



Access Arrangements Policy 2023/24

School Name: St Ives School

Dissemination: Staff Shared Drive and Website

Review date: January 2024

Person responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: SENDCo/Headteacher

Links to other relevant policies: JCQ Policies, Examinations Policy, Equality (Exams) Policy, Use of Laptop for Exams Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	Rebecca Hickson (St Ives)
SENDCo line manager	Simon Horner
Head of centre	Simon Horner
Assessor(s)	Tracey Foster
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Sue Needham (Exams Officer), Rebecca Hickson (SENDCo - St Ives)

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'. ([AA](#) 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'. ([AA](#) Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA](#) 1.8). The definitions and procedures in [AA](#) 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 St Ives 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, 5.4]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file 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 principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (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 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 must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 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 his/her 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. This can be found in the staff shared drive and on the website.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise their duties towards disabled 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. 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.

[†]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 appointed by the SENDCo. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3.

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 of the assessor

The qualifications of the assessor will be checked by the SENDCo at the point of engagement against the current requirements in [AA](#). Evidence of the qualification will be held on file for inspection purposes. This process will be carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence of the Assessors Qualification can be found in the Access Arrangements 2020-21 folder which is located in the SENDCo's filing cabinet. This will be presented to the JCQ Inspector as necessary by the SENDCo/Exams Officers.

The name of the current Assessor will be entered into AAO by the SENDCo/ Exams Officers before any access arrangements are applied for.

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

The school's process will reflect fully the requirements laid out in:

[AA](#) 5.5.5 *Evidence of need for all types of disability* and 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*

1. The SENDCo will establish a full picture of need of the candidate before assessments are carried out, including requesting evidence from classroom staff to show this is the candidate's normal way of working. The SENDCo must produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and the access arrangement reflects their normal way of working within the centre. The SENDCo will complete and sign Section 1 of Form 8.
2. This background information will be shared with the assessor by the SENDCo prior to the assessment of the candidate.
3. The assessor must personally conduct the assessment. They must not sign off an assessment carried out by another person.
4. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo. ([AA](#) 7.5)

5. Current edition of nationally standardised tests must be used and results given as standardised scores.
6. The assessor will enter the results of the assessment into Form 8 Section 2 and sign and date this section.
7. Section 3 of Form 8 will be completed by the SENDCo after the assessor has completed the testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which significantly affects their performance.
8. Once Form 8 has been completed and signed by the SENDCo and the assessor, the Exams Officers will process the application for the relevant access arrangement using AAO.
9. The original (not photocopied) Form 8 will be stored on file as evidence to show for inspection purposes. Unsigned/undated forms are not acceptable.

This process will also apply to private candidates and any home educated students entered for examinations at the school. Where necessary, the assessment may need to be carried out at a candidate's home or an alternative site.

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

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo **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 SENDCo 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.

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/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo. (AA 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 listed in Chapter 8 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed in Chapter 6.

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) 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.

Candidates will be assessed at the end of Year 9, as a picture of need should have been established by this point. The SENDCo/ Exams Officers will submit all applications as directed in [AA](#) 8.6, before candidates enter Y10 so that Access Arrangements are in place for all of Y10 and Y11. Only in exceptional circumstances will candidates be tested during Y10 or Y11 (for example, a candidate who joins the school during these years).

The SENDCo 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)

Centre-delegated access arrangements/adjustments

Centre delegated access arrangements include:

1. Use of a word processor
2. Use of coloured overlays/coloured paper
3. Supervised rest breaks
4. Prompt
5. Separate Invigilation within the centre

This list is not exhaustive. In all cases, the SENDCo is responsible for recommending these arrangements, based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Evidence of this will be held in the access arrangements folder by the SENDCo.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access 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.

In order to qualify to use a laptop in exams, a student should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A learning disability which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the student's ability to write legibly

- A medical condition
- A physical disability or temporary injury to their writing hand
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting that would be illegible to an unfamiliar eye
- Other condition evidenced by the SENDCo

In all cases, use of a word processor must reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre. Laptops will be provided by the school and must not have any access to the internet, internal network, shared folders or any other unauthorised software.

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENDCo. Recommendations may be made by the pastoral team, based on their evidence of the needs of the candidate.

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]

"SENDCos must note that candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo 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]