



NEWMAN CATHOLIC TRUST



HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

Accessibility Policy 2026-27

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Policy	Reviewed by	Next Review Date
Annual	May 2026	FBM	May 2027

Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Board	Chris Izuka		21/05/26
CEO	Dr Daniel Doyle		21/05/26

Commitment to Equality:

The Trust and its schools are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

"Rooted in faith, we ignite a love of learning, foster inclusive education and empower every individual to achieve their utmost potential."

At the Newman Catholic Trust, we stand united in our unwavering mission to nurture a transformative educational experience, where every child is seen, valued, and cherished as a unique gift from God. Rooted in faith, we ignite a love for learning that awakens curiosity, sparks imagination, and fuels a lifelong journey of discovery.

Guided by the teachings of Christ and inspired by the profound wisdom of our namesake, Saint John Henry Newman, we strive to foster a community where inclusion is lived, diversity is embraced, and every individual is empowered to fulfil their highest potential. As Newman said, *"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."* We believe that education is a sacred journey of continual transformation—intellectually, spiritually, and personally. We believe that true education is not just about knowledge, but about shaping hearts and minds, cultivating resilience, and nurturing the whole person.

Our vision is simple yet profound: to be a beacon of hope and excellence, where students are not only academically accomplished but spiritually enriched and personally empowered to make a difference in the world. In all that we do, we strive to embody our core values:

- **Hope** – Believing in the boundless potential of every child and striving to build a future filled with possibility, courage and faith.
- **Excellence** – Pursuing the highest standards in learning, leadership and love so that every action reflects our calling to greatness.
- **Authenticity** – Living truthfully and faithfully, ensuring our words, actions and decisions are grounded in integrity and the Gospel.
- **Responsibility** – Caring for one another and for creation with compassion, stewardship and a deep sense of duty to the common good.
- **Truth** – Seeking wisdom and understanding through Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation, including the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It provides a consolidated source of anti-discrimination law, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, are protected from unlawful discrimination.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the related Equality Duty 2011, all schools and academies have a legal responsibility to ensure accessibility for disabled pupils, including those who may be prospective students. A person is defined as having a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment.
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) further strengthened this duty, applying the Disability Discrimination Act to education and reinforcing protections against discrimination.

The Newman Catholic Trust is committed to ensuring that every child, staff member and visitor experiences a fully accessible and inclusive environment within our schools. Rooted in faith, our approach ensures that all individuals, regardless of ability or need, are empowered to achieve their utmost potential within our schools.

This Accessibility Policy outlines our commitment to ensuring physical, educational and digital accessibility across our Trust and its schools. It aligns with the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and our mission to uphold dignity, inclusion and opportunity for all. The Trust recognises that barriers to accessibility may also impact safeguarding, attendance, wellbeing and participation. Accessibility planning therefore forms part of wider inclusion and safeguarding practice across all schools.

The Trust is also committed to ensuring accessibility for staff, governors, volunteers and visitors through appropriate reasonable adjustments and inclusive working practices.

2. Vision and Ethos

At the Newman Catholic Trust, we believe that every child is a unique gift from God, deserving of the highest quality education in an environment that enables them to flourish. Inspired by Saint John Henry Newman's belief that *"to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often,"* we recognise that true accessibility requires continuous reflection, adaptation and commitment.

3. Legal and Statutory Frameworks

This policy is informed by:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The SEND Code of Practice 2015
- The Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Education (School Premises) Regulations 2012
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

4. Key Commitments

The Trust is dedicated to ensuring:

1. Physical Accessibility – All schools provide safe, accessible buildings and learning environments, with reasonable adjustments made to ensure inclusivity.
2. Curriculum Accessibility – Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, ensuring equal access to knowledge and skills development.
3. Digital Accessibility – Digital platforms, communications and resources are accessible to all, including those with disabilities.
4. Staff Training and Awareness – Ongoing professional development ensures all staff understand their role in making education accessible.
5. Consultation and Co-Production – We work with pupils, parents and external experts to continually improve accessibility provision.

