



RIPPLEVALE

SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan Policy

Date of issue: 12.12.2021

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: September 2024

Ripplevale School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

Ripplevale School provides a caring learning environment where our students make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage

them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Ripplevale School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Atlantic Data (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)

Ripplevale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Ripplevale School.

The policy documents of Ripplevale School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a 'physical or mental impairment' which has a 'substantial and long term adverse effect on a persons' s 'ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. It includes not only physical disabilities but also learning difficulties and mental health.

School Aims

- School must not treat disabled students less favourably
- School must take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
- To provide a caring, friendly environment in which every child and young person can flourish and feel a sense of belonging.
- To have high expectations in order to build a strong foundation for life in the areas of social, academic, physical and creative opportunities.
- To provide an environment, which actively looks for and celebrates individual achievements.
- To provide a secure and stimulating family atmosphere, which encourages supportive friendships between individuals.
- To foster a feeling amongst students of self-worth, respect for other people and property.
- To foster a successful home/school partnership.
- To promote working links with the local community and to encourage greater involvement with the school.
- To maintain our reputation as a leading school in the independent sector.

School Environment

We recognise that our buildings and facilities need to be of a high standard and that they are safe and suitable to the needs of our students now and in the future.

Aims of the Accessibility Plan

The School acknowledges its duty towards students, staff (teaching and support), parents and carers, Directors and members of the wider community who have a disability. Where students and prospective students are concerned, the School acknowledges its non-discrimination and planning duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The School is an independent school and admission to the school depends on the prospective student meeting the criteria required to maintain and, where possible, improve the educational and general standards for its students.

Parents/carers are asked if their child has a disability, any additional need(s) or any medical condition. The parents/carers will then receive a medical form in respect of a prospective student requesting further detailed information about their child and where appropriate a care plan will be drawn up.

In assessing any student or prospective student, the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it deems appropriate. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any issues of confidentiality.

Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments and provide equipment, based on the information given and advice received, to enable a prospective student to take up a place at the school, and to satisfy criteria outlined above, the school is committed to providing these reasonable adjustments in the assessment process.

The School may have a consultation meeting with the parents/carers following assessment to define the reasonable adjustments and equipment the school is committed to provide, discuss any additional services, and make arrangements for review meetings to monitor progress.

Background to the Accessibility Plan School's Layout and Facilities

All teaching activities, delivery of curriculum, cooking and dining are carried out on the school site. In addition to the Main Building, there are other buildings or areas that have been considered for access and these buildings or areas are of varying age and have differing issues in terms of accessibility.

The School's playing fields surround the site and in some areas, the ground undulates resulting in certain difficulties with circulation around the site for wheelchair users.

The School is not required to provide auxiliary aids and services or to make physical changes to the existing buildings, but will make reasonable steps to improve access for both the disabled and able bodied of all ages. A student with restricted mobility is likely to be put at a disadvantage only in his access to certain classrooms. A student with severely restricted mobility may be unable to access some of the educational and recreational facilities that the school offers.

When the school goes off site, it may not be possible to transport a student in the School minibus. In such instances, alternative ways of transporting children with physical disabilities will be sought when the need arises.

Accessibility Plan

The school will review this plan on an annual basis to evaluate:

- The effectiveness of the action taken in the previous school year.
- Relevant targets for the next school year.
- Responses to any legislative changes.
- Changes or expected change to relevant students' needs.

Monitoring will be a constant process and the Headteacher will look to make the necessary amendments and discuss planning, budget and other concerns.

The Health & Safety Committee may raise action points and these will, in the main, be dealt with by the Headteacher. Information relating to H&S meetings is included in reports to the Governors with any specific points brought to their attention.

If a student with special medical requirements and a particular disability which restricts mobility around the school site is offered a place, the Senior Leadership Team and Health & Safety Officer will where reasonable ensure that access to classrooms and areas is made available so that the delivery of the curriculum to that student is not compromised.

Disabled Students Participation in the School Curriculum

With consideration to budget restrictions and reasonable expectations, the School will maintain and encourage the following:

- Further development of the SEND Code of Practice throughout to include:
- Full disclosure of relevant information at transfer.
- Regular meeting of teachers and senior staff to share best practice.

- A commitment to In-Service training for staff to support any student with a disability.
- Access will be provided for specialist help to occur which is reasonable and practicable.
- Students to be provided with available equipment to ensure that all students have access to all aspects of the curriculum (please see Curriculum Policy).

Where physical access to the site is difficult for a prospective student, the school recognises the need to be proactive in enabling such access. The Headteacher will arrange for assessment to be carried out in a ground floor room and will adapt the assessment papers and/or additional support to suit the student where reasonably practicable. Where possible the timetable will be constructed to accommodate any student with a disability and given reasonable consideration to the rooms where accessibility is easier. Students with a disability will be given additional reasonable time between lessons.

Improvements to the Physical Environment of the School

Improvement to the existing buildings will be governed by need, practicality and any budgetary considerations. There continues to be an ongoing commitment to upgrade facilities to enable all students to work in a good, comfortable and safe environment.

The School will continue to identify the areas where disabled access to academic sites may need to be improved if this is practicable and necessary.

The School will, in its regular fire safety risk assessment, update any evacuation procedures. It will also consider whether a particular disability might compromise safety in the event of a fire.

Any new building will be constructed to be fully accessible to the disabled.

Where appropriate and necessary, new equipment purchased for teaching will be considered as to the suitability of its use by students with disabilities, and every reasonable effort made to purchase equipment that meets the need of such students in a better way than the existing equipment it replaces.

Delivery of Information to Disabled Students

Where necessary the school will provide for documents to be provided to prospective parents/carers who themselves may be disabled or who have a child with a disability, in a relevant form which meets that need, if so requested and it is reasonable to do so.

- All school documents will be available in large print format if requested.
- To continue to provide training for staff in order to support them in better communication with students with SEN or disabilities.
- The School will plan/invest in classroom technology to better facilitate communication to students with SEN and disabilities. Specific attention will be given to enable:
 - Clear provision of images and text in a large print format.
 - The use of high quality audio/visual material.
 - The easy dissemination of printed handouts of appropriate clarity.

Schedule of Buildings

Ripple Site

Main House:

The main house is a three storey listed building with a basement and has limited access and does not have a lift. A ramp is available for fitting at the front entrance to allow wheelchair access. This is not a permanent situation and must be erected prior to an event where a disabled person is expected. The ramp will only permit entry to the ground floor accommodation.

Classrooms:

Access to most ground floor classrooms have wheelchair access.
There is a disabled toilet and showering facilities available in the gym area.

Broadstairs

The Broadstairs site comprises of one two storey building and one three storey building, which have limited access and no lift. A ramp is available for fitting at the front entrance to allow wheelchair access. This is not a permanent situation and must be erected prior to an event where a disabled person is expected. The ramp will only permit entry to the ground floor accommodation.

There are plans to have ground floor disabled toilet and wetroom installed in the near future..

Monitoring & Review

We will regularly monitor the success of the plan and it will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Governors.

Plan updated February 2024.