

# Appendix 5 – Exam Access Arrangements 2025/26

## Key staff involved in the strategy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Miss N Bannister
Senior leader(s)	Mrs K Peacock
Head of centre	Mr P Averis
Exams officer	Miss N Harding
Assessor(s)	Miss N Harding

## Contents

Key staff involved in the strategy .....	1
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	2
Access arrangements.....	2
Reasonable adjustments.....	2
Purpose of the strategy .....	2
General principles .....	3
Equalities Strategy (Exams).....	3
The assessment process .....	3
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s) .....	3
Appointment of assessors .....	4
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor.....	4
Picture of need/normal way of working.....	5
Processing access arrangements and adjustments .....	5
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	5
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	6
Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements .....	6
Word Processor Strategy (Exams) .....	6
Alternative rooming arrangements strategy .....	6

## 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'. (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 strategy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Kingsmead 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. (<sup>1</sup>AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document '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 AARA

## General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will 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 Strategy (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.

Appendix 3

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)

Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A)

- *Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (CCET)*
- *Access Arrangements Course (AAC)*

## 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)

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

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

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by SENCo (or equivalent role).

Make full reference to AARA 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

The correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs the SENDCo will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working and complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

All candidates will be assessed in light of the picture of need and relevant background information.

The assessor will establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores will be used, where published.

For candidates potentially requiring a Language Modifier reading comprehension will be assessed using a recognised test of text or sentence comprehension.

Reading speed will be tested in various ways depending on the individual candidate.

Candidates will be allowed the use of a scribe where they have a substantial impairment:

- a below average standardised spelling accuracy score with unrecognisable spelling attempts;
- or

- a below average standardised score for writing speed.

Cognitive processing assessments will include a range of assessments as determined appropriate for the candidate by the assessor.

A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AARA 7.3)

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 (AARA 7.3)

### Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENDCo will work closely with Subject Leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other centre staff to gather information to paint a picture of need for candidates, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

Statements regarding the candidate's normal way of working in the classroom and in internal assessments will be held on file.

The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo. (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)

Applications will be processed for both long-term and temporary conditions.

Candidates must be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

SENCO to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, 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);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA 8.6)

For cases that are not approved, the SENDCo will consider whether this is because the candidate does not meet the published criteria, whether the reasonable adjustment is not listed, and consider further exploration in relation to the competence being tested.

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Centre-delegated arrangements will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Candidates with anxiety will be seated in the main room where possible (after discussion with the EO seating will be allocated appropriately in the room, Alternative rooming arrangements invigilation will only be allocated if deemed necessary).

## Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

### Word Processor Strategy (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.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AA, section 5.8)

### Alternative rooming arrangements strategy

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/college tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre.

The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** apply where the 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)