

# **Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)**

Amended: October 2025

Approved by Governors: December 2025

Review date: October 2026

### Key Staff Involved in the Policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	<b>Dean O'Connor</b>
Senior Leader(s)	<b>David Wright, Dean O'Connor, Seddeer Amran, Emma Jordan, Nicola White, Dominic Riste, Katie Heseltine</b>
Head of Centre	<b>David Wright</b>
Exams Officer	<b>Honor Dignan-Roth</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Samantha Heley</b>
Access Arrangement Facilitator(s)	<b>Wendy Rouse, Nicky Moran</b>

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## What are Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments?

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'. (AARA<sup>1</sup>, 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA<sup>1</sup>, Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA 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 **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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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 (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

## General Principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them 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, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 their 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 head of centre/senior leadership team will...** recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>, particularly Section 20 (7). 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. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

<sup>†</sup>or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR](#) section 5.4)

This 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 AARA 7.3.

### **The Qualification(s) of the Current Assessor(s)**

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s) Ms  
Samantha Heley:  
University College London Certificate  
Diagnostic Assessment and Management of Literacy Difficulties

### **Appointment of Assessors**

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

## Checking the Qualification(s) of the Assessor(s)

**The head of centre/senior leadership team will have a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document 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. (AARA 7.3)

## Reporting the Appointment of Assessors

Ms Samantha Heley's qualifications are held on file in the SENCo office.

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

During the summer term of year 9 the SENDCo meets with the Access Arrangement Facilitators to review all the evidence gathered. 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 required Form 8/9 sections 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)

## Picture of Need/Normal Way of Working

### Recording evidence of need

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

- The Aspirations Faculty Evidence Collection (completed by a teacher or Co-Educator)
- Exam Access Arrangement Request (completed by a teacher or Co-Educator)
- 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)
- Pupil Passport (completed by the pupil and supported by a Co-Educator)
- 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 required in 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. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

### Gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

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

- The Aspirations Faculty Evidence Collection with examples of annotated work/assessments attached.
- Exam Access Arrangement Request with examples of annotated work/assessments attached.
- Pupil Passport (Pupil and Co-Educator)
- Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where awarded
- Specialist Teacher Reports
- Evidence from classroom observations
- Notes in interventions, logged within [www.provisionmap.co.uk](http://www.provisionmap.co.uk)
- Log of equipment loaned, held within the Aspirations office

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. (AARA 7.5)**

## **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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

AAO applications are made by the SENDCo or equivalent following completion of the Form 8/9. Approved applications are printed and stored in the exam access evidence files in the SENDCo’s office. 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 for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA, section 8.6)

### **Centre-Delegated Arrangements/Adjustments**

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 a central file.

### **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.

The word processor policy is available to view on our website [www.woodlandsschool.org.uk](http://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. [AARA 5.8]

## 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 will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).


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 (AARA 5.16)

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. One-to-one invigilation must only apply where candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)

Signed:   
Head Teacher

Dated: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Signed:   
Vice Chair of Governors

Dated: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025

