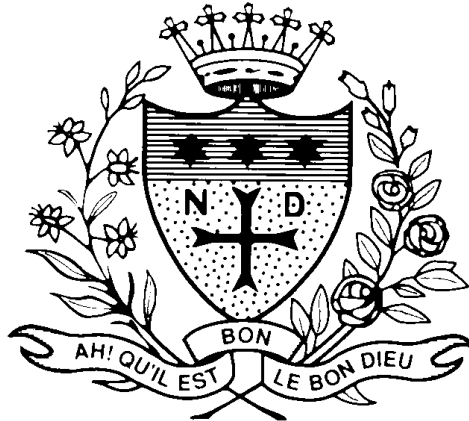


Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College



Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan

January 2010 – December 2013

**This document can be provided in other formats
on request**

1. Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) places a duty to promote disability equality on all public sector organisations. As a public authority within the meaning of the Act, Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College has regard for the six inter-related parts of this duty, also known as ‘the general duty’ or ‘disability equality duty (DED)’ and the Specific Duties. Under its terms, Notre Dame will, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled¹ people and other people
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take account of disabled people’s disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, inspired by the Christian tradition, holds at the centre of our ethos the dignity and uniqueness of each person. Our work promotes the celebration of each individual, and we aim to cater for individual needs in all aspects of our work, and this forms our guiding principle for the Disability Equality Scheme (DES). We recognise that responding to DDA 2005, builds on the college’s approach to DDA 1995 with a new requirement to be proactive in our move towards disability equality. We believe that by addressing the requirements of the Act, we will improve the experience of disabled people with measurable positive outcomes for them.

Such aims and objectives are fully in accordance with the College’s Mission Statement, under whose terms we aim to:

- treat each other with respect
- create an atmosphere of mutual trust in which we develop the confidence to be ourselves
- provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person
- provide equality of opportunity
- celebrate the joy and energy of our community
- support everyone, of all abilities, to make positive steps towards achieving their full potential
- promote a caring environment, working together for the benefit of the individual and the wider community
- develop an environment based on equality, trust, respect for each individual in our community, and full development of each person’s potential, as found in the teaching and example of our Lord.

¹ Under the DDA, a disabled person is someone with a physical or sensory impairment, mental health difficulty, specific learning difficulty or medical condition that has a substantial, adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This Mission Statement applies to the whole Notre Dame community – students, staff, potential students or employees, parents, and any others who use the College’s services, as does our Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

The central strategic aims contained in the Development Plan 2010-2013 embrace these objectives. Within Notre Dame’s Disability Equality Scheme, these strategic aims will be re-articulated to emphasise the significance of the Duty, and will be impact-assessed

The Central Strategic Aims 2006-09:

Rationalise and improve current accommodation and embark on a new capital build programme to improve the teaching and learning environment	New building completed and in use
Develop the college monitoring and improvement strategies in relation to equality and diversity	Ongoing
Maintain the effective implementation of the college Health and Safety Strategy, ensuring consideration is always given to the health and safety implications of all college activity, thus ensuring a safe environment in which to learn and to work	Ongoing
Consult with the local LSC, the Diocese of Leeds, and planning authorities and prepare a building proposal	Completed
Submit a new Property Strategy, following consultation with the LSC Regional Property Adviser and the college surveyors	Completed
Embrace the Safe Learner Concept, and continue to consolidate the role of the Health and Safety Committee; review all policies and procedures, revise documentation, staff and student induction procedures, and comply with legislation and with LSC requirements and reporting procedures	Ongoing
Ensure that the SAR for Health and Safety and other cross-college areas is self-critical, is rigorously audited, and that its development plan is implemented and audited in its turn	Ongoing
Ensure that general staff awareness is raised, training provided, and that specialist training needs are identified	Ongoing. Annual training

and provided through the annual Health and Safety audit of all sections of college personnel and through the SAR development plan	
Implement a whole site security upgrade to provide a safer environment for learners and employees	Ongoing
Extend recent audio-visual improvements to all classrooms	Improvements completed
Recruit high quality staff and ensure a match of staff expertise and curriculum need	Ongoing
Support CPD opportunities for all staff	Ongoing
Renew IIP status	Achieved

1.1 Purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme

In our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan, we want to continue to address the current issues and equality gaps that we have identified so far. We intend to adopt the social model of disability in our equality strategy which “recognises that it is the social, environmental and attitudinal barriers that a disabled person encounters, rather than a person’s impairment, that create disabling barriers and prevent participation”² However, throughout our DES, we will be using the language of the medical model, as used in law.

