

MODEL ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

This Policy is the responsibility of:

Date:

Date Ratified:

Revision date:

Key personnel

Role	name	email	Phone number
Head of Centre			
SENCO			
Exams Officer			
Chair of Governors			
Governor with SEN Responsibility			
Specialist Assessor			

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1.0 Key legislation and guidance:

This policy is to be reviewed and updated annually following the publication of the revised JCQ Regulations and guidance on exam access arrangements

Reference in this policy to AARA refers to the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2021-2022 publication

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>

Reference in this policy to ICE refers to Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022 publication.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>

Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Malpractice_21-22_FINAL.pdf

Equality Act (2010)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

SEND Code of Practice (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

2.0 Introduction:

The purpose of an exam access arrangement (EAA) is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for candidates with special educational needs and/or disabilities to prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. They are to ensure a level playing field to mitigate, where possible, the disadvantage imposed by the disability. They are not to give an unfair advantage. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (AARA 4.2.2). Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.3). The need for EAA must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis because candidates may require different arrangements for different subjects, due to the varying demands of each subject.

This Policy details how <insert name of school here> complies with JCQ Regs AARA for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties. It provides information for how candidates are allocated exam access arrangements and how they use them in public examination. The policy supports and facilitates the Centre's aim to create a learning environment in which every student can fulfil his or her full potential.

3.0 Definitions:

3.1 Special Educational Needs:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision to be made

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

3.2 Disability

The Equality Act (2010) defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long term’ negative effect on the individual’s ability to do normal day-to-day activities.

‘**Substantial**’ is defined as: more than minor or trivial

‘**Long-term**’ is defined as: 12 months or more, although there are special exceptions for recurring conditions

3.3 Reasonable Adjustments Duty:

The Equality Act (2010) sets out legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions and other towards disabled children and young people.

- They must not directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers
- Initiations must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, provide equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people

See SEN Code of Practice (2015) for mor information

4.0 Who are the JCQ?

The Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) are the regulatory body for access arrangements in external exams for the majority of Exam Boards. They Regulate the implementation of access arrangements in public examinations (EAA) through annual inspections. Every year in September, the Regulations are revised and updated. It is the responsibility of XXX to ensure that any EAA are updated in line with current policy and that current practices reflect the **most recent Regulations**.

5.0 What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements for external examinations are *reasonable adjustments* as defined by the Equality Act (2010). A reasonable adjustment is required where there is a *substantial* and *long-term need*. It is required during exams where a candidate would be put at *a substantial disadvantage* without it, when compared to someone without the disability.

An exam access arrangement must not give an unfair advantage over other candidates and must not interfere with the assessment objective of the skills being assessed. For instance, an exam where reading is assessed as a skill, cannot provide a Reader as a concession.

6.0 What Exam Access Arrangements are Available?

The Centre will only enter candidates for exams which are appropriate to the candidates’ needs and for which they are able to achieve. The Centre recognises that it is not always possible to provide equal access to exams, the responsibility upon the Centre is to endeavour to do what is deemed *reasonable*.

The following exam concessions are currently offered:

- 25% extra time
- Up to 50% extra time in rare and exceptional cases
- Word processor (laptop or tablet)
- Reading pen
- Separate invigilation

- Small group room
- Coloured overlays
- Supervised rest breaks
- Prompter
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe
- Voice activated software
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for exams
- Modified papers
- Bilingual dictionary
- Practical assistant
- Braille or enlarged papers
- Modified papers (e.g. change colour paper)
- Language Modifier

A reasonable adjustment may not be included in the list of available EAA because it may be unique to the individual.

The following categories of need are currently supported through these various concessions:

- **Cognition and Learning Needs**, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, processing speed, moderate learning difficulties and memory issues
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs**, including ADHD and ADD
- **Communication and Interaction Needs**, including ASD and SLCN
- **Sensory and Physical Needs**: including VI and HI, medical needs, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy

This list is not exhaustive and merely demonstrates the types of categories of need which are supported through EAA.

