



Examination Access Arrangements Policy

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Signed:

Chair of Governors Date: January 2025

1. SUMMARY

This policy explains the actions taken to support students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in undertaking both internally and externally set examinations and other assessed elements of their courses. These actions are largely determined by the rules and regulations which apply to examinations as laid out on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website (www.jcq.org.uk).

The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student can fulfil his or her full potential.

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3. PURPOSE

To provide a detailed overview of how students are assessed for Exam Access Arrangements and the form that these Exam Access Arrangements may take along with other forms of support which may be available to them to support them with their examinations.

4. SCOPE

This document applies to all students at the School.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Governors are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the JCQ publication 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'.
- Ensuring that this policy is in place, continually monitored and reviewed biennially via the Governors Curriculum and Standards Subcommittee.
- Ensuring that any complaints arising from the operation of this policy are dealt with under the School's Complaints Policy.

5.2 The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Supporting the SENDCO in the implementation of this policy and reporting to governors, periodically, on these matters.
- Making available for inspection a brief written rationale for why the Centre has accepted or rejected a privately commissioned report by a professional relating to Exam Access Arrangements.
- Producing written evidence for the need for an alternative site for the conduct of examinations.

5.3 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) is responsible for:

Leading on the Exam Access Arrangements process within the Centre, including:

- Arranging testing for Exam Access Arrangements of students who have been referred by teaching staff.
- Investigating parental concerns as to whether a student requires Exam Access Arrangements.
- Receiving and acting upon medical evidence provided by medical professionals in connection with an application for Exam Access Arrangements. □ Applying for Exam Access Arrangements through JCQ.
- Gathering information and evidence from a student's teachers in support of an application for Exam Access Arrangements.

- Working with the Examinations Officer to ensure that approved Exam Access Arrangements are in place for internal and external examinations for those students who qualify for them.
- Advising the Head of Centre on issues arising from the implementation of this policy and its associated processes.

5.4 The relevant person who holds the qualifications to assess Exam Access Arrangements is responsible for:

- Assessing students for Exam Access Arrangements.
- Gathering information and evidence from a student's teachers in support of an application for Exam Access Arrangements.
- Applying for Exam Access Arrangements through JCQ.

5.5 The Examinations Officer is responsible for:

- Working with the SENDCO to ensure that approved Exam Access Arrangements are in place for internal and external examinations for those students who qualify for them.
- Informing Exam Invigilators of the Exam Access Arrangements relating to particular students who are taking examinations in venues where Invigilators are leading the examinations.
- Applying for Exam Access Arrangements through JCQ.

5.6 Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Putting in access arrangements for appropriate students within their classes and providing evidence to the SENDCO that this is the student's normal way of working.
- Providing evidence, upon request, in support of the assessment of Exam Access Arrangements for a particular student.
- Implementing any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments a particular student is entitled to for any examinations or assessments which take place in the classroom.

5.7 Learning Support Assistants are responsible for:

- Understanding their specific role when supporting a candidate with Examination Access Arrangements in internal and external examinations and to undertake this role to the best of their ability.
- Implementing any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments a particular student is entitled to for any examinations or assessments which take place in venues where Learning Support Assistants are leading the examinations.

5.8 Exam Invigilators are responsible for:

- Implementing any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments a particular student is entitled to for any examinations or assessments which take place in venues where Invigilators are leading the examinations.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Introduction

Access Arrangements are for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment in its normal format owing to a difficulty or a disability. It should reflect what help is **usually** given to the candidate in the classroom and **the normal way of working** should reflect what is available in the exam. The intention behind Access Arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access Arrangements are not intended to help certain students, or give them an advantage, but to give them a fair opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Access Arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom and with internal exams. This is commonly referred to as the '**normal way of working.**'

Access Arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments.'

6.2 Reasonable Adjustments

"The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment" (JCQ 'Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration').

A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a **substantial and long term** (more than 12 months) effect on performance in examinations may qualify for Access Arrangements. As outlined above, Access Arrangements should allow students with substantial long term special educational needs to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without affecting the integrity of an assessment or examination.

However, there may be an instance where a student sustains an injury that will hinder their performance in exams. In this instance access arrangements will be applied for.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

6.3 Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

6.4 Temporary Arrangements

Temporary Arrangements may be required by candidates suffering from medical or psychological illness or injury which is not a permanent disability or permanent impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations. Candidates with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the exams should obtain a letter from a consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the Access Arrangements that they feel are deemed necessary.

