READING BLUE COAT

Disability Policy

Definition of Disability

For the purpose of this policy, disability is defined as follows:

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and / or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause (as defined in the Equality Act October 2010).

This policy is drafted in light of the guidance document "The Equality Act 2010 and Schools: departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities" (2014), which may be found here.

Policy Aims

- Support the ethos of the School, which respects the rights of students with any disability, to have equal access to the curriculum, co-curricular activities and other services
- Equally value and encourage all students
- Foster positive attitudes towards disability within our school community
- Enrich all students' lives by pursuing an inclusive policy to all students which reflects the diversity of outside communities
- Ensure that no student's education, progress, and opportunities are impaired by the behaviour of another student or member of staff.

By implementing this policy, we uphold the core values of Reading Blue Coat School: aspiration, compassion, courage, integrity and service.

Admission to the School

We are an academically selective school and we welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer and can flourish in the caring environment of the School. Treating every child as an individual is important to us, and we welcome students with disability. However there are certain restrictions associated with the School site which will need to be discussed with the parents / guardian at the time of the application.

The prospective student must be able to meet the School's entry criteria and to maintain and, if possible, to improve the educational and general standards for all its students, in keeping with the School's 'Purpose and Values'.

- The School must feel reasonably sure that throughout the student's time at Reading Blue Coat, it will be able to educate and develop the prospective student to the best of his / her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the student's peers.

- The School policy is to apply these criteria to all students and potential students, regardless of any disability of which it is made aware by parents / guardians. The School has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled student or potential student at a substantial disadvantage compared with other students who are not disadvantaged because of disability.
- Reading Blue Coat requires parents to inform the School in respect of the disability of a prospective student in the relevant section of the application form in order that an assessment can be made.
- In assessing any student or prospective student, the School may take such advice and require such assessments, e.g. - Educational Psychologist's report, and recommendations it regards as appropriate.
- With prior notification of disability, supported by the recommendation of an Educational Psychologist's report, the School may allow special measures such as some extra time / use of a computer / large print papers / a scribe / a reader in the entrance exam for prospective students with a disability.

Physical Access

Under the legislation the School is required to make reasonable adjustment to physical features in the school. However we are not required to remove or significantly alter physical features.

- Parents should be aware that the School site covers a wide area with many old buildings of more than one level, some of which do not have lifts. Like many secondary schools, the School's approach of hosting subject areas within designated classrooms, requires students to move around the site, necessitating the use of steps or stairs in buildings to access classrooms. Students with impaired mobility will therefore be somewhat disadvantaged with building design.
- The School is addressing these issues as part of the buildings development and refurbishment programme but some substantial improvements cannot be achieved by reasonable adjustments short of major alterations at prohibitive cost to the School.
- The Accessibility Plan that supports this policy, to meet the legal planning duties, will seek to improve physical access within the constraints of local planning permission and the budgetary impact outlined above.

Education

- As part of the School's Equal Opportunity Awareness, staff will be alert to the needs of a student with a disability or Learning Support (LS) needs and, where specialist physical or medical help is required, relevant staff will be appropriately supported by the School Nurse and Wellbeing Centre team. Where relevant, details of individual learning or access plans will be shared with the appropriate staff.
- Additional academic support and help with access to the curriculum will be facilitated by the Director of Learning Support, through members of the Learning Support team, the teaching staff and the pastoral staff in the School.
- Staff will continue to be made aware of strategies to make "reasonable adjustments" within the classroom so as not to place a student with any disability at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the curriculum. Departments should refer to the individual learning plan.
- Staff will need to adapt their teaching to the learning patterns of all the students according to their abilities and needs. Such differentiation should be reflected in Departmental Schemes of Work.
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments to classroom management, teaching and expectations, should not prejudice the progress of other students, nor their Health and Safety (e.g. labs, workshops, sports equipment).

- The School, as an independent school, is not required under legislation to provide auxiliary support such as a classroom assistant, or auxiliary aids e.g. laptops or hearing loops, although the School will support the use of such devices where the need is identified, for instance an Education Psychologist's report.

Sporting & Recreational Activities

- The School will continue to provide equal access to all school activities for student with any disability, within the constraints of the physical nature of the site, the budgetary costs and the Health and Safety implications. There may be budgetary consequences in cases where additional staff supervision is required.
- Individual Risk Assessment and management strategies will be provided for a student with any disability participating in school trips or visits.

Welfare Awareness

- Wellbeing and Futures lessons, and other areas of the curriculum including assemblies, aim to promote equity of opportunity between disabled and other people, eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes to disabled people.
- The School is committed to providing appropriate training to staff that is deemed necessary to support any student with a disability to ensure their learning and welfare needs are appropriately considered.
- Other School policies will be continually improved to reflect an ethos of inclusivity.
- The School will agree with parents on regular appropriate means of communication with regard to the student's progress, behavioural issues and the effects of any medication.

Author(s):	Dr Guy Williams [Deputy Head (Pastoral)]
Date:	November 2025
Review Frequency:	Bi-Annually
Next Review Date:	November 2027
Related Policies:	• Accessibility Plan
Agreed by:	 Anjali Mehta Chandar (EDI Governor) *on behalf of the Full Governing Board*
Date of Agreement:	November 2025