

## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (EXAMINATIONS) POLICY

*Non Sibi Sed Aliis*

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.  
Psalm 119, vs 105

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”  
**Jeremiah 17:7-8**

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. No amendments can be made without their express instructions and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

Review Date: Spring Term 2025

Next Review Date: Spring Term 2026

Reviewed By: Mrs M Rogerson

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APPROVED BY THE HEADTEACHER – Spring Term 2025

## **Rationale**

Our Exam Access Arrangements Policy explains the activity undertaken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), which will include those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND). The policy supports and facilitates the school's aim to create a learning environment in which every student can fulfil his or her full potential.

## **What are Exam Access Arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a student accessing an examination caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties, without creating any unfair advantage or compromising the integrity of an assessment. These arrangements are agreed before an assessment, and must reflect a student's normal way of working within the school.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

## **Examples of Access Arrangements:**

<b>Access Arrangement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Reader	A trained adult reads the question and any relevant text for the student (but not where the skill of reading is being assessed e.g the reading section of the English papers).
Scribe	A trained adult writes for the student. The student dictates their answers. The scribe writes exactly as the student dictates. In MFL, the student must

	dictate spellings letter by letter in the relevant language.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt the student with a few permitted phrases to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refocus.</li> <li>• indicate how much time is left.</li> </ul>
Exam Reading Pen	When a student is reading difficult a text, he/she may work more effectively if he/she can hear the text being read for them. The Exam Reading Pen reads the highlighted sections of text through headphones. The student takes the examination in the main exam room.
Modified Papers	Specially prepared papers, e.g. enlarged to a specific font size.
Rest Breaks	Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time taken is added to the finish time. Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.
Extra Time	Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% Extra time between 26 and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances. In very exceptional circumstances, a student may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.
Live Speaker	A student with a hearing impairment my need a live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g. MFL listening examinations. The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a listening examination.
Bilingual translation dictionaries (with up to a maximum of 10% extra time in some cases)	For students who have English as an additional language and have been in the country no longer than 3 years. The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.

Practical Assistant	Help with practical tasks for students with physical difficulties. Support includes examples such as turning the pages in music or holding a ruler in maths.
Laptop/Word Processor	Access to a laptop for an exam so the student could word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks to be disabled.

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

### **Evidence needed for Access Arrangements**

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), depending on the arrangement required. These could include:

- Form 8/9 report from SENDCO
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. spelling, writing, reading comprehension tests
- Any letters from outside agencies, hospitals or doctors
- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

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
- A data protection notice signed by the student
- A data protection notice signed by the SENDCO
- A record of all occasions where the student has been supported by Access Arrangements

### **Medical Letters and Private Assessments**

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but any request for an access arrangement also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school. Likewise, private assessments or reports from Educational

Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement if supported by school evidence, which must be sent to the assessor in advance of the assessment. Private reports cost a significant amount of money, putting those unable to obtain a private report due to financial circumstances at a disadvantage. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. External Assessors are required to contact the SENDCO before carrying out the assessment. The SENDCO 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. We may choose not to accept a private assessment report as evidence for an access arrangement if it conflicts with evidence gathered at school and by the SENDCO. In this case, a written rationale for rejecting the report will be held on file and made available.

### **The assessment process**

The assessment process is carried out by Mrs M Rogerson (SENDCO), who is appropriately qualified as required by the JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3. Mrs M Rogerson (SENDCO) has successfully completed a post-graduate course at level 7 (including at least 100 hours of individual specialist assessment) at Edge Hill University and is an associate member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA certificate number 14/AM1121).

### **The qualification(s) of Mrs M Rogerson (SENDCo)**

- Post Graduate Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties (PGCSpLD) – Dyslexia
- Post Graduate Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties (PGCSpLD) – Dyscalculia
- Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA)

### **Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties**

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### **Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)**

The head of centre/senior leadership team will check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments ([GR](#), section 5.4). The head of centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate. Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCO. ([AA](#), section 7.3)

### **Identifying the need for Access Arrangements**

Students will be identified for consideration for Access Arrangements in one of the following ways:

- They had an Access Arrangement in KS2 for their National Curriculum Tests
- Baseline testing in Year 7 completed using the Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)
- Parental referral
- Subject Teacher referral
- Information from previous schools
- They are known to the Special Needs department

### **Testing and applying for Access Arrangements**

When a student is brought to the attention of a SENDCO in one of the above ways, the SENDCO will investigate further. If further testing or screening is indicated, this will be carried out and parents informed. The outcomes of the assessments will be recorded and summarised; where an Access Arrangement is recommended due to a learning difficulty, JCQ Form 8 Part 2 (the assessor's report) will be completed and used as evidence for online submission of a formal Access Arrangement application. The school will then apply to the Awarding Bodies using the Access Arrangements Online application system. Where the Access Arrangement is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the student, and the parents informed in writing. The evidence of need is held on file, and the SENDCO monitors and ensures that the Access Arrangement is normal working practice for the student within school.

