



# **ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2025/26**

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Lisa Williams
Senior leader(s)	Helen Partington
Head of centre	Claire Batson
Exams officer	Sarah Adamson
Assessor(s)	Zoe Featonby and Lisa Williams
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Lisa Williams

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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'. (AA<sup>1</sup>, 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
- 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
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AA<sup>1</sup>, Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

### 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.

(JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo and the exams officer alongside the individual 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 there is an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder holds each of the required documents for inspection. (<sup>1</sup>AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

<sup>1</sup>This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

## General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (4.2). 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 them 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 a disabled candidate.

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

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 their first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

Part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Learning Support Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail. All policies are located on the school website

## The assessment process

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

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

Lisa Williams - CPT3A and Zoe Featonby - CCET
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## Appointment of assessors

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)

Qualifications of the assessors are held at the centre.
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<b>The head of centre/senior leadership team will...</b> have a <b>written</b> 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 <i>Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...</i> (GR 5.4)
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The head of centre <b>must</b> 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.
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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 7.3)

Make full reference to AA 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

At transition information about pupils is transferred. Pupils' normal way of working is tracked from when they start in the september of year 7. Teachers also refer if pupils require additional support during lessons and / or for tests.

At the end of year 9 or start of year 10, the assessors will assess all pupils who have had additional support since being at the school. A full picture of need is created and applications for access arrangements are made if required.

## **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 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers).

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

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

Lisa williams is the qualified named person who processes applications for access arrangements.

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

Lisa Williams has discretion as to who can be awarded center delegated access arrangements. These are decided based on a full picture of need and supporting evidence from a qualified specialist expert or medical professional.

### **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.

#### **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 will be made by the 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 5.16)

**Pupils who are in a separate room will include;**

- Pupils with supervised-rest breaks.
- pupils who have a scribe / reader.
- Pupils who use a word processor.
- Pupils whose normal way of working is a separate room.
- Pupils who have to have their phones with them.