ACCESS ARRANGMENTS POLICY (EXAMS)

2024-2025

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by the Examinations Officer and SENDCO

“The Governors of Greenbank High School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	**Name(s)**
SENDco	**Mrs H. Howe**
SENDco line manager (Senior Leader)	**Mrs A. Gent-Jones**
Head of centre	**Ms D. Aspinall**
Assessor(s)	**External Providers and Mrs H. Howe**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Mrs H. Howe**

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

*"**Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment**. They allow candidates with 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 particular 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 *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[1], 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 Greenbank High 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 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. ([1]AARA, section 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document 'Adjustments t for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

[1]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, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 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 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.

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 their first examination.

Equality 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 AARA 7.3.

The Qualifications of the current assessors:

Mrs Helen Howe – NASENDCO Award plus CCETTAAC, CPT3A

Copies of all qualification certificates are held in centre centrally and by the SENDCO.

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 ensures that this written process is followed - 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 document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*… (GR 5.4)

The head of centre ensures 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.

Reporting the appointment of assessors

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is held on file for inspection purposes, in the SEND Examination file, to be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. AARA 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors).

How the assessment process is administered

- Individual candidate's needs are assessed twice yearly by the SENDCo and form 8 / form 9 is completed when appropriate (7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties)
- SENCos and assessors working within the centre 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)
- Recording evidence of need
- Gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working through teacher evidence.*

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

The centre SENDCO will work alongside the schools SEND registers to identify pupils who will warrant additional arrangements.

The SENDCO works in conjunction with the Examination Officer to report and process candidates requiring adaptations.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

These include:

- A Reader / C-Pen
- A Prompt
- A small setting

- Use of a laptop
- Coloured Examination Papers
- Alternative room
- All centre delegated arrangements are approved by the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer.
- Evidence of the arrangement on school letter head signed by the SENDCO.

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

The SENDCO completes all Form 8's and details file notes to paint a picture of need.

All pupils access files contain a Pupil Profile detailing the child's need.

All pupil access files contain medical letters evidencing a child's need.

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 listed on page 2 of AA. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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 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**
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA, section 5.16)

All SEND staff receive updated annual training to ensure JCQ compliance.

Invigilator training takes place annually for all involved in the examination process.