



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Lisa Williams	
Date of next review	April 2025

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Lisa Williams
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Helen Partington
Head of centre	Clare Batson
Assessor(s)	Lisa Williams and Zoe Featonby
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Lisa Williams and Zoe Featonby

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed **before** an assessment. They allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. (¹AA, Definitions)

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. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; **or**
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Parklands High School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'.

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

All policies are detailed on the school website under GCSE's

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], particularly Section 20 (7). This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

[†]for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Elisabeth Williams – CPT3A

Zoe Featonby - CCET

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)

Certificates of the Assessors are kept in the Centre

All relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AA including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but 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 **must** ensure 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) **must** be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA, section 7.3)

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

Access Arrangements regulations 7.5 states the following:

- The SENCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by the Centre's appointed assessors who are Elisabeth Williams and Zoe Featonby.
- Both the SENCo and the assistant SENCo are able to seek feedback from the candidates class teachers and gain background information from parents. A picture of need can therefore be painted as required in part 1 of form 8.
- Home school and the candidate work together to ensure a joined up and consistent process.
- The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.
- Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produced standardised scores must be used, where published.
- The candidates chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age.
- Results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and the 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 Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores must be converted into standard scores.

Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD is used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements or reasonable adjustments to be presented by the SENCo for inspection

- The candidates name must be recorded on every page of Form 8 and where the form is stored in hard copy format must be stapled together.
- The form must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties or where a language modifier is required.
- The Centre holds access arrangements electronically and will print off upon request of the candidate, parent or for inspection purposes.

These stipulations also apply in the case of remote learners who are educated away from the school building.

Overtyping here details of the process followed in your centre.

Make full reference to 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) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Picture of need/normal way of working

The Centre starts to gather information to paint a picture of need and normal way of working from the moment that the candidate starts at the school. This information is then used to form part of the Form 8 or file note

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.

When the candidate is at the end of year 9, start of year 10 the assessors start to make the applications for access arrangements using JCQ's access arrangements online portal. Elisabeth Williams processes all of the applications. The data collection letters are sent home to parents prior to the application. Once the letter is returned, the SENCo/Assistant SENCo will complete the Form 8's. The SENCo will then process the applications.

All data for candidates with SEND is kept in the school archives until the candidate's 31st birthday.

All candidates with access arrangements are at school support and on the SEND register.

Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single online application for a candidate requiring access arrangements/reasonable adjustments using any of the awarding bodies secure extranet sites.

Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

This centre adheres to the regulations set out in the access arrangements regulations booklet. All access arrangements are applied for within the deadlines set by JCQ. There may be some circumstances where late applications are made, but the SENCo will provide a reason for this on request.

Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper.

Centres must not order modified papers for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series.

Make full reference to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

There is a separate Word Processor Policy which is held on the school website under GCSE examinations.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

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)

The decision to allocate a separate room is decided on a case by case basis. This may be that the candidate will cause a disturbance in the main hall either due to their own disability or if they need to read aloud. Candidates who have a reader and/or scribe will also have alternative room arrangements.

Appendices

APPENDICES

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Include any documentation or information here that you have referred to in the policy that has been provided as an appendix. Number each appendix and start each one on a new page. If no appendices are provided – delete this page. (**Remember:** adding or deleting headings from the policy template affects the table of contents which will need updating).