



Access Arrangements Policy

King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls

Access Arrangements Policy

Centre Name	King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls
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Date policy first created	27/09/2023
Current policy approved by	Marie Campbell
Current policy reviewed by	Marie Campbell
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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Neil Jones
Senior leader(s)	David Chesterman
Exams officer	James Cashmore
ALS lead/SENCo	Marie Campbell
Other staff (if applicable)	Kelly Brown, David Moorcroft.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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.

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

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 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'.

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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that King Edwards 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The principles for King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls to consider 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 (AA 4.2)

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are 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..

2. The assessment process

At King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

- The Current assessor is Mrs Marie Campbell. The assessors qualifications are:
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). NPQSL. British Psychological Society RQTU Membership no: 483325

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

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 and her qualifications are available for viewing upon request.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the exams officer, SENDCo or a member of the senior leadership team.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist 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**. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

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

King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls confirms:

- 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 (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements (AA 7.3)
- Relevant staff 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 (AA 7.3)

Additional information:

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. 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.

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

Picture of need/normal way of working

King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5)

Additional information:

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.

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

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through 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.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by the SENDCo. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENDCo and exams officer..

- The use of a word processor

The SENDCo details the criteria King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- Alternative rooming arrangements

The SENDCo details the criteria King Edwards VI Northfield School for Girls uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation).

Additional information:

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 leadership team produced the word processor policy specific to the centre and is available for inspection on request.

In the case of alternative rooming 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. Alternative rooming 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.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- SENDCo to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate Personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- SENDCo and exam officer to complete the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo, prior to the processing of the online application
- SENDCo and exam officer to submit applications for approval using AAO
- SENDCo and exam officer 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 signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo form; 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)
- SENDCo and exam officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- SENDCo and exam officer to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Exam officer

Changes 2023/2024

Due to section renumbering in the AA publication, references to AA sections in this policy have been changed to 2 places, e.g. AA 7.3.1 changed to AA 7.3, etc.

(Changed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** 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) (To) A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AA 7.3)

(Removed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** An independent assessor will be instructed to contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This will take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor will be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate (AA 7.5)

(Removed) Under **Picture of need/normal way of working:**

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 the 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 person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5)

(Changed) Under **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments** all reference to Separate invigilation within the centre (To) Alternative rooming arrangements and re-worded the section accordingly.

(Changed) Under **Roles and responsibilities:** to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6) (To) 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 signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; 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)

Centre-specific changes

Not applicable