

Access Arrangements Policy

2020/21

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Reviewing Panel: Standards, Staffing and Curriculum (SSC)

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Sarah Fowler
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	David Wright
Head of centre	David Wright
Assessor(s)	Lisa Cooper, Education Matters Assessments Ltd
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Wendy Rouse, Aundrea Robinson

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... **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'.

Reasonable adjustments

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... 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 Woodlands 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 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 SENCo 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.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the 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 his/her 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.

Please refer to the Equality Policy which can be found on the school website or alternatively in the policies folder in the Exams Office

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 candidates...

†or 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)

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Ms Lisa Cooper:

- British Dyslexia Association competency to teach certificate.
- British Dyslexia Association Associate Membership (AMBDA).
- Patoss SpLD Assessment Award Practising Certificate No. 500001512-IF3298.
- Bachelor of Science Degree.
- Qualified Teacher Status.

Master of Arts in Education (Special Needs/Inclusive Education).

Ms Lisa Cooper:

- British Dyslexia Association competency to teach certificate.
- British Dyslexia Association Associate Membership (AMBDA).
- Patoss SpLD Assessment Award Practising Certificate No. 500001512-IF3298.
- Bachelor of Science Degree.
- Qualified Teacher Status.

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)

The assessor brings evidence of her qualifications with her when she comes to the centre. The originals are viewed by the Assistant Headteacher SENDCo and copies are taken. The copies are held in the exam access evidence files which are held in the SENDCo's office.

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 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 SENCo. (AA 7.3)

Make full reference to AA 7.3 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Ms Lisa Cooper from Education Matters Assessments Ltd qualifications are held on file in the SENCo office. Lisa Cooper is employed as an external assessor and has an established working relationship with the school.

SENCo and Access Arrangement facilitators make all arrangements for assessments to take place.

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

All teaching staff are encouraged to complete 'Exam Access Request Forms', attaching appropriate evidence, if they have needed to differentiate assessment processes for in class assessments for pupils throughout years 7-9. The Access Arrangement Facilitators also collate other information such as NGRT reading test results and CATs scores. During the summer term of year 9 the SENCo meets with the Access Arrangement Facilitators to review all the evidence. In this meeting decisions are made as to which pupils should be assessed for access arrangements based upon the robust nature of evidence collected. The Access Arrangement Facilitators then prepare the Form 8 Section A for each pupil put forward for assessment, ensuring there is a thorough history of need. Towards the end of the summer term the Assessor comes into school to assess those pupils that have been identified and completes the Form 8 Sections B and C. The Assessor will have been provided with the

Form 8 Section As prior to her visit so that she is able to plan the assessments she wishes to administer. The Assessor's assessment of the pupils will be supported by the Access Arrangement Facilitators. Assessments are conducted in line with the requirements stipulated by the Assessor and are appropriate to each assessment tool used.

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...*

(GR 5.4)

Note

... SENCos 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 assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

Also detail any process (where relevant) for private candidates, distance learners and home educated students (refer to the requirement in GR 5.4)

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Recording evidence of need

The following documents are used to evidence the needs of the pupils:

- Learning Development Evidence Collection (completed by a teacher or Progress Mentor)
- Exam Access Arrangement Request (completed by a teacher or Progress Mentor)
- Application for Access Arrangements – profile of learning difficulties (Form 8) (completed by the Access Arrangement Facilitators)
- Appendix to Form 8 (report produced by the Assessor)
- Learning Passport (completed by the pupil and supported by a Progress Mentor)
- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where awarded
- Appropriate medical evidence (if provided)
- Specialist Teacher Reports
- Dyslexia diagnoses report

Where relevant include any additional information relating to **private candidates**.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo 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.

Gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

The following documents are used to evidence the normal way of working of the pupils:

- Learning Development Evidence Collection with examples of annotated work/assessments attached.
- Exam Access Arrangement Request with examples of annotated work/assessments attached.
- Learning Passport (Pupil and Progress Mentor)
- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where awarded
- Specialist Teacher Reports
- Evidence from classroom observations
- Notes in interventions, logged within www.provisionmap.co.uk
- Log of equipment loaned, held within the LD office
- Evidence of arrangements for Key Stage 2 tests

Where relevant include any additional information relating to **private candidates**. Bear in mind *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;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *literacy 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 Section A of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

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 SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 7.5)

Make full reference to AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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.

AAO applications are made by the SENDCo following completion of the Form 8. Approved applications are printed and stored in the exam access evidence files in the SENDCo's office. New applications this year have also been downloaded as PDF files and stored within the linked document section of a pupil's records in SIMs. The majority of applications are made in the summer term of year 9. If an application made through AAO is not approved, and no alternative successful application is made, all evidence of this application will be stored in the pupil's SEND files. If an application is not approved and an awarding body referral needs to be made this will be done in line with the guidance on AAO.

The SENCo 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) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

Make full reference to AA 8 Processing applications for access arrangements and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

For centre delegated access arrangements the same evidence collection process is in place and this, along with the SENDCo's decision, are held within the exam access evidence files held within the SENDCo's office. All access arrangements are listed on the exam access spreadsheet in the LD folder of the RM Staff shared area.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

The Word processor policy (exams) is available to view on our website www.woodlandsschool.org.uk and in the Exams Office.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) **with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled** to a candidate **where it is their normal way of working within the centre**, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. **For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.** [ICE 14.20]

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. 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.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. For example, a candidate with...

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.

[AA 5.8]

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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**
- **the candidate's normal way of working within the centre** (AA 5.16)

Please see the Separate Invigilation policy under the Exams Policy which can be found on the Woodlands School Website or alternatively in the policy folder in the Exams office.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo 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. (AA 5.16)



Signed: _____

Head Teacher

Dated: November 2020



Signed: _____

Chair of Governors

Dated: November 2020

