

# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

## 2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
JXM	
Date of next review	13/11/2024

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>Maria Stewart</b>
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	
Head of centre	<b>James Mackay</b>
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	

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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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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 St Andrew's C of E 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's **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 ALS lead/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 ALS lead/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. (<sup>1</sup>AA, section 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 t for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

<sup>1</sup>This 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.

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)

- Clive Walker – Certificates on file –

Certificate of Registration for Test User: Educational, Ability/Attainment, & Assistant Test User: Educational from the British Psychological Society Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements (CPT3A) Postgraduate Certificate in Assessment for Dyslexia and Literacy Certificate in Qualified Teacher Status Overtyping here details of the current assessor(s) and the qualifications held.

## 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)

This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

A photocopy of the assessor's certificate (s) ( or a printout screen shot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file by the SENDco.

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 SENCo. (AA, section 7.3)

Make full reference to AA, section 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

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

**St Andrew's High School confirms: Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6) Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5.1) Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5.5) The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AA 7.5.6) A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. (AA 7.3.6) Relevant staff 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 assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3.6)**

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

**St Andrew's High School confirms Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5.2) 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. 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 independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5.3)**

## **Processing access arrangements and adjustments**

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

## Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

**Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by • SENDCo. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by • SENDCo**

## Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

### 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.

### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect **and**

### Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)

Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. 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. (AA 6.1)

Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)

For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

### Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2.13)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2.13)

It is the responsibility of:

- SENDCo to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate Personal data consent form) to record their personal data online through AAO
- SENDCo to complete the Data protection confirmation by the SENDCo, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved
- SENDCo to submit applications for approval using AAO • SENDCo to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6)
- SENDCo to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer to order modified papers

#### CHANGES 2023/2024

(Amended bullet point) Under Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties - A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1) (to include additional detail) A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1, 7.4.1)

(Changed heading) Painting a 'holistic picture of need' confirming normal way of working (To) Picture of need/normal way of working

(Changed) Under Centre delegated arrangements - details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments (To) details the criteria the centre specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

(Added bullet point) Under Roles and responsibilities (to add who will) complete the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved

#### CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES •

Upon review in 2023, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.



## Appendices