Bullying, Harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students Policy which can be triggered if a young person reports being bullied and/or harassed based on their disability.
- The College will ensure accessibility to all by making reasonable adjustments as required.
- The College Health, Safety and Facilities Manager must ensure the completion of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for staff, students and visitors, liaising with and advising the Learning Support Department as required.

## **Disability Policy - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **1. How do I know if I have a disability?**

A disability is usually a long-term physical or mental condition that has a substantial effect on your ability to do everyday activities like studying, communicating, or moving around. If your condition has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months, it may be considered a disability.

### **2. What does 'substantial effect' mean?**

It means the condition has more than a minor or trivial impact on your daily life. This could include taking longer to complete tasks or needing to do them differently.

### **3. What are considered 'normal day-to-day activities'?**

These include things like reading, writing, using a computer, getting dressed, preparing food, or travelling. If your condition affects these kinds of activities, it may be considered a disability.

### **4. What types of conditions are covered?**

Disabilities can include:

- Sensory impairments (e.g. vision or hearing loss)
- Neurodiverse conditions (e.g. autism, ADHD)
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Mental health conditions (e.g. depression, anxiety)
- Long-term illnesses (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes)
- Physical conditions (e.g. arthritis, chronic fatigue)
- Progressive conditions (e.g. multiple sclerosis)

### **5. What if I'm managing my condition with medication or support?**

Even if you're receiving treatment, your condition may still be considered a disability if it would have a substantial effect without that support.

### **6. Who will know about my disability if I tell the College?**

Only staff who need to know will be informed, such as those arranging support or exam adjustments. Your information is kept confidential and shared only with your permission.

### **7. Do I have to tell the College about my disability?**

No, but telling the College helps them support you better. If you choose not to disclose, it may limit the support or adjustments they can offer.

### **8. Can I get my past work re-marked if I disclose a disability later?**

No. Adjustments can only be made from the point of disclosure. The College cannot apply changes to work submitted before they were aware of your disability.

## **9. What are reasonable adjustments?**

These are changes made to help you access learning and assessments fairly. Examples include extra time in exams, assistive technology, or alternative formats for materials. Adjustments are tailored to your individual needs.

## **10. How do I arrange support or adjustments?**

Contact the Learning Support Department. You'll need to provide evidence of your condition and meet with a specialist to discuss your needs.

### **Related Policies:**

- Bullying, Harassment (inc. sexual harassment) and Sexual Violence of Students Policy
- College Complaints Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Examinations Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medication Policy
- SEMH Policy
- Support to Study Policy