

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

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Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Rationale

The Exam Access Arrangements Policy is a guide for teachers, parents and students to understand the procedure for the identification and support of students who may require EAA. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academy's SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

Our Exam Access Arrangements Policy explains the activity undertaken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), which will include those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). The policy supports and facilitates the school's aim to create a learning environment in which every student can fulfil his or her full potential.

Definition of Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a "physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

The candidate may demonstrate: Cognition and learning needs, Communication and Interaction needs, Sensory and/or physical needs and/or Social, mental and emotional needs.

Social, Mental and Emotional needs:

The centre will already be aware of any difficulties a candidate may be experiencing and key staff (such as the Tutor, Head of House, SENCO, Pastoral Support Workers and/or Senior Leaders) will be able to provide evidence of the ongoing history of need and support in liaison with outside agencies where necessary. Please note: Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

Definition of SEN

A candidate can be identified as having SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. (SEND Code of Practice: DOH/DfE, 2015).

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a student accessing an examination caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties without creating any unfair advantage over their peers or compromising the integrity of an assessment (i.e. they are to 'level the playing field'). These arrangements (adjustments) are agreed before an examination, and must reflect a student's normal way of working within the school. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'. (JCQ, 2019/2020, p3).

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. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

Available Exam Access Arrangements include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Reader/Computer reader
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Scribe
- Alternative accommodation within the centre
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. enlarged or modified papers)

N.B. A reasonable adjustment may not be included in this list of available access arrangements because it may be unique to an individual.

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal EAA during KS4/KS5 are identified early in Year 7 based on assessments and information shared by primary schools. At this stage, needs are screened and identified rather than formally tested. Teachers will be made aware of these students through the **Inclusion Register** and will make '**reasonable adjustments**' within the classroom through '**Quality First Teaching**' to ensure a student can access their learning.

Additional students may be brought to the attention of the SENCO/Access Arrangements Co-ordinator for further investigation for possible assessment through subject teacher/SEN/Pastoral staff referrals to the Student Services Board and/or parent referral and/or information from previous schools. If further testing or screening is indicated, this will be carried out and parents will be informed.

Testing and applying for Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs)

Students who continue to have 'significant and persistent' difficulties and for whom this is affecting their day to day activities will then undertake formal assessment for EAA from Year 9 upwards. Assessment is carried out in accordance with the current JCQ guidelines. The outcomes of the assessments will be recorded and summarised. Where an Access Arrangement is recommended due to a learning difficulty, JCQ Form 8 Part 2 (the assessor's report) will be completed and used as evidence for online submission of a formal Access Arrangement application. The school will then apply to the Awarding Bodies using the Access Arrangements Online application system. The feedback is instant, and, where the Access Arrangement is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the student.

Some arrangements (adjustments) can be applied at the discretion of the centre but the school must present a compelling case – demonstrating that there is **evidence of need** (e.g. assessment data, where applicable, or medical evidence), **history of need** (from teachers, pastoral staff) and that the EAA being applied for is the **student's normal way of working in the centre**. This evidence has to be made available for inspection.

Using EAA at Key Stage 4 & Key Stage 5

Where EAA have been applied for and approved by JCQ, the agreed arrangement becomes the candidates 'normal way of working' in a classroom setting and in any exams/coursework or controlled assessments. Parents will be informed in writing and we ask for a parental/student response form to be returned. The agreed information is added to a student's documentation and the Inclusion Register so that all teachers are aware that the arrangement has been formalised. Students will be monitored and supported in how to use the arrangements by the SENCO/Exam Access Co-ordinator and members of the SEND team when needed.

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed EAA in an exam type setting, then the EAA may be withdrawn.

Use of Word Processor

Students for whom using a laptop or other device has become their 'normal way of working' **may** be eligible to complete internal and external exams on a computer. The awarding of a Word Processor for examinations can only be granted with the permission of the SENCo. Please refer to the policy: **Word Processor use in Examinations.**

Evidence needed for Access Arrangements – and Malpractice

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, letters and reports from outside agencies, record of Access Arrangements used and any Statement of Special Needs or EHCP.

Once the Access Arrangement is granted, this evidence will be held on file and available for inspection, together with:

- Permission from the awarding body for the arrangement
- A data protection notice signed by the student

Note on Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCO/Exam Access Co-ordinator as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or other Access Arrangements. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. External Assessors are required to contact the SENCO/Exams Access Co-ordinator before carrying out the assessment. The SENCO/Exams Access co-ordinator will provide the Assessor with any existing information about previous support and current difficulties. A student's 'normal way of working' in school is key, and **Access Arrangements will not be awarded purely on the basis of a private report.** In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.

Temporary Arrangements and Special Consideration

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

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. The candidate will have been fully prepared for the exams, but due to some unforeseen circumstance could not demonstrate what they knew. Special Consideration can only be applied as per the guidelines from JCQ.

Deadlines for Access Arrangement Applications

Year 11



The school deadline to submit evidence and request Access Arrangements for a student in Year 11 is October half term. This allows the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any Access Arrangements. Ideally, the Year 10 examinations should provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have. Only in exceptional circumstances will applications be considered after the Year 11 Mock examinations.

Sixth Form

The deadline for Sixth Form Access Arrangements requests is July of Year 12, as long as a body of evidence has been collected by teachers in advance of this. Year 13 is too late to make requests for Access Arrangements as no history of need or provision is in place .

Further Information

Further information can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:
www.jcq.org.uk.

If you have questions about Access Arrangements, please send an e-mail to churchill@churchill-academy.org for the attention of: **Mrs Elizabeth Slocombe (Exam Access Co-ordinator)** stating your questions.