## **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor**

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan*, the SENDCo paints a picture of need by collating information from parents, teachers and assessments throughout Years 7-9. Candidates are screened and support is monitored at Key Stage Three which is then used to determine what support is needed at Key Stage 4. This information helps to build a picture of need and demonstrates the candidate's normal way of working. This information is then used to complete Section A of Form 8 prior to the candidate being formally assessed in KS4 (by the SENDCO).

The SENDCo is the centre's qualified assessor and arranges for the candidate to be assessed. Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo builds a picture of need through data collected at Key Stage 3. Evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information is kept in candidate's files and this information is collated before the candidate is assessed. The candidate is then assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information gathered.

The SENDCO personally conducts the assessments and then establishes if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has **an impairment which substantially affects their performance**. The SENDCO will not sign off on assessments carried out by another professional

**7.5.6: The SENDCO carries out tests which are relevant to support the application.** For example, if the candidate requires a reader but does not have writing difficulties, there is no requirement to carry out tests of writing skills.

**7.5.7: Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores are used, where published.**

**7.5.8: The candidate's chronological age will be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless no test is published for the candidate's age.**

Results will be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. (These are standard scores.) Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Section C of Form 8 will not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores will be converted into standard scores.

### **Reading skills**

**Reading accuracy:** reading accuracy is assessed using an individually administered, untimed test of single word reading.

**Reading comprehension:** reading comprehension is assessed using a recognised test of text or sentence comprehension.

**Reading speed:** a candidate with a history of reading difficulties, whose reading accuracy (at single word level), or reading comprehension, is within normal limits for his/her age, may read slowly because he/she:

- takes longer than expected to decode the words, leading to slow reading (**slow reading speed**);
- needs to re-read text many times in order to absorb its meaning (**slow reading comprehension speed**).

There are various ways of assessing text level **reading speed**:

- a test which assesses speed at text level (known as reading rate or reading speed);
- a test which combines text level speed and accuracy (sometimes known as reading fluency);
- a test that assesses **the time** taken to both read the text and to answer questions on what has been read. The test **must** provide a score for **reading comprehension speed**, not just for reading comprehension.

These text level assessments of reading speed may be used as evidence for a computer reader/reader and/or 25% extra time. The results will be recorded within Section C of Form 8 under 'Reading Speed'. The provision of a computer reader/reader and/or 25% extra time for reading difficulties will depend on whether the candidate's impairment in reading accuracy or reading comprehension has a substantial and long term adverse effect. For examination purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as a standardised score in tests of reading accuracy or reading comprehension or



reading speed which falls in the below average range, i.e. a standardised score of 84 or less. A below average standardised score for reading accuracy can be used to award a computer reader/reader but not 25% extra time.

A below average standardised score for reading comprehension can be used to award a computer reader/reader but not 25% extra time.

A below average standardised score for reading speed at text level can be used to award a computer reader/reader or 25% extra time as all are measures of speed.

### **Writing skills**

A scribe, a word processor with the spell check enabled, or speech recognition technology will be allowed in certain subjects when a candidate's impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect.

For examination purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as the candidate having:

- a spelling accuracy score in the below average range (a standardised score of 84 or less) where target words are unrecognisable and the writing is incomprehensible; or
- free writing which cannot be read by others; or
- free writing which is grammatically incomprehensible; or
- free writing which is produced so slowly that answers could not be fully recorded even with extra time allowed. (The candidate's writing speed as a standardised score being in the below average range for their age.)

### **Cognitive processing**

Cognitive processing assessments will include, for example, investigations of short-term/ working memory, phonological processing (e.g. phonological awareness, phonological memory and/or rapid naming) visual processing, sequencing problems, organisational problems, visual/motor co-ordination difficulties or other measures as determined appropriate for the candidate by an assessor.

Where a candidate has cognitive processing difficulties which have a substantial and long term adverse impact on their speed of working 25% extra time may be awarded. These difficulties will be demonstrated by tests which result in at least one below average standardised score, i.e. a score of 84 or less, **and** one low average standardised score (a score 85-89).

Section B of Form 8 must be completed by the SENDCo once the assessment has been completed and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

**Section B of Form 8 must make recommendations for access arrangements** taking into account:

- the information from the assessment (**Section C of Form 8**);
- the requirements of the specifications; **and**
- the candidate's normal way of working in the centre (**Section A of Form 8**).

7.6.2 The completion of Form 8, **Sections A, B and C** will enable the JCQ Centre Inspector to see clearly and concisely the candidate's **normal way of working within the centre and the results of an assessment**.

