



Woodhey High School

Access Arrangements Policy

(Exams)

2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Reviewed by: Emma Kerrigan (Exams Officer) Approved by: Gary Holden (Assistant Head Teacher)	
Date of next review	September 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo Line Manager/SENCo	Clare Holden (AHT) Carla Fleming
Assistant Head Teacher	Gary Holden (AHT)
Head of centre	Dean Watson
Assessor(s)	External/Internal Assessor
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Teaching Assistants, Emma Kerrigan (Exams Officer), Emily Bond (Data & Office Manager), Invigilators

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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'. (¹AA, 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 Woodhey 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo Line Manager/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 Line Manager /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. (AA 4.2)

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.'

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 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 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.

A copy of the Equalities Policy (Exams) is held by the Head of Centre, the Assistant Head Teacher, SENCo Line Manager/SENCo and the Exams Officer

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...

[†]or 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)

Woodhey High School uses either an internal assessor or employs an external assessor ensuring their qualification meets the current requirements as outlined in **AA** 7.3. When employing an external assessor, the centre endeavours to use an assessor who is

- employed by another centre within SET
- employed by the LA
- an external assessor who has an established working relationship with Woodhey or, before an assessment, establishes a working relationship with the centre.

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)

- Prior to employment an assessor must provide documented evidence e.g. an appropriate qualification certificate, photocopy of certificate or printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) which demonstrates they meet one of the standards listed in *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (AA section 7.3).
- They must also demonstrate a proven track record of carrying out such assessments as prescribed in the *JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (AA section 7.3) .
- Each year, the Deputy Head Teacher meets with the SENCo Line Manager/SENCo to review requirements to ensure the qualifications of the school's assessor have been kept up to date. Also ensures that all assessments are completed by a suitably qualified person. The Deputy Head Teacher reviews the outcomes from any assessment process and checks against current JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

A copy of the assessor's qualification(s) is kept on file by the SENCo Line Manager /SENCo and is available for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspector. The SENCo ensures the documentation meets the requirements as set out in (AA, section, 7.4)

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

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*

- The SENCo Line Manager/SENCo uses information provided by the candidate's primary school
- Where a candidate has learning needs and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* the SENCo Line Manager/SENCo utilises the 'Curriculum Support Student Referral Form' and assures assessments are completed in-line with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Students are highlighted to the SENCo Line Manager/SENCo through: EHCP, test (including Dyslexia), teacher feedback, TA feedback, completed exam feedback forms and monitoring of progress. Their information is used to paint a *picture of need* and to demonstrate the candidate's *normal way of working* prior to an assessment being completed
- Up to date records are kept for Students in all year groups
- The SENCo Line Manager/SENCo utilise a variety of forms, including those specified in *JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and internal forms to record evidence of need
- Section A of Form 8 is completed prior to the candidate's assessment being completed. Note: an independent assessor must be provided with this information prior to an assessment being undertaken.
- It is the SENCo Line Manager/SENCo's responsibility to ensure access arrangement assessments are completed in a timely manner.
- The SENCo Line Manager/SENCo works together with an independent assessor and jointly discusses and access arrangements with them
- The SENCo Line Manager/SENCo ensures when determining a candidate's needs the requirements of (AA sections 7.5) are met
- The head of centre/senior leadership team ensure that the correct procedures are followed as detailed in the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR, section 5.4)
- Form 8 is completed for each candidate and is available for inspection purposes. See *JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 'Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties page 80 for more information. **Note:** Only Form 8 is acceptable. Spreadsheets, e-mail messages,*

centre devised equivalents of Form 8, educational psychologists' reports and other reports are not acceptable for inspection purposes (AA section 7.6)

