



**KING EDWARD VI
NORTHFIELD
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

Educational excellence for our City

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2022/23

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	September 2023

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	Mrs Marie Campbell
Assistant SENDCo	Miss Kelly Brown
SENDCo line manager (Senior leader)	Ms Jacqueline Hall
Head of centre	Mr Neil Jones
Exams officer	Mr James Cashmore
Assessor(s)	Mrs Marie Campbell
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Mrs Marie Campbell

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**' and also the **General Regulations for approved centres**. These publications are further referred to in this policy as AA and GR.

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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' (page 7, AA regulations).

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'. (page 7, AA regulations).

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Kind Edward VI Northfield School for Girls 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 policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo (Mrs Marie Campbell) 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 SENDCo is storing documentation electronically she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AA, section 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**'.

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 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.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, 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.

The equalities policy (exams) can be viewed upon request.

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 head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor Mrs Marie Campbell:

Postgraduate Diploma in Education, National Award in SEN Co-ordination. Certificate of Psychometric testing, assessment and access arrangements (CPT3A) from Real Training validated by the British Psychological Society and accredited by Middlesex University. MA Education (SEN and Inclusion).

British Psychological Society RQTU Membership no: 483325

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(s) of the assessor(s)

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place 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 publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR, section 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. (AA, section 7.3)

Specialist qualifications are checked by the School HR Department and original certificates are then copied and held on file by the HR departments as well as by the SENDCo. Mrs Marie Campbell is an appropriately qualified assessor as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3. and her qualifications are available for viewing upon request.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

SENCos must hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified (AA, section 7.4). Mrs Marie Campbell is an appropriately qualified assessor as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3. and her qualifications are available for viewing upon request. Copies of these qualifications can also be found within the centre's access arrangements folder.

In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. 7.4.3 The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed within the Deadlines section, must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status.

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

Candidates who may have a learning difficulty and may therefore require access arrangements are highlighted to the SENDCo by teaching staff. Candidates may also self-refer. An assessment is carried out by an appropriately qualified assessors (AA 7.5 1). Assessments are completed adhering to the timeframes required for regulations for external examinations. The Learning Support Department has a range of assessments which can be used by the SENDCo (trained assessor) depending on the individual needs /difficulties of the candidate. Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. (AA 7.5.5)

If assessment results meet the criteria for access arrangements they are combined with the candidate's history of need and supporting evidence gathered during their time at King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls to show examples of where arrangements are required and used as the candidate's normal way of working. The SENDCo will make the decision to apply for access arrangements based on:

- Whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect
- The candidate's normal way of working within the centre

The assessor carries out all assessments on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement applications. Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties will be completed. (Access arrangements 7.5, 7.6)

The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AA 7.5.6).

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. (AA 7.3.6) 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. (Access Arrangements 7.3.6)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCO will provide background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (Access arrangements 7.5.2) In the event of an independent assessor being used, the 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.

A historical picture of the use of access arrangements for each candidate is collated. The SENDCo will bear in mind the "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*, e.g.

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons; literacy intervention strategies; mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Part 1 of Form 8.

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 person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the centre. (Access arrangements 7.5.3).

Teaching staff are asked to provide examples of candidates' work to demonstrate the need that has led to the application of an access arrangement being made. This work is stored in the student file in the access folder and made available for inspection. Since the application requires evidence of need, King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Educational psychology reports.
- Speech Therapist reports.
- Occupational Therapist reports.
- Letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service).
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers.
- Copies of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangements.
- A signed copy of Form 8 report by the Academy's designated assessor / tester.

*The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3 of JCQ AA).

Joint Council for qualifications (JCQ) deadlines are fully adhered to.

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 AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

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

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AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used. The Exams Officer applies for AAO and abides by the deadlines set for each examination series. Access arrangements may for example include: supervised rest breaks, extra time, reader, scribe, word processor, transcript, oral language modifier and prompter.

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). Any applications that are refused are also retained by the centre in the access arrangements file. Personal data consent forms completed by the exam officer or the SENDCo are completed prior to processing the online application and are retained by the centre for 26 months from the date of the online application being made.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Some access arrangements can be "Centre-delegated" which means that an online application to JCQ is not required. Examples of such arrangements include:

- supervised rest breaks
- candidates who read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen)
- use of a word processor
- use of a prompter
- use of a bilingual dictionary
- coloured overlays
- separate invigilation within the centre

The assessor will complete a cover sheet to support the arrangement. The SENCo must be satisfied that there is a genuine need for the arrangement to be put in place. In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established within the school and be part of their 'normal way of working' as defined by JCQ.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3 of JCQ AA).

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.

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. The Word Processor Policy details the criteria King Edward VI Northfield School For Girls uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments. A member of the schools leader ship team produced the word processor policy specific to the centre and is available for inspection on request (AA, section 5.8).

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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)

In the case of separate invigilation within the centre (which may include sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room e.g a room for a smaller group of candidates or one-to-one invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a Head of Year, DSL, the SENDCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities (AA, 4.1.4). 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). Information regarding the candidates difficulties and need for separate invigilation is included within the centres access arrangement folder.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, 5.16)

Links to other Policies:

Word processing policy: examinations/access arrangements

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Equality policy for exams

Exam contingency plan

Suspected malpractice policy and procedures- JCQ guidance