7.6.3 All assessors, as appointed by the head of centre and thus having an established relationship with the centre, must use Form 8, Section C, to record the results of their assessment. At the same time, the assessor must sign and date Section C.

7.6.4 Once Form 8 has been completed, assessors employed within the centre may process the application using Access arrangements online. They must keep within the centre for inspection purposes a fully completed Form 8 (Sections A, B and C), signed and dated. This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version.

7.6.6 The assessor **must**:

- sign and date Form 8, Section C;
- have administered each particular assessment him/herself.

The assessor must not sign off assessments carried out by a teacher or another professional.

Unsigned and undated assessments cannot be accepted as appropriate evidence. The signature acts as confirmation that the assessor has completed the assessments and supports the recommendation made.

An electronic signature is permissible.

Photocopies of Form 8 are not acceptable for processing and inspection purposes.

By detailing this, I confirm

*"... that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments..."*

[[GR](#) 5.4]

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

The SENDCO follows the guidelines in [AA](#), sections 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) to gather evidence, assess and record the AA process.

Firstly, the SENDCO collates information from teachers, parents and pupils throughout KS3 to build up a picture of need and gather information to demonstrate normal way of working. All candidates are be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

The SENDCO uses this information to determine which assessments need to take place and to provide background information to complete Form 8 so that the candidate can be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8.

Marie Rogerson, the SENDCO, performs all the assessments, collates the relevant evidence, completes the Form 8 and conducts the applications using AAO (Access Arrangements Online).

If an independent assessor is used, the independent assessor **must** contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This **must** take place **before** the candidate is assessed. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo." ([AA](#), section 7.5)

## **Processing access arrangements and adjustments**

### **Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to [AA](#), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Once a detailed picture of need is painted, and relevant assessments conducted, the SENDCO applies for the relevant access arrangements/modified papers using Access Arrangements Online. Hard copies of all assessments and applications are kept in the SEND Office, whether approved or rejected, and parents informed of the outcome of the application.

The SENDCo keeps detailed records, electronically and/or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. ([AA](#), section 8.6)

Candidate Personal data consent form and the [Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo](#) is signed prior to the processing of the online application, and is retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENDCO follows the requirements of the [AA](#), section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and section 6 (Modified papers).

### **Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded) may include the use of a word processor, a separate room and/or rest breaks.

Centre delegated arrangements require medical evidence provided by a consultant, referral to CAMHS and/or a diagnosed medical condition which justifies the need for a word processor, a separate room and/or rest breaks. All medical evidence is checked and approved by the SENDCO and kept on file in the SEND Office by the SENDCO.

### **Separate Invigilation Policy**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENDCO.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect **and**
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre ([AA](#), section 5.16)

Candidates are only entitled to separate invigilation if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of House, the SENDCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs."

The SENDCO requires and will keep copies of medical evidence provided by a consultant/CAMHS which explains the need for separate invigilation within the centre in the SEND office.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)

## **Deadlines for Access Arrangement Applications**

### **Year 11**

The school deadline to submit evidence and request Access Arrangements for a student in Year 11 is October half term. This allows the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any Access Arrangements. The Year 10 examinations should provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities Relating to Access Arrangements**

### **Examinations Officer:**

- To ensure that the agreed Access Arrangement provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To ensure the agreed Access Arrangement provision is updated in the school's exam software.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding Access Arrangement provision.

- Deal with any emergencies, such as accidents or medical conditions, on the day of the exam (in conjunction with the SEND department).
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.

### **SENDCO:**

- To encourage a 'whole centre' approach to Access Arrangements but to lead on the process within her centre.
- To ensure that they, together with the head of centre and members of the senior leadership team are familiar with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidelines and regulations.
- To determine, apply for and implement appropriate Access Arrangements with the support and help of teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team.
- To build a picture of need and provision.
- To administer standardised tests after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews and classroom observations.
- Assess candidates, process applications online and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE qualifications.

### **Teaching Staff:**

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties.
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENDCo.
- Detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct Access Arrangements are in place for controlled assessments.

### **Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main rooms near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should

obtain a letter from a consultant (not a GP) giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around. In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENDCo and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

### **Evidence Held and Malpractice**

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, letters from outside agencies, record of Access Arrangements used and any Statement of Special Needs or EHCP, together with a data protection notice signed by the student.

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working
- Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence

### **Special Consideration**

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. The candidate will have been fully prepared for



the exams, but due to some unforeseen circumstance could not demonstrate what they knew.

### **Further Information**

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

If you have questions about Access Arrangements, please contact the SENDCo at [m.rogerson@balshaws.org.uk](mailto:m.rogerson@balshaws.org.uk).