7.0 Specific Arrangements:

7.1 Supervised Rest Breaks:

- Rest breaks must reflect the candidate's normal way of working and should not exceed more than 25% of the exam time.
- Most candidates will only require one short movement or concentration break.
- All applications for a rest break must be supported by evidence from a specialist clinician and must be due to a psychological or medical condition, such as anxiety or concentration and attention which is long-term and substantial
- The final decision rests with the SENCO
- A File Note must be held on file, which outlines the needs of the candidate

7.2 Extra time:

The most recent edition of the JCQ Regs. (2021) stipulate that there must be **at least two below average qualifying scores (standard score of 84 or below), or one below average and one low average (between 85 and 89) qualifying scores in two different areas**. These scores must not be related. Qualifying scores include (7.5.12):

- verbal or visual processing speed
- reading speed/fluency/efficiency/reading comprehension speed
- Short term auditory/auditory working/visual memory or the composite score
- Phonological awareness
- Visual motor processing

Only in very rare and exceptional circumstances will a candidate be considered for 25% extra time who has two low average scores in different and unrelated areas. Application for extra time, in this circumstance is made directly with the boards, based upon a substantial body of evidence.

However, it is worth noting that under current JCQ Regs. the two or more scores must not be related and associated with the same area of processing. For example, two reading speed or reading efficiency scores cannot be used, but a single reading speed and cognitive processing score can be used.

7.3 Word processors:

See separate word processor policy

A word processor will initially be considered for a candidate with slow handwriting, and only where the candidate is not proficient in the use of a word processor will extra time be considered.

7.4 Complex Needs:

Some students with complex needs may not require a specialist assessment as they are under review through external agencies, such as speech and language therapists or clinicians. Each concession will be considered for students with complex needs, on a case-by-case basis.

Students with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Conditions or other medical or physical conditions who have a *current* clinician involved, will require a letter from their clinician which states specifically how the disability or difficulty impacts upon their performance in exams. The letter cannot be a generic letter, but must be **specific to the individual student** and produced by a specialist clinician after the start of year 9

In all cases the final decision regarding the application of access arrangements rests with the SENCO.

8.0 Evidence needed for Access Arrangements:

8.1 The evidence required for application of EAA varies according to the type of arrangement.

These could include:

- Completed Form 8 outlining (where a specialist assessment is required)
 - o the candidate's history or need and evidence of ongoing need,
 - o specialist assessment results indicating at least 2 below average scores or one below average and one low average score in relevant areas
 - o signed and dated part 3
- Subject evidence from teachers, in the form of Teacher Questionnaires
- Feedback from Exams including double marked papers
- Detailed File Note for complex needs where there is a medical need or complex physical or sensory need
- Short File Note for rest breaks, word processor, reader – substantiated with evidence of need
- EHCP detailing the EAA required
- Up-to-date letter from specialist clinician/psychologist/CAMHS/OT/PT or support services, to support the application in the case of complex needs
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools

Once the Access Arrangement is granted, this evidence will be held on file and available for inspection, together with:

- Permission from the awarding body for the arrangement -AAO print-out or directly from the Awarding Body
- A data protection notice signed by the student
- A record of all occasions where the student has been supported by Access Arrangements
- The qualifications of the Specialist Assessor also need to be held of file

8.2 Note on Private Specialist Assessment Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private assessors and submitting the reports to the SENCo as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or other EAA. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. External Assessors are required to contact the SENCo **before** carrying out the assessment. The SENCo will provide the Assessor with any existing information about previous support and current difficulties. A student's 'normal way of working' in school is key, and Access Arrangements will **not** be awarded purely on the basis of a private report. In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the Head of Centre or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes. The final decision rests with the Head of Centre.

9.0 How are students identified and assessed for access arrangements?

The majority of students requiring access arrangements are identified prior to entry to the school through their Primary school.

Pupils are tracked and monitored from Y7 for evidence of any area of need.

It is recognised that difficulties change over time and that any access arrangements which were implemented during Key Stage Two SATs might not be appropriate for GCSE.

It is the responsibility of teaching staff to refer students who are not on the Inclusion register who may be at risk of underachieving in exams due to a learning difficulty in a timely fashion.

Teachers must complete a Referral Form and forward this, along with supporting evidence, to the SENCO for further investigation.

Further background information will be collated to determine whether to provide a specialist assessment.

Access arrangements cannot be applied at the last minute as there needs to be a history of need and they must reflect the candidate's normal way of working and their current level of need.

In rare cases students themselves might refer themselves for an investigation Parents are also able to refer their child for further investigation, if they have concerns relating to performance which is substantiated through performance in class.

10.0 Specialist assessment and applying for access arrangements

The Centre has a Centre-delegated assessor who will carry out the majority of the specialist assessments.

When a student is brought to the attention of a SENCo in one of the above ways, the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator will investigate further. If further testing or screening is indicated, this will be carried out and parents informed.

Where a specialist assessment is required, as a result of the investigation, a Form 8 part 1 will be completed by the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator and a specialist assessment will be organised.

