

Policy Title - Access Arrangements Policy

Status	Non Statutory
Reviewed by	Local Governing Body Principal Vice Principal SENDCO
Frequency of Review	Annually
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Author	Exams Officer

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](#)

Definitions, page 13]

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 a number of 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’.

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[\[AA](#) Definitions, page 13]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Etonbury Academy 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*, 5.4]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCO 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 SENDCO is storing access arrangements 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*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#).

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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 a disabled candidate.

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) before their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will:

Recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. 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 candidate

for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR 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 7.3](#).

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

Post Graduate Award – Specialist Assessment of Difficulties in Learning in Schools and Colleges

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

Certification held in the SENDCO office.

The Academy's HR Department/Business Manager will be responsible, along with SLT to ensure the qualification(s) of any appointed assessor meet the JCQ regulations.

Bear in mind **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 specialist assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...

[[GR 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 SENDCO.”

[[AA 7.3](#)]

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

The SENDCO will consider all information that creates a picture of the students potential difficulties and is responsible for instigating the assessment of a candidate.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCO 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 SENDCO and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

An assessor must contact the centre prior to any candidate's assessment; they must liaise with the centre and must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate. All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCO. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCO.

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.

The school's assessor will then assess the students as per section 7.5 AA.

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 using current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores and must be used, where published.

Results must 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 Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores.

How the assessment process is administered and evidence is gathered

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCO must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per the completed Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCO and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

A detailed history of need is collected:

'Effective screening and monitoring systems during Years 7 to 9 will enable the SENDCO to provide sufficiently robust evidence of need. School tests might identify those candidates who need to be assessed for access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments' (AA 7.6)

Evidence supporting a holistic picture of need and normal way of working may constitute the following:

- any previously granted access arrangements;
- comments and observations across relevant subjects from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers);
- intervention strategies (e.g. individual education/learning plans) in place for the candidate;
- pupil premium indicators;
- screening test results;

- use of pupil baseline and tracking data;
- information about any differentiation in the classroom;
- observing the candidate in the classroom to see their style of learning;
- normal way of working in the classroom (where appropriate);
- arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations;
- review of the candidate's workbooks, checking their spellings, legibility of writing and whether classroom tasks have been completed. AA (7.6)

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. A Form 8, with Part 2 must not be completed earlier than the start of Year 9 for GCSE qualifications (AA 7.6).

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCO. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCO. (AA 7.5)

Following an assessment Part 2 of the Form 8s are completed, signed and dated by hand by our assessor.

Note

"Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties...

Only Form 8 is acceptable.

- *spreadsheets;*
- *email messages;*
- *centre devised equivalents of Form 8;*
- *educational psychologists' reports;*
- *a diagnosis of Dyslexia;*
- *diagnostic assessment reports.*

(AA 7.6)

Candidates must be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Appropriate access arrangements will be put in place for all tests, controlled assessments and examinations by the SEND Co-ordinator, Exams Officer and teaching staff.

If the access arrangement ceases to be the student's 'normal way of working', then the SENDCO reserves the right to withdraw permission of said arrangement. Written confirmation must be provided to parents/carers.

Bear in mind the *normal way of working* as defined by JCQ...

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*

- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *support lessons;*
- *intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *mock examinations.*

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the SENDCO or the assessor working within the centre.

*SENDCOs and assessors must refer to **Chapter 7, paragraph 7.6.1** for information on how to confirm 'normal way of working'. †The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment"* [\(AA 4.2\)](#)

If a student who has an access arrangement chooses not to use it on more than three occasions the access arrangement may be removed and the parent/carer informed.

All assessment evidence is retained and kept on individual files for each student who have Access Arrangements in place. This is retained in secure storage in the SENDCO office.

A spreadsheet detailing the students who have access arrangements is held on a school network and accessible to SENDCO and Exams Officer.

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements 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 (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.