2. Involvement of disabled people

Having identified as a priority the need to involve disabled people more in our move to disability equality, we are committed to exploring ways in which existing systems can be strengthened and innovative approaches taken to new initiatives. The steps we have taken to involve disabled people in the preparation of this scheme, and elsewhere, are outlined in APPENDIX 1. However, we support disabled people’s right to non-disclosure. We acknowledge, therefore, that this, and other factors inhibiting participation, may have had an impact on consultation and we recognise that greater involvement is a high priority area for development. This is reflected in our Action Plan.

3. The Current Position

Under existing legislation, Notre Dame has responded to the needs of individuals and made adjustments both to the environment and towards inclusion in its teaching and learning strategies (see APPENDIX 2 for examples). In addition, in response to the General Duties of DDA 2005, the college adopted a whole organisational approach towards consultation.

² (LSN toolkit Core document: The Journey Towards Disability Equality)

The website has been re-designed to make it more accessible and the college Student Senate has one representative specifically to give a voice to disabled students on current issues and plans. We are aiming also to become a model employer that attracts and retains the best employees who reflect the population served. To assist in achieving this, we produced a staff audit which encouraged staff disclosure of disability.

4. Gathering and using information

Currently, we gather information about our students with disability prior to enrolment in order to anticipate need and make the necessary adjustments. We also gather it retrospectively through our Management Information System (MIS), for retention, achievement, and success, in addition to analysis of Value Added through reports from the ALPS system. The Learning Support department gathers the ongoing statistical information on the number and range of students with disability and/or learning difficulty and this is shared with MIS and the Examinations department, in accordance with Data Protection.

For staff we record:

- the total number of teaching and support staff and within that figure those who declare a disability
- the number of staff who leave who have disclosed a disability and those who have not
- the range of reasonable adjustments made for all staff who have disclosed a disability under the DDA
- the number of return to work interviews held
- the number of annual reviews carried out with staff with a disclosed disability and any actions

However, we acknowledge that to improve disability equality, some of these systems need further refinement and analysis to identify equality gaps and barriers.

We look to make our Mission Statement a reality, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust by making transparent how we intend to use the information gathered on both students and staff.

5. Reporting on progress

Each year, a report on progress against the Action Plan will be presented to the Governors of the college and placed on the college's website by the Principal. The DES will be incorporated into the College SES by April 2011.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Disability Equality Scheme and its Action Plan will be kept under review by the Principal and Senior Management Team. It will extend the involvement of disabled people and continue to build on the whole organisational approach

by the involvement of students, staff, senior management, governors, parents and other service users.

APPENDIX 1

INVOLVEMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

STUDENTS

The student Senate highlighted the need for greater and more accessible pre-college publicity on what is available for students with disability. Students also requested modifications to some resources.

To widen the consultative process, provision needs to be made that facilitates contribution from a distance or anonymously. Methods using suggestion boxes, email, Moodle (our virtual learning environment) and questionnaires are all being considered for this purpose.

STAFF

Our programme of staff development always includes an expansion in training opportunities for all staff on meeting the needs of disabled students and cross-college issues linked to the DDA.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

We have tried to anticipate the needs of parents/guardians/carers who would describe themselves as disabled or who are parents/guardians of our disabled students' as part of our compliance to DDA and to respond to an individual's own needs when informed.

INVOLVING OTHER AGENCIES

Notre Dame is a member of the Leeds Colleges' Inclusive Learning Forum, which meets on behalf of students with disabilities. All the colleges in Leeds participate and there is representation from a number of key organisations in the city who are working to support adults, including young people, with disabilities. These organisations have agreed to liaise via this forum, giving another voice to people with disabilities.

