



Accessibility Policy

Overview

Richard Cobden School is an inclusive school where we strive to ensure that the ethos and practice of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treated with respect.

We are a diverse school where all stakeholders and visitors are given the opportunity to experience, understand and value the diversity of the school community. All stakeholders and visitors are expected to demonstrate their active commitment to the school vision and ethos of equality.

We are committed to taking all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that pupils, staff and other stakeholders within, or wishing to join our school community are able to do so.

Richard Cobden School aims to include all pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. We will do this by:

- ✿ Having high expectations of everyone
- ✿ Having an admissions policy and criteria which does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- ✿ Finding ways of ensuring everyone can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including sport, drama and music
- ✿ Ensuring that curriculum enrichment activities, both in and out of school, are organised so that all pupils, including those with disabilities are able to participate
- ✿ Ensuring that resources are available to meet the needs of disabled pupils or staff and that images (e.g. teaching and learning resources, books) are inclusive of positive images of disabled people
- ✿ Providing auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when it is reasonable to do so, to ensure that the pupil is not at a disadvantage in comparison to a non-disabled pupil.
- ✿ Recognising the need to make changes to our practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what we offer to the same extent as a person without a disability.
- ✿ Devising teaching strategies that support the participation of all pupils, including those with disabilities
- ✿ Raising the awareness of disability amongst all staff through training
- ✿ Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made during building development work and planning of the physical environment of the school so as to avoid disabled people being placed at a disadvantage
- ✿ Ensuring that any pupil or other stakeholder who requires modified communication is appropriately catered for

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination. It provides legal rights for disabled people in all areas of life including education. It is unlawful for a school to treat disabled people unfavourably.

Under this Act a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal

day-to-day activities. Unfavourable treatment could include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from a disability and harassment.

In addition the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2001) gives practical guidance on how to identify and assess children with Special Educational Needs including disability.

The school seeks and follows advice on the provisions of resources, aids and support, from Local Authority support services such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, Speech and Language therapists, support for visually impaired, health professionals and other advisors.

The school employs additional teaching and support staff and these staff are deployed according to individual pupils' needs.

Training is provided to teachers, teaching assistants, learning support assistants and leaders to teach, support and care for pupils with special educational needs and disability.

Richard Cobden School is a large three storey Victorian building. It has a separate Nursery and Adult Learning Centre. The building presents significant accessibility challenges beyond the ground floor, the Nursery and the Learning Centre. All practicable measures are taken to enable accessibility for all pupils and adults who come to our school.

The school regularly reviews accessibility and resources. The school improvement planning process takes account of aspects of school improvement required to ensure all reasonable and practicable steps are planned and achieved in order to ensure equitable provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. The improvement actions relating to equality development priorities (EDP) can be found in the School Improvement Plan and are indicated by a tick (✓) in the EDP column.

Scope of Plan

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

i) Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with disabilities are able to take advantage of education and associated services.

This strand of the planning duty covers aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors,

gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture.

Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

Physical aids to access education also cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

At Richard Cobden School the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through the SEN framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which applies to all schools.

The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEN but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

ii). Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can access and participate in the school's curriculum.

This strand of the planning duty helps to improve access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum. It covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training. Schools are expected to plan to improve progressively access to the curriculum for all disabled pupils although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and may be provided through the SEN framework. The accessibility strategies and plans help to ensure that schools are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

iii). Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities

This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils – such as hand-outs, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled pupils.

As required, this will include alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, or through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information should also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats.

Other Related School Policies

Equality for pupils is included as an explicit aim in all of the school's policies including:

- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy (including Anti-Bullying)
- Admissions policy/criteria
- School improvement plan
- School Premises Management Plan
- Policy for school trips
- SEN policy
- Exclusions Policy

Effective From	September 2016
Review Date	This policy will usually be reviewed every three years or sooner where the need arises