SENDCO processes the following access arrangements online liaising with the Exams Officer, to ensure all deadlines are met well in advance of any exam entries.

- Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes
- Bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time (solely for those qualifications listed within Chapter 5, paragraph 5.18.2)
- Computer reader/reader
- 25% extra time

- Extra time over 25%†
- Exemption †
- Listening to music/white noise due to a substantial impairment
- Practical Assistant†
- Remote invigilation†
- Scribe/speech recognition technology
- Timetable variation on the day of the exam for a candidate with a disability
- Timetable variation requiring overnight supervision for a candidate with a disability

†The arrangement will be automatically rejected. Applications should then be referred online to the relevant awarding body. (AA 8.5)

The paperwork is held securely in the SENDCO office. Once applications have been processed and confirmed, students, parents/carers and teachers are informed.

The SENDCO 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);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA 8.6)

Centre-delegated access arrangements

The following arrangements do not need to be processed online and are therefore centre designated:

- Alternative rooming arrangements - sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates
- Amplification equipment
- Bilingual dictionary
- Blank sheet of paper for doodling, where a candidate has persistent and significant concentration difficulties (This must be included with the candidate's completed answer booklet.)
- Braille transcript
- Braille
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Communication Professional (for candidates using Sign Language)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Non-electronic headphones
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners
- Prompter

- Read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen)
- Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties
- Supervised rest breaks
- Timer on a candidate's desk – a small countdown clock, a small analogue or digital clock, digital timer, sand timer, stopwatch (The candidate must have an established difficulty and control the device themselves.)
- Word processor.

(AA 8.5)

When awarding centre designated arrangements the SENDCO must make their decision 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

SENDCO is responsible for informing the Exams Officer of students who require access arrangements that can be centre-delegated. The Exams Officer to ensure that the arrangements are in place for all examinations.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AA 5.8)

Please see Word Processor Policy.

Alternative Rooming Policy

The purpose of this statement covers the circumstances in which a candidate with 'an established difficulty' may be eligible to take exams in alternative accommodation. Requests may be received from students, parents and teachers for individuals to sit their exams in a smaller room. This guidance applies to external exams and any internal mock exams that might take place in a larger exam hall.

The JCQ guidance, Exam Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be followed at all times.

Alternative accommodation is determined by the SENDCO, in conjunction with relevant teaching staff and exam team personnel. JCQ are clear that the decision to offer alternative accommodation to candidates is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

It must reflect 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.

Arrangements to do exams in a smaller exam venue, or with other specific seating arrangement, will be decided based on the following guidelines:

- 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

In line with JCQ guidance, a substantial and long-term impairment will be supported by evidence from the following only:

- a letter/report from CAMHs, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- a current EHCP which confirms the candidate's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multi- sensory impairment.

In extreme situations, where a child is on a waiting list for CAMHs, consideration will be given to alternative accommodation provided that there is clear documented evidence in school of a long term and substantial impairment AND evidence of being on the CAMHs waiting list is provided.

This evidence must confirm the candidate's eligibility for alternative accommodation.

- The candidate's disability must be established within school and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.
- Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for alternative accommodation within the centre.
- Any student who has an extenuating circumstance that occurs in the lead up to, or during, the exam period that is likely to impact on their usual exam performance, will be considered under the term "special consideration." Evidence will be collected and the exam board advised if JCQ criteria is met. Seating arrangements may also be varied at the last minute on these occasions and in consultation with the student and exams team.
- Where a candidate panics on the day of an examination or becomes anxious, then they may be seated more appropriately within the main examination venue, where this is feasible.
- alternative accommodation is no different to other access arrangements; such as prompters, supervised rest breaks etc.
- Staff with pastoral responsibilities who are working with students that have established and long-term health conditions will help to determine if alternative accommodation is warranted. Together, with the SENDCO and exams team, a centre-based decision will be made on the need for separate invigilation.
- The alternative accommodation will be reviewed after each internal mock cycle to determine if it is still required.