In accordance with statutory requirements, every school in the Newman Catholic Trust must determine its Accessibility Plan and Arrangements at local level. This policy sets out how accessibility across the Trust and its schools will be ensured, maintained and improved in alignment with legislative requirements and the Trust's ethos and values.

The Equality Act 2010 places three key duties on schools:

1. Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
2. To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
3. To plan for increased access for disabled students.

Each school in the Newman Catholic Trust must address these key areas:

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum.
2. Improving the physical environment of the school to enhance accessibility.
3. Improving the delivery of written and digital information to disabled students.

5. Accessibility Plan

To translate our policy into action, we have developed an Accessibility Plan, focusing on three core areas: Physical Environment, Curriculum and Information & Communication.

5.1 Physical Environment

Objective: Ensure that all school sites provide a welcoming and inclusive environment that meets the needs of all individuals.

Actions:

- Engage with SLTs and LGCs to ensure that all Trust schools identify and address barriers to accessing education.
- Ensure that entrances, corridors, classrooms and communal spaces are wheelchair accessible.
- Install appropriate signage, contrasting colour schemes and assistive technology where needed.
- Support schools to apply for or access school transport options for students with physical disabilities.
- Request that schools have evacuation procedures that cater to individuals with mobility impairments.
- Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place, reviewed regularly and understood by relevant staff where required.

5.2 Curriculum Accessibility

Objective: Ensure that teaching and learning methods reflect an inclusive approach, enabling all students to fully engage with the curriculum.

Actions:

- Regularly review timetabling to accommodate students with physical disabilities.
- Provide high-quality adaptive teaching to support diverse learning needs.
- Develop and implement personalised learning strategies for pupils with SEND.
- Ensure accessibility of resources, including large print, braille and assistive technology, where needed or identified by a qualified professional (e.g. Educational Psychologist).
- Offer alternative assessment methods for students with additional needs where possible or needed.
- Embed inclusive practices within all subjects, recognising different learning styles and abilities.

5.3 Information & Communication Accessibility

Objective: Ensure that information is accessible to all stakeholders, including pupils, parents, staff and visitors.

Actions:

- Provide school communications in accessible formats and ensure easy, efficient access to their child's records or school communications via a Trust-wide, consistent MIS and Parent Comms App.
- Provide options for staff to use inclusive communication strategies or resources in schools.
- Establish a clear reporting system for accessibility concerns and ensure timely responses.
- Ensure websites and digital communication platforms are designed and reviewed in line with recognised accessibility standards, including compatibility with assistive technologies where appropriate.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Trust Board

- Holds overall responsibility for ensuring that accessibility policies and plans are in place.
- Reviews accessibility policies annually and ensures compliance with legal requirements.
- Delegates implementation to Trust Central Leadership Teams and Local Governing Committees (LGCs).

6.2 Trust Central Leadership Team

- Ensures all schools implement effective accessibility strategies.
- Provides guidance and support to individual schools in maintaining an inclusive learning environment.
- Monitors compliance with accessibility standards.

6.3 Local Governing Committees (LGCs)

- Ensures that school leaders implement their accessibility plan.
- Monitors school-level accessibility issues and reports concerns to the Trust Board.
- Ensures funding is allocated appropriately to support accessibility needs.

6.4 Principals (Senior School Leaders)

- Responsible for developing and implementing their school's three-year Accessibility Plan.
- Ensures accessibility plans are published on the school's website and are available upon request.
- Oversees adjustments for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to ensure full inclusion in school life.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- The Trust will conduct an annual review of the Accessibility Policy, assessing progress against set objectives.
- The Trust will engage external experts where necessary to provide recommendations and ensure best practice.

8. Complaints and Concerns

We encourage open communication regarding accessibility. Any concerns can be raised through:

- The school's complaints procedure.
- Direct contact with the Trust's Executive Leadership Team.
- Regular accessibility consultation forums.