- *A privately commissioned assessment cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online (AA section 7.3.6)*
- Students who are identified for access arrangements are tested early to ensure they can be fully supported throughout their time at Woodhey
- In lessons they may be given support with certain tasks by the teacher e.g. structured worksheets to support writing, support with reading. Students may be in smaller sets and have the support of a TA, who supports with reading/writing. Some Students are targeted for additional support for literacy and numeracy and work with TA's or given intervention support.
- Once a student has been tested and has access arrangements/reasonable adjustments allocated these are supported in all internal exams.
- Each academic year each year group sits at least one set of internal exams under full exam conditions. Invigilators and facilitators complete an 'Access Arrangement Monitoring Form' for each exam. These forms are passed to the SENCo Line Manager/SENCo to give an indication of whether an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is working or whether a particular student needs to be reviewed
- The access arrangement in place for a student reflects their *normal way of working*.
- If an independent assessor is required:
 - the SENCo **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.
 - An 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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.
- Form 8 is completed for each candidate and is available for inspection purposes. See *JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 'Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties page 80 for more information. **Note:** Only Form 8 is acceptable. Spreadsheets, e-mail messages, centre devised equivalents of Form 8, educational psychologists' reports and other reports are not acceptable for inspection purposes (AA 7.6)*

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a Woodhey H.S., the Head of Centre or the Deputy Head Teacher provides a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer/carer AA 7.3.5

Private Candidates

Assessment of private candidates

- As a centre we only accept private candidates who have been previously known to the centre for the subsequent November GCSE Maths and English Language exam series. E.g. ex-Students. Also, with the exception of a qualification where

the NEA, coursework or endorsement can be carried forward from a previous certification we only accept private candidates for exam only qualifications

Access Arrangements

- As a centre we only accept private candidates who have been previously known to the centre for the subsequent November GCSE Maths and English Language exam series. E.g. ex-Students. The SENCo Line Manager/SENCo will facilitate/reapply for access arrangements for these candidates only. This is because the required body of evidence is still available in school. As a centre we do not have the resources to process applications for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for other external candidates

Processing access arrangements

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, (section 8) **Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments**) and section 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.

The SENCo:

- determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- follows guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications.
- has a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site to gain access to *Access arrangements online*² (AAO.)
- applies for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.
- ensures appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO; examples might include:
 - painting a picture of need on section A of JCQ Form 8
 - a completed specialist assessment to substantiate the picture of need recorded on section C of form 8
 - a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- confirms by ticking the '*Confirmation*' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the '*malpractice consequence statement*' has been read and accepted
- makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- ensures that arrangements and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed)

or internally assessed/externally moderated) and prior to the awarding body's hard deadline date.

- ensures where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- has a file for each candidate, securely stored in the SENCo's office, that will include:
 - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
 - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- if an application does not initially gain approval the SENCo contacts the awarding body for further advice. Where applicable further supporting information is provided and submitted.
- when an application does not gain approval the candidate and parent/carer is informed by the SENCo. Any supporting information obtained is placed on file.
- ensures the Candidate Personal data consent form and the Data Protection Confirmation is completed prior to the processing of the online application and is retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.
- keeps detailed records, electronically 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 data protection notice for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically 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)

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

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The SENCo will:

- determine if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated.
- determine whether a centre-delegated access arrangement is appropriate for the candidates needs and will ensure that it reflects their normal way of working of which there is documented evidence.

- ensure a centre-delegated access arrangement does not give the candidate an unfair advantage e.g. the use of a word processor just because a candidate can type faster than they can write.
- will ensure the centre-delegated access arrangement is formally recorded and evidence is obtained to support that it is the candidate's normal way of working.
- ensure that arrangements are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated) and prior to the awarding body's hard deadline date.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

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.

- An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs (*unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise*), and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.
- The word processor (*e.g. computer, laptop or tablet*) must have the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled.
- The use of a laptop in exams reflects the candidate's normal way of working.
 - *N.B. a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.*
- A copy of the Word Processor Policy (including the written statement which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams) is held by the Head of Centre, Deputy Head Teacher, AHT (Raising Standards), Exams Officer and SENCo Line Manager/SENCo.

Alternative rooming Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming within the centre will be made by the SENCo Line Manager/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 Exams Officer uses the approved access arrangements to produce an outline invigilation plan. Some Students are given alternative rooming for a range of needs: some require a reader/scribe, some have behavioural issues linked to their EHCP, some have a long-term mental health need, some have a health need. The outline plan is agreed with the SENCo to ensure they support the individual candidate's access arrangement.

Alternative rooming within the centre is not given solely for exam related stress and anxiety. Candidates who suffer from a raised level of anxiety and stress are supported

within the main exam room by careful allocation of seating, usually at the front or back of the main exam room.

For example, in the case of alternative rooming, 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 Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations. Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.