



## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS POLICY (Senior School)**

**Reviewed: November 2020 (CM/GR)**  
**Governor Review: December 2020**

## Key staff involved in the policy

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
SENCo	<b>Gayle Ripper</b>
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Catherine Millar</b>
Head of centre	<b>Nicola Smillie</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Gayle Ripper</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Gayle Ripper</b>

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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'.

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 Alderley Edge School for Girls 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 SENDCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication.

These regulations reflect a whole centre approach to access arrangements.

It is therefore the responsibility of the Headmistress, members of the SLT, the SENDCo to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the JCQ regulations.

### 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 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 candidates.

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

## **The assessment process**

Assessments are carried out by the school's SENDCo who is also a qualified Assessor. The assessor is Gayle Ripper.

### **The qualification of the current assessor**

Post Graduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements

Gayle Ripper Jan 2020

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

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

### **Checking the qualifications of the assessors**

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. The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7.

An external assessor must have an established working relationship with the centre or, before an assessment, establishes a working relationship with the centre.

A privately commissioned assessment cannot be carried out without prior consultation with the centre and cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online.

The SENDCo must provide the assessor with at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed. (Part 2 of Form8)

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.

The SENDCo and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately the candidate themselves should be instigated.

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.

The access arrangements assessor will have completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.

The specialist assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.

The head of centre is responsible for:

- The quality of the access arrangements process within her centre; and
- The appointment of assessors, checking the qualification of those assessing candidates (eg photocopy of certificate or print out or screenshot of HCPC SASC registration)

The JCQ is not able to approve an assessor's qualification and does maintain a list of approved assessors or appropriate qualifications for assessors.

All assessors must

- have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles and procedures and accountabilities involved.
- Be familiar with the Equality Act 2010
- Either hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties or be a HCPC registered psychologist.

## **Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)**

The SENDCo must hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor is suitable qualified.

In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health and Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals with Access Arrangements Online.

The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed within the Deadlines section, page 2, must be entered into Access Arrangements online to confirm their status. This will include all other professionals working outside the centre.

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

The SENDCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor.

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 Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo 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.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo.

The assessor is required to establish 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.

The candidate's 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 in standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. 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.

Reading Comprehension must be assessed using a recognised test of text or sentence comprehension.

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

- Takes longer than expected to decode words, leading to slow reading (slow reading speed)
- Needs to reread text many times in order to absorb its meaning (slow reading comprehension speed)

The provision of 25% extra time for reading difficulties will depend on whether the candidate's impairment in reading speed has a substantial and long term adverse effect. For examination purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as a standardised score in a test of reading speed which falls in the below average range, i.e. a standardised score of 84 or less.

### **Writing skills**

A scribe, 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 below average standardised spelling accuracy score with unrecognisable spelling attempts.

A below average standardised score for writing speed.

### **Cognitive processing**

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.

In rare and exceptional circumstances an awarding body may grant 25% extra time where a candidate has at least two different low average standardised scores relating to speed of working. This may include two different areas of cognitive processing.

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

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo collects a background of information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. In the event of the assessment being carried out by an external assessor, the SENDCo 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.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo.

### **Completing Form 8**

Form 8 must be used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements and be presented by the SENDCo for inspection. The candidate's name must be recorded on every page of the Form 8 and the form must be stapled together. The form must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties.

A Form 8, with Part 2 completed no earlier than Year 9 for GCSE qualifications may roll forward to GCE qualifications where a candidate requires

- Extra time; and/or
- A scribe

The rolling forward of a fully completed Form 8( Parts 1,2 and 3), signed and dated, from GCSE to GCE qualifications principally applies in an 11 to 18 school setting where a candidate proceeds to the school's Sixth Form. This also includes 11 to 18 schools operating local Sixth Form consortium arrangements for GCE AS and/or A Level qualifications. The Sixth form setting must have an established working relationship with 'feeder' schools for the Form 8 to roll forward from GCSE to GCE.

Part 1 of Form 8 must be completed prior to the assessment by the SENDCo/Assessor. The three questions within Part 1 of the Form must be addressed.

Part 1 of Form 8 is a Pen Portrait of the candidate's needs. It allows the SENDCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming a normal way of working bringing together:

- If known, arrangements made for the KS2 tests if appropriate
- Comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Specialist Teachers and Teaching Assistants)
- Intervention strategies
- Screening test results
- Use of baseline data
- Information about any differentiation in the classroom.
- Normal way of working in the classroom
- Arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mocks
- Candidate's self reported difficulties

Part 3 must be completed by the SENDCo once the assessor has completed the testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

Part 3 must make recommendations for access arrangements taking into account:

- The information from the assessment (part 2 of Form 8)
- The requirements of the specifications; and
- The candidate's normal way of working in the centre.

The completion of Form 8, parts 1,2 and 3 will show concisely the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as well as the results of an assessment.

## **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. Processing applications for access arrangements  
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 SENDCo keeps detailed records 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. This information is stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SENDCo's office.

Access Arrangements online approves around 90% of all applications made by centres in the UK, providing centres with an automated response. If an application is not approved, the SENDCo/Assessor must consider whether this is because the candidate does not meet the published criteria for one of the arrangements requested and does not have a substantial and long term impairment for the required arrangement.

## **Centre-delegated access arrangements**

### **Supervised rest breaks.**

There is not a requirement to process an application for supervised rest breaks using Access arrangements online. However, for GCSE and GCE qualifications, the SENDCo must produce a short concise file note on centre header paper, signed and dated, confirming the need for supervised rest breaks. In this case, the SENDCo must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties.

Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- A medical condition
- Sensory and physical needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs.

In addition the candidate's difficulties must be established within the centre and thus known to the Form Tutor, Head of Year, SENDCo and/or senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

## **Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements**

### **Word Processor Policy (Examinations)**

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. More information can be found in the Word Processing Policy.

### **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

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre such as ADD, ADHD, Mental Health Conditions and are known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. 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.