

Policy Title: Exam Access Arrangements Policy	Effective Date:	September 2023
Staff Member Responsible: Access Arrangements Coordinator	Review Date:	September 2024

Key staff involved in the policy:

Head of Centre @ Westonbirt School: Natasha Dangerfield

SENCo @ Westonbirt School: Polly Reuter

Westonbirt School Exams Officer: Nicola Cook

Westonbirt School Assessor and Access Arrangement Coordinator:

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(Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Assessment OF Specific Learning Difficulties - Dyslexia)

Legal Framework:

The Westonbirt School policy for Access Arrangements complies with the statutory requirement and has been written with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- JCQ Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustments regulations 2022-2023 JCQ Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Disability Discrimination
- Removing Barriers to Achievement 2004
- Education Act 2001
- Equality Act 2010
- Statutory Guidance on Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions April 2014
- Safeguarding Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with Westonbirt School's:

- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy

- Accessibility Plan

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

Introduction:

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. At Westonbirt School we will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school. Professional reports are requested that demonstrate an Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the pupil's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate.

Exam access arrangement extends and reflects the support that is given to a pupil who has SEND/AEN in the classroom, internal exams and mock exams. Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way, Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Definition:

The JCQ Definitions, (page 3) state 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. Ensure the proposed access arrangement does not unduly disadvantage or advantage the candidate. 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'.

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 undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

Special Educational Needs:

A candidate has “special educational needs” as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years, if they have a learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mobility impairment mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Definition of disability:

Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’.

Identification:

In line with JCQ regulations, Westonbirt School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment, which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate’s current and normal way of working. Appropriate evidence of need will be available for inspection.

Access arrangements may include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time of up to 25%
- Extra time of up to 50% (rare)
- Extra time of over 50% (exceptional)
- Reader/Reader on hand/computer reader
- Read aloud
- Scribe/Voice Activated software
- Word processor
- Transcript
- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Practical Assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre may be made for him/her
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: amplification equipment; Brailers; closed circuit TV; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind; Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.

Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements within Westonbirt School:

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 and 5 are identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments. KS2 (prep/primary school age) access arrangements are not applicable as there is no history of need. Formal assessments for Access Arrangements take place in Y10 during the first half of Autumn Term. Students who have had EAA at KS3 are screened for EAA at this stage.

Although they may have received EAA at KS3, it does not necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS4 exams because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had a reader at KS3 may not qualify for a reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board

criteria.

Assessment:

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations (Level 7). For those students potentially requiring access arrangements formal assessment and application to JCQ is carried out in Year 10/11 and Year 12 as standard. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted, access arrangements are valid for 26 months. Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent Access arrangements.

Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out at Westonbirt School by an appropriately qualified assessor. Parents may request an independent assessment. However, Westonbirt School may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report. If rejected the SENCo or a member of the Senior Leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision, which must be available for inspection purposes.

At Westonbirt School the examination officer, specialist assessor, SENCO and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

If the SENCo and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/careers.

Procedures for processing an application:

Parents must declare at the time of enrolment and when completing the school application form if their child has any medical or psychological condition, SEND needs, previous EAA at another educational institution or any other issues that may require an EAA. Failure to disclose this negates Westonbirt School from their responsibilities.

Once diagnostic tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation for EAA, there is a named person who is qualified to carry out EAA related assessments and tests who applies to the exam board with the Exams Officer. Since the application requires evidence of need, Westonbirt School will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice.

This can include:

- Educational psychologist reports.
 - Speech Therapist reports.
 - Occupation Therapist reports.
 - Letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors, and CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service).
 - Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers.
 - Copies of Statements of Special Educational Needs, or Education, Health Care Plans (EHCP).
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- Permission from the exam board for the arrangements.
 - A signed copy of Form 8 report by the academy's designated assessor/tester.
 - A record of all occasions when a pupil has been supported by EAA.

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

Evidence needed to apply for EAA:

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports from specialist teacher carrying out EEA assessments/tests.
- Previous EAA from another school.
- Subject teachers- examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams.
- Results from baseline tests such as reading age, writing tests.
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability.
- An educational psychology report, which explicitly diagnoses severe dyslexia.
- A Speech therapy report, which diagnoses severe language impairment.

The deadline for online applications for Access Arrangement varies slightly from year to year and is set by the government. Additional time is also applied for on the basis of whether a pupil requires a reader. An application for early opening of the papers is usually made each year. The deadline for early opening applications is usually at the start of the year and varies slightly from year to year. This deadline is set by the government and this deadline is fully adhered to.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements?

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded.
- Students are informed verbally.
- Access Arrangement list is made available to the exam officer.
- A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.

This information will be placed on Westonbirt School's relevant shared drives.

Private Educational Psychologists' or other commissioned Reports

A parent/carer may have their children assessed by a private educational psychologist and submit the report to the school's SENCo as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time or EAA. Private educational psychologists' report cost a significant amount of money. Therefore, this means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre Westonbirt School must be consistent in its decisions and ensure that no student is either given an unfair advantage or disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Therefore, when parents submit such reports to Westonbirt School, we will look for evidence of a history of need. Such privately commissioned reports can be in conflict with what Westonbirt School's tester (specialist teacher) recommends. If the school's diagnostic tests contradict privately commissioned reports then the school's tests and assessments will take precedence and will inform EAA decisions and no further negotiation regarding this matter will take place with the parent/carer.

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCO 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 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.

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval Access Arrangements Online (AAO) & Pearson's Access Arrangements Online (PAAO) 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.

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements:

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENCO. If there has been an historical pastoral need for this adjustment, it is paramount that parents and pastoral staff pass this information onto the Exams Officer and Learning Support at the earliest possible opportunity for assessment.

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.**
- **Medical evidence provided by a consultant (not GP).**

The candidate's disability is **established within the centre**. It is known to the 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 tests and mock examinations.

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

Rest Breaks:

The purpose of a supervised rest break is for a break from the examination and **should not** be used as 'thinking time'. Supervised rest breaks must reflect the candidate's current and normal way of working in internal tests and mock examinations.

Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty, for example a medical diagnosis of ADHD, Westonbirt School will explore and trial the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and mock examinations **before** making an application for 25% extra time.

Rest breaks must take into consideration the practicalities of the school day for the candidate and for staffing. The SENCo will decide on the time set for supervised rest breaks based on their knowledge of the candidate's needs and the candidate's normal way of working when placed under timed conditions. At Westonbirt School it is normal policy to recommend no more than 10 minutes per hour, however in some cases this will be flexible depending upon the nature of need. There will be some constraints on timing if the candidate

has more than one examination to take each day. The supervised rest break **is not** included in any extra time allowance.

The SENCo **must** be satisfied that:

- The candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act): and
- There is a genuine need for the arrangement.

Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- Cognition and learning needs.
- Communication and interaction needs.
- A medical condition.
- Sensory and physical needs.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs.

Rest breaks are **not for** general fatigue and exam stress.