



**KING EDWARD VI  
SHELDON HEATH  
ACADEMY**

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*Educational excellence for our City*

## **ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY**

Other relevant policies and documents:

Non-examination Assessment Policy

BTEC Policy

Examinations' complaints and appeals procedures

Examinations' Contingency Plan

Examinations' Policy

Word Processor Policy

**This policy was adopted by the Curriculum and Student Welfare Committee in May  
2022.**

**Next review due Spring Term 2024, or earlier if the need arises.**

## **1. Rationale**

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQCIC awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

## **2. Reasonable Adjustments**

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

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.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

## **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that the Academy fulfils its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.

## **4. Access arrangements**

In line with JCQ regulations, the Academy will make all decisions with regard to applying for access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working at the Academy – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement. Access arrangements may include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Reader
- Read aloud
- Scribe/Voice Activated software
- Word processor
- Transcript
- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Practical Assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; separate invigilation with the centre.

Appropriate evidence of need will be available at the Academy for inspection.

## **5. Identifying the need for access arrangements**

Initially the Academy relies on information from the students' previous school to identify students with SEND. However, as soon as the students join the Academy, HLTAs, TAs and other key and experienced staff observe all students in a variety of lessons and settings and report to the SENCo their findings. Information from these observations, as well as information from classroom assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, observations from teachers and other colleagues, is collated and scrutinised to identify whether:

- a) The information received from primary schools is accurate and complete.
- b) The year 7 SEND register is accurate and complete.
- c) There are (potential) students with SEND who have not yet been identified.

Depending on findings, further assessment may be required for individual students. This process ensures that all students with SEND are identified early and receive support as required.

### **a) Assessment and arrangements**

- For those students on the SEND register who could potentially require access arrangements, formal assessment and application to JCQ is carried out in Year 9 and / or 10 and Year 12 as standard. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.
- Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent Access arrangements.
- Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out at the Academy by an appropriately qualified assessor. The outcome of the assessment is recorded on the student profile and completed assessment forms are passed to the SENCo as evidence.
- Parents may request an independent assessment. However, the Academy may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report. If rejected the SENCo 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.
- The examinations manager, specialist assessors, SENCo and teaching staff at the Academy all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.
- It is the responsibility of the SEND team to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the Exams officer and wider staff body. The SENCo, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that access arrangements are normal working practice.
- If a student chooses continually 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.
- If the SENCo and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/careers.
- The SENCo and exams officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order.

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded

- Students are informed verbally
- A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.

### **b) Gathering evidence**

Appropriate evidence of need will be available at the Academy for inspection. Evidence will take the form of one or more of the following and should be documented from Year 7 onwards.

- Identification of potential candidates requiring access arrangements at the point of entry to school based upon information from primaries, initial staff observations, KS2 data and internal assessment.
- History of need.
- History of relevant provision.
- Intervention strategies.
- Assessment results.
- Staff observations - to include teaching staff, teaching assistants and examination invigilators.

The Academy will:

- Provide relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on the candidate's ability to carry out day to day activities.
- Provide evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant.
- Show evidence of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Confirm that the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment
- Confirm that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working within the Academy as a direct consequence of their disability.
- Ensure that the arrangements put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in Academy and therefore reflect the normal way of working.

The requirements of different subjects vary – an English assessment would require a greater amount of prose writing than a Maths assessment, for example. Therefore it is often the case that a candidate's difficulties mean that he/she only requires support in one or two subjects. Equally, another candidate may need support in all their subjects. The key principle is that the SENCo can show a history of relevant support and provision.

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with for example:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist
- A letter from a hospital consultant
- A letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)

### **c) Recording evidence**

Documentation used to support/record evidence and other information that is collected to support the need is on JCQ forms, for example:

- Form 8 – Application for access arrangements
- Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements
- Form 9 – Arrangements permitted by the centre
- Form 11 – Notification of access arrangements Entry level
- Form 12 – Application for access arrangements Entry level
- Form VQ/EA – Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications
- Form VQ/IA - Application for reasonable adjustments; Internally assessed units – Vocational qualifications

d) **Roles and responsibilities**

The head of centre will:

- Be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications.
- Ensure that processes for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements') for individual candidates is clearly defined and documented.
- Ensure that staff roles and responsibilities in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined in this policy.
- Ensure a qualified specialist assessor is appointed and that evidence of the appropriate qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file.
- Ensure that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations.
- Ensure a disability policy showing the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place.

The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) will:

- Be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications.
- Lead on the access arrangements process.
- If not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process.
- Ensure that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance.
- Ensure arrangements put in place reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis,
- Present when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor's qualification,

In addition, the SENCo will:

- Provide and annually review a centre policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments.
- Ensure criteria for candidates allowed separate invigilation within the centre is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main exam rooms.

Teaching staff will:

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate.

- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate.
- Support the SENCo as required in identifying the need for access arrangements.

The specialist assessor will:

- Conduct appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate.
- Provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate.
- Complete appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body.

Normal way of working is defined as “the arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre”, e.g.

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

## **6. Requesting access arrangements (AA)**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

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.
- Ensure 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

The Examination Manager (EM) will:

- Follow guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications.
- Have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site in order to gain access to Access arrangements online (AAO).
- Apply for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.
- Confirm by ticking the ‘Confirmation’ box prior to submitting the application for approval that the ‘malpractice consequence statement’ has been read and accepted.
- Make 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).
- Ensure 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).
- Ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline.
- Maintain a file for each candidate 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 data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector.
- Order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for GCSE and GCSE qualifications, through AAO by the deadline date for the November (GCSE only) and summer exam series.
- Order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate; application for modified papers to the awarding body must be at least 10 weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for vocational qualifications, by submitting JCQ Form VQ/EA - Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications to the awarding body no later than 10 weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for any other qualifications, by identifying and following the awarding body process by the deadline date.

## 7. Implementing access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities - External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body and/or JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

The Head of Centre is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The SENCo will:

- Appoint appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates who have been approved the use of:
  - a practical assistant
  - a prompter
  - an Oral Language Modifier
  - a reader
  - a scribe
  - a Sign Language Interpreter
- Ensure facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s).
- Ensure candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their exams and assessments.
- Liaise with the EM regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams.
- Ensure cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators.
- Liaise with the EM where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

The EM will:

- Liaise with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates.
- Liaise with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates.

- Ensure invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates.
- Provide cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and will ensure that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers.
  - print pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- Will check in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required).
- Make modifications that are delegated to the centre (a question paper on coloured/enlarged paper) that may be required and will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam.
- Ensure that where a candidate has been approved for a computer reader, will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam.
- Ensure that where a candidate has been approved for an Oral Language Modifier, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time.
- Ensure that where the centre has granted the candidate a live speaker and/or a sign language interpreter, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time.
- Have a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation.
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, apply for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

### **Roles and responsibilities – Internal assessments**

These are assessments which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body. The SENCo will liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates. Teaching staff will support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

### **Roles and responsibilities – Internal Exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments (exams). The SENCo will liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates. Teaching staff will support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

## **8. Monitoring**

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements 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 General and Vocational qualifications'