In all cases where an Access Arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the School is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for Access Arrangements has been identified before an exam session, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time.

Example

- A candidate who suffers from panic attacks in test or exam situations must obtain a note from a consultant or CAMHS worker and provide this to school at least 12 weeks before the start of the examinations.
- In an emergency, a scribe can be provided with 24 hours' notice. It may not be possible to provide a scribe if the request is made without notice.

Temporary arrangements last for one 'exam session' e.g. examinations taken during the summer 2021 session. If the condition persists a letter from a consultant or other professional may be required for the next session.

6.5 Different forms of Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are the responsibility of the SENDCO, directed by the Head of Centre at the School. At Higham Lane School assessment of Access Arrangements for exams will be conducted by a member of staff who possesses the relevant qualifications in accordance with JCQ guidance. Evidence from teaching staff will also be requested to support these assessments.

Access Arrangement	What is it?	Criteria
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Scribe	A trained adult writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write down exactly what they say.	<p>A student has a physical disability; where her/his writing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his/her writing speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time. <p>Under JCQ rules, for written examinations in Modern Foreign Languages, the student must dictate every word in the target language and must do so letter by letter.</p>
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Access Arrangement	What is it?	Criteria
Reader	A trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of the GCSE English Language exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves.	A student has a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by the Support for Learning Department (100 is the average).
	A reader can, in response to a student requesting it, read instructions and questions to the student, read the whole paper if necessary or the student may prefer to just ask for some specific words to be read to them.	
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.	A student who persistently loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time. This can also be put in place for students who are affected by OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Students with OCD often focus on one question in particular rather than moving on to look at other questions in the exam paper.
Read Aloud	Where a candidate is reading difficult text he/she may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read.	A candidate who persistently struggles to understand what they have read, but who does not qualify for a reader, to read aloud.
	<p>The arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and examinations.</p> <p>A candidate who reads aloud to himself/herself must be accommodated separately within the centre.</p>	

Separate Room	<p>A student with a medical condition such as epilepsy where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Students who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room.</p> <p><u>Medical evidence must be provided in advance to support this arrangement and then be approved by the SENDCO.</u></p>	
Modified Papers	<p>Individually prepared papers for candidates. 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.</p>	<p>Modified enlarged papers are intended for candidates who cannot read a standard exam paper. Modified papers can also be exam papers printed on different coloured paper.</p>
	<p>Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series. Centres are not allowed to order papers for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series. Where a student simply requires an examination paper photocopied on a particular colour, this can be done in the centre.</p>	

Access Arrangement	What is it?	Criteria
Laptop	<p>Access to a laptop for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled and a special exam user account would be used to access the laptop with no internet access.</p>	<p>The provision to use a laptop is put in place to address an underlying difficulty such as: speed of handwriting; medical condition; physical disability; sensory impairment; planning and organisational difficulties or poor legibility.</p>
	<p>The use of a laptop in exams reflects the student's normal way of working at the school and has been agreed as appropriate to the student's needs. The use of a laptop cannot be granted to a student simply because this is their preferred way of working.</p>	
Rest Breaks	<p>Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time spent resting is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.</p>	<p>A student has a physical disability which prevents them from concentrating or sustaining writing <u>for long periods of time.</u></p>

	<p>This is now the recommended option from the awarding bodies before considering extra time.</p> <p>Rest breaks are not included in any Extra Time allowance that the student may have.</p> <p>The amount of time awarded for rest breaks is granted at the discretion of the SENDCO, but candidates will be consulted.</p>	
Extra Time	<p>Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time depending on the recommendation of the member of staff who holds the relevant qualification to assess Access Arrangements.</p> <p>Extra time of more than 25% can be granted in exceptional circumstances e.g. in order to manage a very substantial impairment.</p>	<p>Students will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing. A standardised score of 84 or below (100 being average) can qualify for extra time.</p>

