

GRANTA SCHOOL

WHEELCHAIR POLICY

The governors' wheelchair policy has the following aims:

- To promote the safe use of wheelchairs by their users and those around them
- To promote a high standard for the maintenance of wheelchairs
- To promote awareness of wheelchair users and their needs

The governors recognise that there are three main categories of wheelchair users who use the school buildings:

1. Pupils and students who are on roll at the school, or staff employed by the school, who are disabled and have regular access to a wheelchair;
2. Visiting pupils and students and adults who are disabled and have regular use of a wheelchair;
3. Pupils, students, staff or visitors who may have sustained an injury or have an illness requiring the temporary use of a wheelchair.

This policy is aimed at those who fall into category 1 – effectively those who regularly access the building in their normal daily routine using a wheelchair.

For the purpose of this document, wheelchairs are divided broadly into two types: manual and powered. Users of powered wheelchairs may also have the use of a manual wheelchair.

In each instance, the school requires that the parents of children at the school or adults who work at the school, to provide a chair that is maintained as 'fit for purpose' and managed with the health and safety of all in mind. The school strongly recommends that pupils who rely on a powered wheelchair for school purposes to have an alternative manual wheelchair for when their powered wheelchair may be being serviced.

Mechanical

From whatever source the wheelchair is provided – the Wheelchair Service, privately funded or a charity – the responsibility for the regular servicing of a wheelchair and ensuring that it is well maintained and 'fit for purpose' remains with the parents. If the school has concerns about the safety of a wheelchair it reserves the right to ask parents to use a different chair whilst servicing is completed.

The school expects:

- That the wheelchair should be in good working order and regularly serviced by a competent qualified engineer

- Brakes and other working parts should be regularly checked and maintained
- If the wheelchair is a powered wheelchair, the governors require that it is provided with a speed limitation built-in for safety and an adult over-ride switch
- In the case of mechanical breakdown or another problem which arises with the wheelchair regularly used by an individual that might make using the wheelchair unsafe, the school will expect parents to inform the school and to make alternative arrangements
- If the school has concerns about the mechanical workings of the wheelchair or its safety, then it will inform parents

Safety for pupils/students on roll and staff employed at the school

Wheelchair users

It is the school's expectation that all pupils/students who are on roll or staff who are wheelchair users should be trained in the basic use of their wheelchair.

In terms of the powered wheelchair training should cover:

- General health and safety awareness – including putting on brakes when stationary
- Use of the controls
- Use of the brakes in emergencies
- Awareness of others when manoeuvring – both in class and around the school

General safety

- Teachers should use the full flexibility of movement time to ensure that disabled students are safe when moving between lessons.
- Disabled pupils/students should not allow others to play with their chairs, either by playing with their controls or by standing or riding on the chair
- Disabled pupils in wheelchairs should also be aware that other disabled pupils who may or may not be in a wheelchair and younger pupils or the elderly who may be in the vicinity when they are manoeuvring, need special consideration and due care and attention should be paid to these pupils

Abled bodied pupils/students in the school should be made aware of the following:

- that pupils in wheelchairs should be given additional space to manoeuvre around the school
- that they should be vigilant when standing or sitting near to those using wheelchairs
- that they must not touch the controls of any wheelchair or stand on or ride on the back of any wheelchair

Information regarding the awareness of wheelchair safety should be available to all via the School website.

Liability

Parents should be aware that the school insurance does not cover accidental damage to the wheelchair or liability, for loss, damage or injury caused by use of the wheelchair except where the loss, damage or injury may have arisen as result of the negligence of the school.

Parents of wheelchair users are advised to take out additional insurance to cover the use of the wheelchair if this is not already covered by their household insurance.

Off site activities

- The school undertakes to ensure that all pupils have access to off site activities as far as they are purposeful and essential for their education. School maintains a small fleet of vehicles that are suitable to transport pupils in manual chairs.
- The school will undertake to assess each model of powered chair that a pupil may have for suitability to be transported in school owned buses. If school transport is suitable the school will transport pupils in powered chairs so long as the destination is suitable (for example surfaces are even) and so long as the destination has sufficient space so that pupils have the necessary areas for manoeuvring. School will take into consideration visual impairment and accuracy, e.g. driving.
- School retains the right to advise parents that in their opinion the safety of the pupil and others mean that a manual chair should be provided to enable the pupil to take part in the off site activity.