



Examinations

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewing Member of Staff: Mrs H Green, Examinations Officer

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Approved by Governors:

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Committee: Academic, Pastoral and Teaching

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCO	Mrs S Nolan
SENDCO Line Manager (Senior Leader)	Mrs N Barker / Mrs Claire Fisher
Head of Centre	Dr A Evans
Assessor(s)	Mrs S Nolan

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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 2010¹ to make 'reasonable adjustments'. (²AA, 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'. (²AA, Definitions)

The Centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA¹, Definitions)

¹References 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 Prince Henry's High 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's **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 SENDCO 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 they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (²AA, section 4.2)

¹ 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

² This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**' (AA).

General Principles

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will appoint a SENDCO, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language, and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

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 them 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 SENDCO, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the Centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCO to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
- Applications should be processed at the **start** of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
- 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 their 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.

A copy of the Equalities Policy can be located on the Exams section of the main school website.

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private 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...

[†]for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 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 AARA, section 7.3.

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

Appointment of assessors

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 [AARA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties is carried out by the Head of Centre. Full PAPAA training is provided for assessors following their appointment (if the assessor does not already hold the qualification, no assessor conducts assessments until this training has taken place).

Assessor's certificates are held by the assessors and a copy is kept by the Examinations Officer for inspection purposes, presented to the JCQ inspector in the presence of the SENDCO.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Details of school assessors are kept on their personal file and details of their role are displayed on the main school website.

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

All candidates are tested on joining the school using an internal cognitive test. These tests are reviewed by the assessors and SENDCO to establish any additional needs.

Teachers are also asked to refer candidates who are struggling in their lessons using an internal system.

Once evidence has been collected candidates with learning difficulties are tested by trained assessors in school.

Where parents/carers are keen to access testing from external sources, the assessor completes a Form 8, evidence from a school perspective is used to inform the assessor before making any recommendations.

The school only accepts ex-candidates as private candidates, so access arrangements would have been established during their time at the school.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Candidates are assessed after the appointed assessor (SENDCO) is informed that a potential need exists. This may come from class teachers as a result of reviewing a student's normal way of working or after reviewing class tests and exams. In addition, the SENDCO will formally remind all teachers to identify relevant students in each year group at least annually. Parents and pastoral support teachers are also encouraged to identify any student who they feel has learning or other difficulties. The SEND Register is also used to help to identify potential needs and parental concerns are passed to the SENDCO for review.

Once candidates have been identified, their class teachers are asked to complete a form detailing any arrangements that they need to make to ensure progress in the classroom or to allow them to succeed in school tests. These are then collated and if it is possible to build a picture of need, the student is tested to see whether we can evidence that need.

In exceptional circumstances, the student may need to be assessed at home if they are not able to attend school for the process.

Tests used for access arrangements in school include Detailed Assessment of Handwriting (DASH AND DASH 17+), Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP-2), Diagnostic Reading Analysis (DRA), Wide Range

Achievement Test (WRAT-4), Adult Reading Test (ART), Single Word Reading Test (SWRT6-16) and Single Word Spelling Test (SWST).

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 [AARA](#), 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.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the Centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

The assessors are responsible for using Access Arrangements Online to process requests for arrangements. Where these are agreed, the JCQ form is printed and stored on the student file in the SENDCO's office.

Applications are not made until the relevant Form 8 has been compiled, printed and signed. Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where approval is not gained, the nominated assessor will review the evidence and consider more testing if required.

The assessor, with support from the schools Exams Department will order modified papers by the deadline dates for all exam series.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Prince Henry's High School offers Exams workshops for candidates who suffer exam stress. If candidates still feel anxious after the workshop they are offered online CBD and, in severe cases, in-school counselling or a referral to external agencies.

The School offers the following arrangements for candidates depending on their need: small room: 46 candidates, Classroom: 16 candidates, own room: 1:1, back of large exam room, front of large exam room, front of smaller room, near back of smaller room dependant on laptop usage in the room. Coloured overlays (coloured paper if they have medical evidence and it is their normal way of working).

Candidates require a referral by a medical professional or Head of Year to be awarded a Centre-delegated arrangement/adjustment. A letter is required by either source to be kept on the candidates SEND file.

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.

The Word Processor Policy for Exams can be located within the Exams section of the main school website.

Full details on how candidates are allocated the use of a word processor in exams are detailed in this policy.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the Centre will be made by the SENDCO.

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 ([AARA](#), section 5.16)

Candidates who require alternative rooming arrangements for exams anxiety will have received the Exams anxiety workshop, been referred to online CBD, in-school counselling, or sought external support but still struggle with exams.

Candidates are offered a smaller venue of 46 initially, if they continue to struggle a small classroom style venue will be offered. Own room arrangements would be used for candidates with severe anxiety or social difficulties.

Candidates can be referred for an alternative room arrangement by their Head of Year, medical professional or SEND.

In rare cases the school may be able to offer invigilation at an alternative site depending on the candidate's circumstances (this option is not available to external candidates). For safeguarding and insurance purposes two invigilators would be required to attend alternative site arrangement which may incur a cost to the parents/carers of the candidate - £22 per hour.

Candidates who require own room for an impairment, reader/scribe support or for medical reasons, these candidates will have an approval through Access Arrangements Online.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room must only apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)