We also continue our strong links with:

- Catholic partner schools about anticipating students' needs
- Deaf START, Leeds
- NORVIC – Network of sixth Form Colleges in the north
- Yorkshire and the Humber's Learning Provider Network
- Association of Catholic Sixth Form Colleges (ACVIC)

- People in Action
- Job Centre Plus

APPENDIX 2

THE CURRENT POSITION

Leadership and management

The Principal and Senior Management Team are committed to meeting the general duty. To ensure a whole organisational approach, information about the legislation and Notre Dame's response has been shared with the Governors of the college and the full college staff.

Staff and Employment

- Our application for 'The Two Tick' Symbol to ensure we have good practice at all stages of recruitment and retention of staff with a disability and/or learning difficulty was successful is annually reviewed by Job Centre Plus
- All job advertisements reinforce the fact that we are an equal opportunities employer
- Application packs and forms invite applications from disabled people and include a statement that reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate their needs.
- Staff development has been delivered to all staff, teaching and support, on the DDA. Disability-related training is a regular feature of staff INSET.
- Staff who have disclosed a disability or who have become disabled have been supported by the necessary Occupational Health Assessments and adjustments made.

Students

- Students are invited to disclose a disability, learning difficulty, or long-term medical condition that affects their everyday life as a student. This can occur on application, at interview, enrolment, their first tutorial session and with publicity around college that encourages disclosure at any time through the year.
- Named people to contact are given in copies of the college's Disability Statement, displayed in each tutor base and in public areas.
- Liaison takes place with partner feeder schools to aid transition.
- Brief details of students' educational and medical needs are listed, with their agreement, on the Staff Intranet (for teachers only) with a document in which the student has identified how they want to be supported, which is then circulated to contact staff.

The services we provide for students include adjustments to teaching and learning strategies (including examinations Access Arrangements) not just the physical environment.

- Notre Dame has forged strong links and had a contract with Dyslexia Action for student support since 1998. In addition, the college funded the training of a Specialist Teacher to Post-Graduate level to increase the flexibility of support.
- Notre Dame has a contract with Deaf START, the post-16 provider of support for students with hearing impairment in Leeds. They have provided us with note-takers and radio-aids to meet the assessed needs of students; run Deaf Awareness sessions annually for staff and, one year, offered the CACDP Certificated course for staff and students as an Enhancement choice. They also provide a signer for large College events, such as Open Day. Induction loops are fitted in the hall and in the Lecture theatre and a portable loop has been used for individual students in classrooms.
- Liaison has taken place as requested with CMHTs, as advised by them, to create partnerships between home, college and health professionals when supporting students with mental health difficulties
- Links have been made with Leeds Mind who have been able to signpost advisory and support services
- Links have been made with St James Hospital as we support students with long term illness e.g cancer

Estates

- All new build programmes are DDA compliant and a substantial programme of works has been carried out to render the majority of other accommodation DDA compliant.
- Accessible car parking is available near the main entrances.
- Stairlifts, lifts and power-assisted doors are operational in current accommodation to allow greater access for students with mobility difficulties
- An integral part of our current accommodation strategy is in response to the DDA, following previous audits and current review of college accommodation

External links

- Since 2000, Notre Dame has been represented on SENAC (The Special Educational Needs Advisory Committee for the Education Committee of the Diocese of Leeds)
- Notre Dame is actively involved in the Leeds College Inclusive Learning Forum
- In the Enhancement programme, students are able to work with students with profound and complex needs at VINE, Leeds Inclusive Learning Centre
- Job Centre Plus

Summary of Key Points

- We at Notre Dame CSFC believe that by addressing the General Duty of the Disability Discrimination Act, with the Specific duties, we will improve the experience of disabled people.
- To achieve this, we intend to address the current issues and equality gaps that we have identified so far and to plan a programme that allows us to review and rewrite our policies, procedures, practices and plans, having assessed how they impact on disabled people.
- In our efforts to build on current practices and progress, the priority areas we need to address, including those specifically identified by disabled people in our consultation to date, are to:
 - Involve disabled people more in a truly consultative process
 - Embed disability equality within quality improvement and planning processes
 - Gather and use information about disabled people more effectively and earlier to effect change
 - Extend our response to the DDA to specifically include staff
 - Improve publicity about what Notre Dame does to support the needs of disabled students, particularly pre-enrolment publicity
 - Review materials used to support all students with identified needs