

St Paul's Catholic College



Access Arrangements Policy

Access Arrangements Policy

2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Dee Wood	
Date of next review	March 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

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Access arrangements policy template (2020/21) Hyperlinks provided in this document were correct as at September 2020

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Annette Chatfield
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Dee Wood
Head of centre	James Mc Nulty
Assessor(s)	Donna Dawson
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Helda La Porte

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

AA (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. 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

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... 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 St Paul's Catholic College 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, (section 5.4)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as **GR**

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/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. (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 general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in **AA** (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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 Exams Policy is located on the school's website: <https://www.st-pauls.surrey.sch.uk/examinations>

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private 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...

[†]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(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

AMBDA / PGDip Dyslexia and Literacy / Practising Certificate for Disabled Student's Allowance Assessment / SpLD Assessor / STIP (Specialist Teacher for Inclusive Practice)

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 assessor's qualification documents are held on file by both the SENCO and the Exams Officer and the Schools bursar checks all required qualifications.

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AA including:

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 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 7.3)

Make full reference to AA 7.3 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the ALS lead/SENCo.

Make full reference to AA 7.4 Reporting the appointment of assessors and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

Pupils are identified by Teaching Staff, Teaching Assistants, Heads of Year and the SEND team. Evidence is gathered with regards to the needs of the individual. Access Arrangement testing undertaken in Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 and assessed by an external qualified assessor. Parents, Pupils and Exams Officer are notified of any access arrangements required as a result of the screening / testing. The student's normal way of working is reflected in the Access Arrangement which has been put in place. Our SpLD Assessor attends an annual up-date of her qualification to ensure compliance with any changes to the JCQ regulations ensuring that the assessment process is administered correctly. Form 8's are completed, signed and dated by hand, by our fully qualified Specialist Assessor.

Once the form 8 is completed the candidate has an individual meeting with the Specialist Assessor to explain the application process, what information about them will be shared and with whom and the law regarding Data Protection. The student is asked to complete a Data Protection Notice and a letter is sent home to explain to parents /carers the nature of the changes that have been made.

For private candidates we will "...undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate. This includes distance learners and home educated students. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process. The candidate must be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor. In some instances, depending on his/her needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre, for example at home..."

Make full reference to AA 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 and record your process that reflects the requirements

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* (GR 5.4)

Note

... SENCos and assessors 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)

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

All assessment evidence is retained and kept on individual files for each student who has Access Arrangements in place. All tests used are approved by the awarding body and marked against Standardised Scores. All tests and scoring are administered by our fully qualified Specialist Assessor.

Information regarding scores is recorded on the JCQ form 8 by the Specialist Assessor then checked by the SENCO.

If parents request a privately commissioned assessment, the SENCo completes a 'skeleton' Section A of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed (Section C of Form 8). When a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer. [AA 7.3]

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo 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.

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 SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 7.5)

Make full reference to AA 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 and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AARAO) 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 (chapter 6) **Modified papers**)

AARAO 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. At St Paul's we use AQA to access CAP.

Teachers and support staff are asked to make individual comments with regard to those students who have been identified as having specific difficulties. They are asked to respond to the questions:

How has this student's difficulty impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom?

What support is regularly provided for this student?

Staff are also asked to provide evidence of examples such as unfinished timed tests or handwriting samples, evidence of extra time being used which are kept on file.

Information collected prior to year 10 and 13 testing and a record of the support that was put in place such as, in class support, small group or one to one support are kept on file.

Information regarding students specific circumstances or learning difficulties are kept on file along with reports from outside agencies, parents or students own concerns.

Those students who have been awarded an Access Arrangement will routinely be given that provision in the classroom as their normal way of working. The support given in the centre reflects the arrangement put in place for the examination series. All background information, support and or interventions are recorded in Section A of form 8. This might include for example, when applications are submitted, who is responsible, what information is required, printed, kept on file, location of files, dealing with cases that do not gain approval, awarding body referrals, etc.

The Specialist Assessor retains all original test papers, work samples and other supporting evidence along with a copy of the form 8 and correspondence with parents/carers/outside agencies. Copies are made and kept on file with the original F8 with the SENCO.

The SENCO 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)

Make full reference to AA 8 Processing applications for access arrangements and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Use of a word processor, separate room and supervised rest breaks are dealt with internally on an individual needs basis, following referral from teaching staff, support staff or Heads of Year / Pastoral teams. Medical evidence required for non-standard room use and supervised rest breaks. We build a robust picture of need for each individual pupil with access arrangements

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

The use of a word processor for examinations will reflect the candidate's normal way of practice. A word processor will not be granted because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

We will consider particular types of candidates who would benefit from the use of a word processor if they present certain conditions or impairments that significantly impairs their ability to match the equivalent average handwriting rate. For example, candidates who present with:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- A medical condition;
- A physical disability;
- A sensory impairment;
- Planning and organisational problems with writing by hand;
- Poor handwriting

The use of a word processor will reflect the candidate's normal way of working within St Paul's Catholic College and be appropriate to the individual candidate's needs

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors... A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. (AA 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 5.16)

Pupils will be provided with separate invigilation if the candidate is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other candidates without a disability undertaking the assessment, or, if their disability puts others at a disadvantage if not offered separate invigilation.

These needs will be clearly identified by the SENCO or HOY and will be their normal way of working. Needs may take the form of a medical condition, or social and emotional needs. Evidence will be required.

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