

Disability Policy

Ballard School believes it is wrong to discriminate against disabled pupils or prospective pupils. It will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils and disabled prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with those who are not disabled. It will work to improve staff understanding of the requirements of disabled pupils. It will develop and operate an accessibility plan. (This policy, therefore, needs to be taken alongside the following two policies in particular: 'reasonable adjustments policy for disabled pupils' and SEND 'accessibility plan'.)

Ballard School is located on a dispersed site of 32 acres with buildings spread over a considerable area. Many of the buildings have several storeys and some are without lifts. The system of having departmental areas, common to many schools, allows facilities for a subject to be concentrated in one place but demands the movement of pupils around the site between lessons, often up steps or stairs in buildings without lifts. It is not hard to conclude that any pupil with impaired mobility is going to be at a disadvantage and possibly prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the School offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to the physical features of the School at a prohibitive cost. Even the fruition of long-term plans can only go some way to ameliorate the position.

The Governors have a long-term building development programme which is intended to provide new or replace some existing facilities (e.g. a Design Building for Art, Maths and Technology). It is believed that this route offers the quickest and most effective way to meet Disability Legislation.

The Governors, dependent on the financial viability of the School, provide funding for building maintenance and minor refurbishment. A proportion of money from this budget will be used within the pre-planned maintenance schedule to improve accessibility for pupils with impaired mobility.

Admissions

Ballard School does not select its pupils for admission on the grounds of ability. As detailed in the School's admissions' policy, we admit a pupil based on the need and relevance of a Ballard education for a particular child, a 'taster day' (or days), previous school reports and a reference from the previous school. Formal entry tests are not usually utilised (see the Reasonable Adjustments Policy).

To ease the burden of the external examinations, the School would liaise closely with the parent/guardian or pupil on the mechanics of the exams to be taken. Liaison may take the form of a meeting or by telephone conversation to discuss any special arrangements. The School would apply to the JCQ and/or CIE for permission to supply the provision of the following aids to the prospective disabled pupil:

- Large print exam papers
- Extra time to complete the exam paper
- Accessibility to the exam room for impaired mobility pupils
- Laptop computers
- Readers/Screen Reader software
- Scribes/Voice to text software
- Coloured papers
- Rest breaks

- Prompt
- Language Modifier
- Bilingual dictionary

It will not normally be possible to provide an exam room with a hearing loop, nor provide a secretary or teacher from within School resources knowledgeable in sign language to assist and oversee the exam, although some staff have been trained to use BSL.

Curriculum

It is recognised that the curriculum should be accessible for those with disabilities. Pupils who have Educational Statements, EHC Plans or who have been diagnosed with a learning disability will be helped according to their needs (see the SEND Policy, Reasonable Adjustments Policy and SEND Report). Pupils who are entitled to extra time, readers and scribes in exams will be given this in all internal and external exams and/or laptops for exams (for example) will be allowed and provided if recommended.

1. Buildings and Accessibility

It is the policy of the Governors to improve access to buildings and facilities over a period of time, as finances permit.

2. Vehicular Access

Disabled parking has been provided outside the main building. Access to the Senior School may be gained through the front door with vehicular access available right up to the porch. The lift provides access to the first floor. The Pre Prep is accessed via the back entrance and the rear car park.

3. Paths

Wheelchairs have access via paths to most areas of the School, but specific parts of buildings remain inaccessible. Ramps have been constructed to make access possible, but routes may be circuitous.

4. Buildings

Many of Ballard School's buildings were erected in the late 19th or early 20th century before consideration was given to disabled access. These buildings include the Main House and the Kefford building (housing the Art School on the top floor). The Senior School building has a lift, is accessible by road and has wheelchair access.

5. Lavatories for the Disabled

Lavatories for the disabled are situated in the Senior School and the Main House.

6. Education

As the School operates a policy of departmental areas, access to some subject teaching could be restricted or impossible. Wherever possible, lessons that are not equipment dependent could be moved to ground floor classrooms where access (for example) by wheelchair is possible. Each

case would be judged on the circumstances pertaining at the time. (See Reasonable Adjustments Policy.)

7. Special Educational Needs

All information relating to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) can be accessed via the SEND Policy and SEND information report.

8. Medical

The School employs a part-time School Nurse and the medical regulations are available in the Parental Handbook, published for parents every year. Signed parental consent is required for the School Nurse to administer prescribed medicines for medical disabilities such as asthma and diabetes. The catering manager operates a policy of food being nut free and will provide meals for those with special dietary requirements.

Many classrooms have digital projectors that ease the viewing of subject matter. These will be helpful to those with a sight impediment. Larger print course notes and examination papers will be introduced as and when appropriate.

The provision of hearing loops has been considered, but with the geographical and dispersed nature of the classrooms, together with the grouping of subjects within specific buildings, it is neither practical nor financially viable for the School to install such provision at the current time. Also, more recent technological advancements have deemed this unnecessary for current hearing impaired pupils.

9. Welfare

All staff have been informed of any pupils with disabilities and of the need to be aware of potential difficulties such as:

- Bullying (see anti-bullying policy)
- Non-integration into forms (see details of the Pastoral system in Parental Handbook)

The centre of the pastoral system is the Form Tutor, who is the primary point of contact. The Form Tutor may then refer the matter to a member of the Pastoral Team.

10. Activities and Trips

The School encourages all pupils to attend a variety of trips and activities. These may be sporting, cultural or adventurous. At such venues the programme of activities will be modified if possible to facilitate participation regardless of disability. The School is a strong advocate of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and is aware that it gives specific guidance to enable disabled pupils to achieve awards. Staffing ratios are often adjusted to provide extra help when necessary.

Occasionally it may be considered that the welfare of the pupil with a particular disability cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of the disability and the specific environment and the terrain. In such circumstances it may not be possible to provide a suitable level of supervision and care to enable the pupil to participate in the activity safely.

Jan Brook (Head of Learning Support)

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