All parents will be informed of the specialist assessment taking place

Following the specialist assessment, Form 8 Part 2 will be completed by the specialist assessor and there will be a discussion regarding the most appropriate EAA for the candidate, given their normal way of working within the Centre and their specialist assessment results.

Either the SENCO or Exams Officer will then apply to the Awarding Bodies using the Access Arrangements Online (AAO) application system. The feedback is instant, and, where the Access Arrangement is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the student, and the parents and student are informed in writing.

The evidence of need is held on file, and the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator monitors and ensures that the Access Arrangement is provided during each internal exam within the Centre.

The Centre will monitor the use of EAA within internal exams and collate a spreadsheet on a subject-by-subject basis.

The specialist assessment will not take place before Year 9 and will be within 26 months of the final exam series. Hence, most students will be assessed at the end of Year 9 or start of Year 10, following thorough review of exam performance during Year 8 and 9.

The most recent editions of up-to-date, nationally standardised tests will be used and delivered one-to-one.

The Exams Officer, SENCO and specialist assessor will receive regular JCQ Regulations update training (annually).

The SENCO will inform parents and the candidates in writing of the decision regarding exam concessions once the application has been approved by the JCQ and/or exam boards.

11.0 Moving from year 11 to Year 12 and 13

In all cases, evidence of need will be collated from the candidate's teachers.

11.1 Students moving within the Centre

The previous Form 8 will be reviewed to ensure it complies with current JCQ Regs.

Where it does not comply, further re-assessment may be needed.

Evidence of need will be collected through internal examinations and subject teachers, through the use of Teacher Questionnaire and Feedback from Exams Questionnaire.

Where a student is re-taking their exams, the Form 8 can be rolled forward, provided it complied with the JCQ Regs. at the time it was produced and is completed properly.

Where a candidate's Form 8 is not completed properly, or where his Form 8 does not meet the revised and updated JCQ Regs. a new specialist assessment will be carried out.

11.2 Students moving from a different setting:

The Form 8 will be obtained from the previous setting and reviewed for compliance with the current JCQ Regs.

The specialist assessor qualifications will be obtained from the previous setting.

Where a candidate is re-taking exams, the Form 8 from the previous setting can be used to re-apply for EAA **provided it complied** with the JCQ Regs. of that time and was completed properly.

Where a Form 8 was not completed properly, does not comply with the original JCQ Regs. or does not meet the new (updated) Regs. an updated assessment will be convened.

11.3 More than 25% Extra time

All candidates who were in receipt of 50% extra time will be reassessed at the beginning of Year 12.

12.0 New Admissions:

All paperwork pertaining to the student will be obtained from the previous setting. Where there are EAA in place, the paperwork will be reviewed by the SENCO. The process will vary according to when the new admission takes place:

Prior to Year 9

- The student will be monitored and an updated assessment will take place and evidence collated from their teachers

Following the start of Year 9

- Where there is an existing Form 8, the specialist assessor qualifications will be obtained and the Form 8 will be scrutinised for compliance with current JCQ Regs. Teacher evidence will be obtained
- If the Form 8 does not comply with current JCQ Regs. or is not completed properly an updated assessment will be arranged
- If there is no Form 8, but where there is a recognise need, a specialist assessment will be arranged

13. Exam Access Arrangements and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Where a candidate has an EHCP it will be reviewed following the start of Year 9 and the EAA will be outlined within the EHCP.

Evidence from subject teachers will be collated in the normal way.

An application for appropriate EAA will be made online in the normal way.

See handout EAA and EHCPs

14.0 Deadlines and Late applications:

The Centre reserves the right to not make an application for access arrangements where evidence has not been provided in time for the published deadlines. The school will fulfil its legal duty of care by doing everything possible to obtain evidence of need within the appropriate timescales.

The Centre recognises that in rare and exceptional circumstances sometimes deadlines are missed and the Centre may deem it necessary to make an application after the published deadline. However, the final authorisation of the arrangement rests with the awarding body.

15.0 Malpractice:

Failure to comply with JCQ Regulations is deemed to be malpractice. Every endeavour will be made by the Centre to adhere to the processes outlined within the most recent edition of the JCQ Regulations to ensure a level playing field and an unfair advantage is not given to some candidates.

Malpractice can be by a member of staff or a candidate.

In all instances of malpractice, the Awarding Body must be notified

Examples of malpractice constitutes:

- Completing Form 8 Part 2 without having completed the assessments, using inappropriate assessments or not within the appropriate timescales;
- Completing Form 8 Part 2 without the qualifications to do so;
- Failure to conduct specialist assessment in a standardised way with appropriate assessments;
- Falsification of paperwork to gain access arrangements;
- Maladministration of data by putting wrong or inaccurate data onto the access arrangements online system;
- Implementing an arrangement where there is no evidence to support it.

