

Egerton Rothesay School Accessibility Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the principles and practices of ERS to ensure that discrimination against people with a disability at school does not take place. All staff are expected to be aware of the principles and practices within this policy and to treat disabled people, whether pupils, staff or visitors, fairly and with respect.

Within this policy, the definition of a person with a disability is 'one who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is described in the school's SEN policy. The Accessibility Policy addresses provision for any person with permanent or temporary disability.

Discrimination can take place in two ways:

- Treating a person "less favourably" than others for a reason relating directly to their disability.
- Failing to make a "reasonable adjustment" to ensure they are not placed at a "substantial disadvantage" for a reason relating to their disability.

ERS understands that not all barriers to learning may be physical. Access to the curriculum is risk assessed and detailed in the pupil's Individual Education Plan.

2. Medical and Accessibility Team

This policy and the procedures within will be monitored and implemented by the Medical and Accessibility Team (MAT). (See section 14).

3. Principles relating to disability

ERS seeks to ensure that no member of the School is unfairly discriminated against as a result of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, social background, disability, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances or sexual orientation.

To this end, the school will seek to:

- Fulfil its legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and any related or subsequent legislation.
- Identify and remove any unjustified discrimination against people with a disability.
- Pursue a programme of development and improvement in facilities, in procedures e.g. the school's Admissions Procedure, and in the skills, knowledge and understanding of staff to meet the needs of people with a disability.
- Ensure that disabled staff and pupils have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the school.
- Take into account the views of individual pupils or members of staff when their requirements are being assessed.
- Provide appropriate information and support to members of staff working with disabled people, either as colleagues or pupils.
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable staff and pupils who become disabled during their time at the School to continue in their chosen career or school career, wherever possible.
- Accommodate disabled visitors, wherever reasonably possible, to enable them to participate in events held on school premises.

- Ensure that school premises are accessible and safe for disabled people, as far as this is reasonably practicable and within the constraints of existing buildings.

3. Admissions

Within the admissions process:

- Before a prospective pupil visits the school, the parent will be asked to complete a Medical Questionnaire, which includes reference to any disability issues that their child may have. This should be returned at least one week before the visit to enable any required accessibility arrangements to be put in place.
- If required, as part of this process a designated member of the Medical and Accessibility Team may contact the parent for further information and meet with the relevant Base Leader and other staff as appropriate.
- Assistance will be provided to any enquiring parent or pupil who is visiting the school.
- Applications will be assessed solely against the criteria within the school's pupil admissions policy. No pupil will be refused admission on the grounds of disability.
- Where disability is likely to have an impact on the provision that can be reasonably offered by the school (which in turn could therefore have an impact on the learning of the child) this will be made clear to the parent to enable them to make an informed choice regarding a place at the school.
- Medical and accessibility information regarding the child will be used to inform levels of provision that would be required as part of an offer.
- A designated member of the Medical and Accessibility Team will discuss with prospective parents and, when appropriate, the pupil, any difficulties posed by a disability and their impact on access to the curriculum and the teaching and learning activities entailed, to ensure that any learning support and other needs are clearly identified. General site accessibility will also be discussed and reasonable action agreed.
- Following acceptance of a place, the designated member of the Medical and Accessibility Team will ensure that all required documents and arrangements are in place before the arrival of the pupil. (See sections 5 and 6)
- Following admission to the school, the arrangements for a disabled pupil will be reviewed by the Medical and Accessibility Team (MAT- see below) who will also be responsible for ensuring that actions designed to accommodate disability are met within prescribed timescales.

4. Accessing Curriculum, Assessment and Facilities

The School will take appropriate steps to ensure that lessons are organised in ways, which offer the best possible opportunities for successful participation by disabled pupils.

Appropriate support will be offered to any disabled pupil to enable them to participate in internal assessment and examination arrangements. All pupils are assessed prior to taking external examinations or assessments and access arrangements are put in place following approval by the relevant examination board.

Where possible, the school will take appropriate steps to provide a pupil who becomes disabled the opportunity to remain at the school, through the provision of the same level of adaptation and support as a comparable pupil who is disabled at the start of their school career.

Where possible, the School will aim to ensure that disabled pupils have equal access to all pupil facilities. While it is recognised that some of these facilities are located in buildings which have restrictive access, the school will ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to meet the needs of a disabled pupil. When appropriate, for a pupil with a significant mobility difficulty, the school will create and keep under review a Pupil Mobility Risk Assessment (PMRA). This may require the pupil to have a Personal Accessibility Plan (PAP).

5. Health and Safety

The School will ensure that all pupils, including pupils with a disability, are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and all other Health and Safety issues within the Schools that affect them. When identified by a PMRA, for a pupil with a significant mobility difficulty, the school will create and keep under review a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

6. Accessibility Plan

The school has a three year Accessibility Plan which addresses how the school aims to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- Improve the provision to disabled pupils of information which is already in writing for pupils who are not disabled
- Improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services offered by the school.