Access Arrangement	What is it?	Criteria
Bilingual translation dictionaries (with 10% extra time)	<p>Only to be used by students whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.</p> <p>The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision materials are enclosed or written inside.</p>	<p>Should reflect the student's normal way of working.</p>
	<p>Such dictionaries must not be used in English Language, Irish Language or Welsh Language examinations or Modern Foreign Language examinations testing one of the languages of the dictionary or a similar language, for example, a Portuguese dictionary in a Spanish examination.</p> <p>Exceptions to these rules are: The Writing Test in GCSE Arabic, GCSE Bengali, GCSE Dutch, GCSE Greek, GCSE Gujarati, GCSE Japanese, GCSE Modern Hebrew, GCSE Panjabi, GCSE Persian, GCSE Polish, GCSE Portuguese, GCSE Russian and GCSE Turkish where the specification states that all candidates must have access to a bilingual dictionary. Candidates who are permitted to use bilingual translation dictionaries may also be allowed up to a maximum of 10% extra time, depending on need; if they have been resident in the UK for less than two years at the time of the examination, the candidate still has a very limited knowledge of the English language, extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working.</p>	

Alternative Site	<p>The candidate will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is not a registered examination centre due to, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking examinations in the centre; or • Social, Mental and Emotional Needs. 	<p>The candidate has: an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect giving rise to ☐ persistent and significant difficulties; or</p> <p>☐ a temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination(s).</p>
	<p>The Head of Centre at the School must be satisfied that the candidate is fit to take examinations but is unable to do so at the School. The SENDCO, Head of Centre or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities, must produce written evidence confirming the need for an alternative site arrangement and must make this available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request.</p>	

Access Arrangement	What is it?	Criteria
Practical Assistant	<p>Is not a reader or a scribe. “They support students using equipment. <i>For example a candidate with very poor motor co-ordination may need help in holding a ruler, placing a ruler in the correct place for a line to be drawn or turning the pages of the script. The candidate may also need help when using Mathematical equipment.</i>”(JCQ guidelines 2017-2018, 5.14.4, page 70)</p> <p>The same person may act as a practical assistant, a reader and/or a scribe as long as permission has been given for these arrangements.</p> <p>The regulations for the use of each arrangement must be strictly adhered to.</p>	<p>Students with: poor motor coordination or/and severe vision impairment.</p>
	<p>A practical assistant must not be allowed to carry out physical tasks or demonstrate physical abilities where they form part of the assessment objectives. A practical assistant will not normally be permitted in subjects such as Art & Design, Design & Technology and Music.</p> <p>Candidates using a practical assistant in externally set practical or written examinations may need to be accommodated separately.</p>	

Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind • Coloured Overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers) • Separate invigilation within the centre 	<p>Candidates are <u>only entitled to other arrangements if they have a diagnosed disability, as defined by the Equality Act.</u></p> <p>The candidate would also be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other candidates undertaking the assessment were these other arrangements not in place.</p>
	<p>In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the Centre and known to a Form Tutor, Progress Leader, the SENDCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.</p> <p>Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.</p>	

6.6 Identifying the need for access arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during Key Stage 4 are normally identified early in Key Stage 3 (i.e. from the start of Year 7). At this stage needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to quality first teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

Students are tested formally in July of Year 9 in order to comply with the 26 month rule; so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for Year 10 and 11. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidance.

Students with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for Access Arrangements in exams. For example, a student with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of mild dyslexia or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an exam may not meet the criteria for Access Arrangements.

However, when concerns are raised about a particular student, the SENDCO or the relevant person who holds the qualifications to assess Access Arrangements, will gather information from the all the student's teachers to see whether they have similar concerns. If the initial concerns are echoed by others, the student will be assessed for Access Arrangements.

Where formal Access Arrangements are determined and agreed these become part of 'normal practice'. This means that appropriate Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration in every day teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments. If a student **continually chooses not** to use the agreed Access Arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement then **access arrangements can be removed at the discretion of the Centre.**

6.6.1 Procedures

How students would be identified for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA):

- They would have had EAA at KS2 for their SATs
- Parental/carer Referral
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from previous schools

6.6.2 KS2 SAT EAA

Students who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, it doesn't necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS3 or KS4 as their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had a Reader for KS2 may not qualify for a Reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the awarding body criteria.

6.6.3 Parent Referral

Parents/carers can contact the School to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with regard to the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent/carer, the SENDCO will investigate their concerns by sending a "round robin" to the child's teachers in order to obtain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

6.6.4 Teacher Referral

As with parent referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENDCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student's current teachers will be asked to give feedback in order to obtain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Where a teacher thinks that a student requires extra time, they are asked to get the student to change the colour of the pen that they are using once the allotted time is up, and continue writing until they are finished. This is then used as proof to JCQ and the exam boards of a history of need. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENDCO initially if they feel that a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting parents/carers about their concerns. The SENDCO will then contact the parents/carers if, upon further investigation, there is further evidence to support the teacher's concerns.

