

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Introduction

Ballard School is committed to treating its pupils and applicants fairly. According to the Equality Act 2010, we must take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by comparison with pupils and applicants who are not disabled.

The declared aim of Ballard School is to meet the unique needs of every boy and girl. This policy does not seek to cater for every situation but is intended as a general statement of our policy which sets out the principles underlying our approach to making adjustments for disabled pupils and the factors the School will take into account when considering requests for adjustments.

Reference should be made to two other School policy documents which relate to reasonable adjustments: firstly, the School Disability Policy; secondly, the SEND Plan. These contain specific examples of where adjustments can be made / have been made.

When does the duty arise?

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils and applicants who are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 when they are put at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils and applicants who do not have disabilities. A pupil or applicant is disabled if s/he suffers from a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. In most cases, disabilities will have lasted or be likely to last for 12 months or more. Special consideration will be given to any pupil suffering from a temporary disability caused, for example, by an accident.

What is the scope of the duty?

Ballard School seeks to ensure that disabled pupils and applicants are not put at a substantial disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments:

1. To our policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way we do things); and
2. By providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. additional support or assistance).

There is no standard definition of an auxiliary aid or service. Examples include:

- pieces of equipment;
- extra staff assistance when available and/or county funded;
- note-taking;
- audio-visual fire alarms;
- readers;
- scribes; and
- assistance with guiding.

What is not covered?

We are not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Similarly, we do not need to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with the education and services provided by the School.

Entry tests

We are allowed by law to apply an entry test and we may do so as part of our admissions process. If necessary, we would make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants sitting the entry test, such as, allowing it to be completed on computer rather than by hand. However, the pass mark for any such test would not be altered as this would not be a reasonable adjustment. In the main, however, our admission process (as detailed in the Admissions Policy) does not usually require an entry test (unless this is for a scholarship assessment). We rely primarily on a 'taster day' or days (during which some informal testing may take place), previous school reports and a school reference. Once admitted to the School we do carry out baseline assessments (GL CAT Assessments) to help with set placement, with target setting, to identify any particular weaknesses and to monitor progress.

How do I request an adjustment?

Ballard School prides itself on considering whether there is any adjustment it could make to overcome any substantial disadvantage suffered by a disabled applicant or pupil. However, we do not always think of all possible adjustments and we want to work with parents to think as creatively as possible about this matter.

If your child is disabled and you believe that s/he is being put at a substantial disadvantage compared with pupils without disabilities and there is an adjustment that we could make which would overcome this, you may write to the Head of Learning Support in the Department of Enhanced Learning (DEL) at the School setting out in full the adjustment and (if necessary) how the School could put this into practice.

The School's response

In some cases, the School will be able to agree to and implement the requested adjustment as soon as possible. In other cases, for example where the adjustment would be logistically difficult or more financially costly, we may need to consider in more detail how best to overcome the substantial disadvantage that the pupil or applicant is suffering and what measures it is reasonable for the School to take. In these cases, the School may seek input from teachers, other experts (such as doctors and/or educational psychologists), you and the child in question.

How will the School decide whether an adjustment is reasonable?

When considering whether it would be reasonable to make the adjustment, the School will consider the following factors:

- whether it would overcome the substantial disadvantage the disabled child is suffering;
- the practicability of the adjustment;
- the effect of the disability on the pupil;
- the cost of the proposed adjustment;
- whether it will be provided under an Education Health and Care Plan from the Local Authority;
- the School's resources;
- health and safety requirements;
- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards; and
- the interests of other pupils (and potential pupils).

Confidentiality

You (or your child if the School believes s/he has sufficient understanding of the nature of the request) may request that the existence or nature of your child's disability be treated as confidential by the School. We will take any such request into account when considering whether an adjustment is reasonable.

Outcome

Once the School has determined whether the relevant adjustment is reasonable, we will advise; setting out the decision and the reasons.

What can you do if you are not happy with the School's decision?

If you are not happy with the School's decision about the reasonableness of the adjustment, you may lodge a complaint using the School's Complaints Procedure.

Policy implemented January 2013 by Headmaster

Policy reviewed October 2020 by Jan Brook (Head of Learning Support)