7. Employment

The Equality Act makes it unlawful for the Schools, and therefore, any of its employees to discriminate in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to the persons disability, if that treatment cannot be justified. This applies not only to requirements, but to all areas of employment including the terms of employment, opportunities for promotion, transfer or training, dismissals or redundancies.

Wherever practicable, the school will seek to:

- Employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Ensure that disabled employees are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed term contracts is being considered.

8. Recruitment

All candidates will be assessed on their abilities, qualifications and experience in relation to the job description and person specification for an advertised post. It may be that a 'reasonable adjustment' would be required to allow a disabled candidate to meet the requirements of a post and the school would seek to facilitate this if required. For example, a candidate would not be rejected simply on the basis that they cannot gain access to the building. Most arrangements to accommodate disabled employees can be made within existing resource constraints or at minimal cost. It should, therefore, not be assumed that employing disabled people will cause problems or generate significant additional cost.

9. Support in Employment

Some disabled people may require additional support when settling into their working environment. In particular, consideration will be given to any adaptation, for example, the provision of equipment or the modification of the working environment, which may be necessary to enable the individual to work on equal terms with non-disabled colleagues. The additional support required will initially be assessed by a member of the Medical and Accessibility Team and reviewed periodically by the team as a whole.

Any necessary modifications should ideally be agreed and carried out before the individual commences work. Some of the adjustments may have implications for other staff and it is important that they are consulted about proposed changes. Consideration should also be given to parking facilities, toilet facilities and health and safety issues such as evacuation procedures.

10. Confidentiality

Where a disability is not obvious, the individual should be asked if they wish their colleagues to be informed of their disability. Whenever possible, their wishes in this regard will be respected. In certain cases, it may be appropriate for some colleagues to be aware of the disability in order to be able to respond appropriately in cases of emergency.

11. Training

Training will be made available to disabled people on the same basis as their colleagues. Where special arrangements are required, for example, accessible training accommodation or large print handouts, this should be put in place.

12. Members of Staff who become disabled

Losing the services of a member of staff who becomes disabled can deprive the Schools of a considerable asset in terms of the skills and experience of the individual as well as an investment in that individual's training and development. Where practicable the school will attempt to retain staff who become disabled and to ensure suitable employment for them.

Senior members of staff should deal as sensitively as possible with these situations and seek help where required. Help should be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status, financial loss and reduced self-esteem.

The school is required by law to make reasonable adjustments to enable the individual to continue in post. There are a number of possible options to consider:

- Continuing in the same post – Where the disability has occurred as the result of an accident, for example, the individual has been absent from work for some time, the school will be flexible and sensitive in assisting staff to return to work.
- In circumstances where it is envisaged that some difficulties may be encountered the school will consider a phased return to work or a permanent reduction in hours until confidence and ability are fully restored.
- Redeployment – Where it is not practicable for the individual to continue in their former post, the school will attempt to redeploy the individual into a suitable alternative post. The individual's qualifications and skills as well as their own

preferences in terms of type of work should be taken into account when trying to identify a suitable vacancy.

- Premature retirement on grounds of incapacity – Where it has been decided that redeployment is impracticable, the member of staff may be considered for retirement on the grounds of medical incapacity under the normal terms of the appropriate procedure.
- Termination of employment - If all other options have been explored and found to be impracticable, dismissal on grounds of incapacity should be considered. If it proves to be necessary, termination will be in accordance with the appropriate procedures, which include a right of appeal.

In some cases, the disability will be a progressive condition, which will develop over time and a number of the options could therefore be appropriate at different stages.

13. Visitors and External Groups

The school sometimes organises events that are attended by visitors to the school and it will ensure that all buildings used for such an event are appropriately accessible. Information for emergency and evacuation procedures will be provided.

If the school enters into a contract for hire with an external person or group, it will aim to make all possible reasonable adjustments to enable accessibility. However it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that the part of the premises used meets the needs of their group.

14. Responsibilities

All School staff are expected to be aware of this policy and to treat disabled people, whether pupils, staff, visitors or members of the public in accordance with these provisions.

The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that no pupil or staff member is treated less favourably on account of any disability and that all reasonable adjustments are made. This responsibility is devolved to the 'Medical and Accessibility Team' (MAT) made up of appointed members of staff. The MAT meets termly, or more frequently if required, in order to:

- carry out a routine site survey each term
- ensure that all PMRAs, PAPs and PEEPs are up to date and in use
- address any issues that have arisen regarding accessibility
- review this policy
- maintain and review the school's Accessibility Plan.
- provide an annual report to the Board of Directors regarding implementation of the Accessibility Plan.

Members of the Medical and Accessibility Team are listed in Appendix 1.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Policy approved by: Alison Walker
(on behalf of Governing Body)
Date: September 2022

Next Review (latest): October 2024

Appendix 1

**Medical and Accessibility Team Members
September 21**

Lesley Clifton (Business Manager – Education)
Stephen Potts (Business Manager – Finance)
Sarah Vest (Senior Medical Officer/DSP)
Ellen Masters (Medical Officer)