6.6.5 Candidates transferring into Year 12

When a student requests Access Arrangements following entry into Higham Lane Sixth Form, the School is compelled to follow the rules and guidelines issued each year by JCQ. The student will be re-assessed on entry to Higham Lane Sixth Form, and some students may find they are no longer eligible for Access Arrangements if they do not meet the criteria.

6.6.6 Key Stage 3 screening

Students who are flagged either during transition or during Year 7 as having difficulties accessing their learning are screened. All teachers and LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) are involved in this early identification process.

Throughout KS3 all staff are responsible for implementing recommended adjustments to QFT (Quality First Teaching) and for putting in place recommended Access Arrangements for assessments. Staff are then expected to monitor these adjustments. Needs of students not identified in Year 7 may become apparent at any point during KS3. Staff are responsible for reporting any concerns to the SENDCO who can then arrange for screening to be carried out.

6.6.7 What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

The following sources of evidence can be used by centres to apply for EAA through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report completed by the SENDCO and the person who holds the appropriate qualifications to assess Access Arrangements.
- Previous EAA from primary schools/ other education providers
- Subject teachers – examples of work, as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests

6.6.8 Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A small but growing number of parents/carers are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENDCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or EAA.

Unfortunately, as a registered examination centre, we have no means of verifying the professional standing, accuracy or impartiality of the person/organisation writing these reports. Private educational psychologist's reports also cost a significant amount of money. This, therefore, means that parents/carers who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is 'either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place'. Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive EAA which contradict what the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements recommends. We will also look for evidence of a history of need.

JCQ states that *"if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time."*

In light of the above, the School reserves the right not to accept the recommendations of a private educational psychologist's report. Where the SENDCO is made aware of concerns regarding a particular student's ability to access examinations and other internal and external assessments, he/she will arrange for the student to be assessed by the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements. In all cases where the recommendations of a private report contradict the

recommendations of the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements, the School will follow the recommendations of the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements.

JCQ also states that “*Where a centre elects either to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the Head of Centre or a member of the senior leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes.*”

6.7 How are Exam Access Arrangements applied for?

Formal assessments for exam Access Arrangements are conducted in the summer term for Year 9 students. Students qualifying for these assessments are determined by specified indicators following screening. Students with an EHCP would automatically qualify for a need matched Access Arrangements screening. The assessment process is a staged process:

Stage 1: Early Screening (KS3)

- British Picture Vocabulary Scales (ed 3)
- Dyslexia Portfolio (processing cluster, literacy cluster, digital recall, spelling)

A report is produced by the SENDCO highlighting the key elements including history of need and screening outcomes.

Stage 2: Formal Testing (Summer Term Year 9)

Formal assessments are conducted by the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements using any of the following assessments:

- WRAT 5 (Wide Range Achievement Test)
- WRIT (Wide Range Intelligence Test)
- DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting)
- CTOPP 2 (Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing)

The tests that the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

The test that the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further EAA, the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements will arrange this. Following a report produced by the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements an application is made to the awarding bodies for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s.

Stage 3: Formal application for Access Arrangements for examinations

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements conducting the tests for EAA, the SENDCO, Specialist Teacher or Examinations Officer then applies to the awarding bodies. The feedback is instant and, if successful, at this point the EAA is added to the list of students and the parents/carers are informed of the EAA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the Centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- School-commissioned educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) or hospitals.
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP)

Permission from the awarding bodies for the arrangement/s

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the person who holds the relevant qualifications to assess Access Arrangements
- A data protection form signed by the student
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

Stage 4: Ensuring the EAA are normal practice

It is the responsibility of the SENDCO and Specialist Teacher to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the Examinations Officer and wider staff body. The SENDCO, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that EAA are normal working practice. The SENDCO and Examinations Officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order.

6.8 How do staff and parents/carers know whether a student has Exam Access Arrangements?

- Teaching and support staff can access the list on SharePoint. It is updated on a monthly basis or whenever students become entitled to it. The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy, and are shared on a need to know basis.
- Staff will be informed of any changes to the EAA list via email.
- Parents/carers will be informed of any tests results via a letter home which states what your son or daughter is entitled to, why and when.