Refer to Malpractice Guidance: Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures

This list of examples is not a comprehensive list.

Where an individual member of staff is suspected of malpractice it is the responsibility to inform the Head of Centre immediately who may decide to conduct an internal investigation.

16.0 Complaints process:

The JCQ are unable to communicate with parents directly and are unable to handle complaints from parents.

Where parents are concerned about an application for EAA, they should discuss their concerns with the SENCO in the first instance.

If concerns remain following meeting with the SENCO, parents should contact the Head of Centre in writing, within 10 working days of the concern arising. They should outline their concern. The Head of Centre will reply to parents within 5 working days. Depending upon the nature of the complaint the Head of Centre will take the following course of action:

1. Decide from the information provided in the letter whether to uphold the complaint
2. Make further investigations requiring up to 2 weeks to investigate before making a final decision
3. Delegate further investigation to a member of the senior team

Once the Head of Centre's final decision has been made, parents have 10 working days to appeal this decision. All appeals will be handled by the SEN Governor, or an equivalent governor.

17.0 Temporary Arrangements:

In very rare and exceptional circumstances a candidate may require a temporary arrangement, such as where a candidate has an accident resulting in a temporary injury. The arrangement to be considered will vary according to the circumstance and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the SENCo. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make the final decision over, and application for, any special consideration or temporary arrangement in all cases.



SENDISS

Access-Achieve-Empower

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SENCO following the publication of the JCQ Regs. in the Autumn Term of each academic year.

Further Information

**Further information can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:
www.jcq.org.uk**

If you have questions about Access Arrangements, please contact the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator on XXXXX.

APPENDIX 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the SENCO:

The SENCO is ultimately responsible for all decisions relating to access arrangements. They make the final decision based upon the information available to them.

The SENCO/Deputy SENCO is responsible for collating evidence of need and normal way of working, including evidence of use during internal exams.

The SENCO or Deputy SENCO are responsible for communicating with parents and students over the access arrangements application process.

The SENCO will:

- Maintain a register of students who require access arrangements
- Collate evidence of need and normal way of working
- Collate evidence of use in prior internal exams
- Complete Form 8 Part 1
- Provide background information to the Specialist Assessor prior to the specialist assessment
- Ensure parents are aware of the assessment taking place prior to assessment
- Organise the students' timetables on the day of the specialist assessment

The Role of the Senior Leadership Team:

The Head of Centre is ultimately responsible for the administration of access arrangements in external exams and will be familiar with the JCQ Regulations.

The SEN governor will also be familiar with the JCQ Regulations via training received from the SENCO.

The SENCO will meet termly with the Head of Centre to discuss any concerns and update the Head of Centre. Other meetings may be required on a case-by-case basis.

The Specialist Assessor:

The Specialist assessor is a fully qualified teacher with a specialist qualification at level 7 in assessment (with at least 100 hours mandatory experience) who is able to assess students with learning needs.

The current specialist assessor is <employed by the centre/contracted by the centre > to conduct the access arrangements assessments and has a close working relationship with the school, working in unison with the SENCO.

The Specialist Assessor will:

- Complete Form 8 Part 2 for JCQ purposes;
- Only use tests which are suitable for access arrangements applications
- Only use the most recent editions of nationally standardised assessments
- Personally administer the assessments within a one-to-one environment
- Undergo regular update training
- Deliver all tests in accordance with their published guidelines and for the required age-group

The Role of Teachers:

Teachers are responsible for identification of a need and working with the SENCO to provide evidence of need within the classroom environment and evidence of use of exam concessions during internal exams. This will be achieved by:

- Teacher Questionnaires being issued prior to assessment
- Teacher Feedback forms being completed following mock and other internal exams

The Exams Officer:

The Exams officer is responsible for the implementation and organisation of exam concessions during each exam series.

The Exams Officer is also responsible for making the application online through the AAO in partnership with the SENCO, and Specialist Assessor (where necessary).

APPENDIX TWO: File Notes

Provide the template for the Detailed File Note and Short File Note

APPENDIX THREE: Information for Readers and Scribes

Provide copies of the handouts for Readers and Scribes

APPENDIX FOUR: Information for Parents

Provide a copy of the Handout to Parents

APPENDIX FIVE: FORMS

Provide copies of the following Forms:

- STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
- TEACHER EXAM FEEDBACK FORM
- TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
- BLANK FORM 8 2021-22
- DATA PROTECTION NOTICE