

DISABILITY POLICY

Admission to the school depends upon a prospective pupil meeting the criteria required to maintain and, if possible to improve, the educational and general standards for all its pupils commensurate with the ethos to which the school aspires. The school must also feel reasonably sure it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful preparatory school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded individual. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the school.

The school's policy is to apply these criteria to all pupils and potential pupils regardless of any disability of which it is aware, subject to its obligation to make reasonable adjustments not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared with other pupils.

In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards as appropriate. Subject to this, the school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

One of the obvious problems the school has is the lay out of its buildings, many of which are old and do not have lifts. This is particularly relevant to the boarding facilities and some of the specialist classrooms, such as the science laboratories. In common with many schools, Ludgrove operates a system of having fixed classrooms for individual subjects, based on the valid ground of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. This requires pupils to go from classroom to classroom, often up stairs in buildings without lifts. It is not hard to conclude that any pupil with impaired mobility is going to be put at a disadvantage by these problems, if not prohibited altogether from access to some or all of the educational and other facilities the school offers. Nor can these matters be remedied in any substantial way by reasonable adjustments short of making major alterations to the school at prohibitive cost.

The school has reviewed accessibility and drawn up a plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can be taught, accommodated and enjoy the facilities provided at Ludgrove. This plan will be reviewed at least annually.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

A review was carried out of the school's policies, procedures and facilities, in so far as they are likely to affect pupils and prospective pupils who are disabled.

Admissions

No evidence was found in the school's promotional literature and admissions procedure of discrimination against disabled pupils. Prospective pupils do not sit an examination or any other form of assessment before admission. As the school employs a qualified nurse as its matron, it is able to provide boarding facilities for boys who require additional medical care. This includes diabetics, coeliacs and epileptics. The school's records show that a number of boys with special educational needs have been educated at Ludgrove and the school employs several specialist teachers in its learning support department. There is, however, no record of potential pupils with serious hearing, sight or mobility problems enquiring about or applying to the school.

Plan – When the school's prospectus is next re-drafted, a statement of the school's non-discrimination policy should be included.

Physical lay-out of the School and its boarding facilities

There are no dormitories on the ground floor level. Access to all dormitories is up stairs and there are no lifts anywhere within the buildings.

The installation of lifts within the existing buildings would be extremely difficult. The buildings are old and rambling and a single lift could only provide access to a limited number of dormitories. The amount of space this would take up and the cost would be prohibitive.

Plan – If additional dormitory facilities become necessary in the future, any plan should include access for disabled pupils.

Education

The Science laboratories, French room and a whole floor in the Music Block are upstairs. None of the buildings have lifts. The installation of lifts would be very difficult within the space available and prohibitively expensive.

Plan – There are currently no plans for any additional teaching facilities. If any are planned in the future, provision for access for the disabled should be made.

Recreational and sporting activities

The swimming pool complex can be accessed by wheelchair. As the school grounds cover several acres, the majority of the pitches, the golf course and the clay pigeon shooting area are at considerable distance from the main buildings and approached by uneven muddy tracks, which would be unsuitable for a wheelchair. The downstairs of the Music Block has wheelchair access and the ground floor facilities for CDT could be made accessible.

Plan - All recreational activities are well supervised and so, in general, there would not be a problem in respect of pupils with disabilities that do not restrict mobility. However, each activity would have to be individually risk assessed for the pupils concerned. No feasible, safe plan could be devised to enable pupils in wheelchairs to participate in all sporting activities.

Welfare

The school employs a qualified nurse as the matron and the pupil to pastoral care staff ratio is high. So there is adequate provision for pupils requiring routine medical assistance and/or mental support.

The school has a written policy to deal with bullying, which would include any discrimination against disabled pupils by other boys or staff. All boys at Ludgrove have an assigned division master and under matron. In addition to this, the headmasters and the headmaster's wife take a close day to day interest in the welfare of all the boys. If a disabled pupil had any problems with integrating or bullying, this should be identified and dealt with.

Plan – Any change or review of school policies in the future will consider the effect any changes might have on pupils with disabilities.

Awareness and Observance of the school's disability policy

The school's disability policy should be incorporated in the school's staff handbook, so that all pastoral and teaching staff are made aware of it.

Plan - The school's disability action plan is reviewed annually and the policy and compliance with it should be reviewed at the same time.