

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RANMOOR

INCLUSION POLICY

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Next review: May 2029

Mission Statement

St John's is an inclusive church: a church which celebrates, affirms and welcomes every person and seeks to remove barriers to belonging, participation and leadership in the life of the Church.

We recognise that exclusion and discrimination can be conscious or unconscious, structural or personal. We are committed to challenging these wherever they appear within our church community and in the wider Church.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which proclaims the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, enables all people to know the depth of the love of Christ.

This policy expresses St John's commitment to equality, dignity, accessibility and justice in every aspect of our worship, community life, employment, decision-making and witness.

Our Commitment to Inclusive Church

St John's is a member of the Inclusive Church network and shares its commitment to being a church which celebrates and affirms every person. We support Inclusive Church's values of welcome, equality and justice for all people, including people of all ages, disabilities, genders, gender identities, races, sexual orientations, marital statuses and economic circumstances, and we seek to embody these values in the life, worship and leadership of our church community.



Legal and Church Framework

St John's recognises its duties under the following legislation and Church of England guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Care Act 2014 (safeguarding adults at risk)
- Children Acts 1989 & 2004 (safeguarding children)
- Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 and House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Building Regulations Part M (Access to and use of buildings)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Autism Act 2009 and statutory guidance
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013

We recognise the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

As both an employer and a provider of services and premises, St John's has a statutory duty to prevent discrimination and promote equality. As a church, we seek to go beyond minimum legal compliance to reflect the justice and welcome of the Gospel.

Principles of Inclusion

1. Removing Barriers to Participation

We recognise the **social model of disability**: that people are disabled by barriers in society rather than by their impairment or condition. We therefore accept an **anticipatory duty** to identify and remove barriers before exclusion occurs.

We will make reasonable adjustments and proactively improve access so that all can participate fully in worship, fellowship and leadership.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Accessible physical spaces for worship and events
- Large print and alternative formats for worship materials
- Hearing loop systems and clear sound
- Clear signage and predictable layouts
- Quiet or low-sensory spaces where possible
- Flexible participation for those who are neurodivergent or experiencing mental ill health
- Assistance dogs welcomed at services and events
- Accessibility information published online and on noticeboards
- Accessibility of digital content including website, livestreams and communications

We will regularly review access needs through audits, inspections and consultation.

2. Worship and Church Life

We welcome anyone who wishes to participate in leading worship, reading lessons, leading intercessions, serving in the choir, assisting with Holy Communion, or serving in other ministries, subject to appropriate training and safeguarding requirements.

We recognise that church life extends beyond the building and will ensure pastoral visits and home communion for those unable to attend in person.

3. Listening and Learning

We will cultivate a culture of listening and consultation so that we can learn from the lived experiences of a wide range of people, particularly those who may have experienced exclusion.

Training and learning opportunities relating to equality, diversity, inclusion, disability awareness, neurodiversity, mental health and anti-racism will be encouraged for staff, volunteers and congregation members where appropriate.

4. Safeguarding and Inclusion

We recognise that discrimination, exclusion and abuse are often connected.

Our safeguarding policy and procedures are an essential part of how this inclusion policy is lived out. All clergy, staff and volunteers will follow House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance, safer recruitment practice and reporting procedures.

5. Employment, Volunteering and Leadership

As employers, we will:

- Make reasonable adjustments to support individuals in their roles
- Ensure recruitment, reviews and training are fair and consistent
- Follow Church of England Safer Recruitment and People Management guidance
- Conduct meetings and processes in accessible locations and formats

While volunteers do not have the same employment rights as paid staff, St John's will treat volunteers with the same fairness, dignity and protection from discrimination.

We will seek to ensure that leadership bodies, including the PCC and ministry teams, are accessible and reflect the diversity of our congregation and community.

6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Information relating to disability, health, gender identity, safeguarding concerns or pastoral needs will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Such information will be stored securely and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

Concerns and Complaints

Anyone who feels this policy has not been upheld may raise concerns with the Incumbent, Churchwardens or a PCC representative.

Matters relating to discrimination or safeguarding will be taken seriously and addressed promptly in line with diocesan procedures.

Implementation and Review

The Incumbent, Churchwardens and PCC share responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.

We commit to developing action plans to:

- Improve accessibility of our buildings and facilities
- Improve inclusion of those with disabilities, mental health challenges and neurodiversity
- Review how well the needs of our community are being met

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or Church guidance.

Approval

Signed on behalf of the PCC:

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Date:

Inclusion Policy for notice boards

Inclusion at St John's Church, Ranmoor

St John's is an inclusive church. We believe everyone is made in the image of God and is welcome here.

We are committed to making our church a place where all people can belong, take part, and be treated with dignity and respect – whatever their age, disability, race, gender, gender identity, sexuality, mental health, neurodiversity, economic situation or background.

Our approach is guided by the **Equality Act 2010**, safeguarding law and current Church of England guidance.

What this means in practice

- We work to remove barriers that might stop people joining in worship, activities or leadership.
- We aim to make our building, services and information as accessible as possible.
- We welcome assistance dogs, provide large print materials and use hearing support.
- We try to make our worship and church life accessible for people who are neurodivergent or experiencing mental ill health.
- We offer home communion and pastoral visits to those unable to attend church.
- We encourage a culture of listening and learning from different experiences.
- We expect everyone – clergy, staff, volunteers and congregation – to treat others with respect.
- We follow Church of England safeguarding guidance and safer recruitment practices.
- We handle personal information carefully and confidentially.

If something isn't right

If you feel excluded, uncomfortable, or that this commitment hasn't been upheld, please speak to the Vicar, a Churchwarden, or a PCC member. We will take concerns seriously.

St John's wants to be a church where **everyone can belong and everyone can participate**.

Approved by the PCC of St John's Church, Ranmoor

May 2026 (Next review May 2029)

For a full copy of our inclusion policy please visit our website www.stjohnsranmoor.org.uk/inclusivechurch