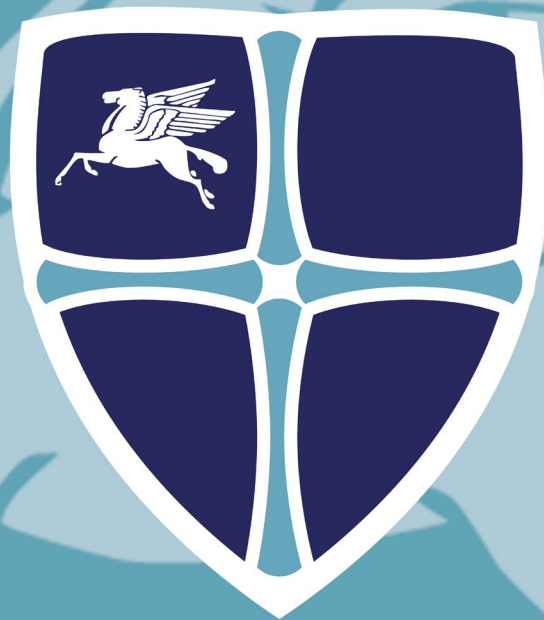


Wellfield School



Access Arrangements Policy

Chair of Governors – Mrs N Wood

Headteacher – Ms S Hammond

Updated - 05/09/21

Review Date - 05/07/23

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 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'. Access Arrangement Definitions, page 3

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 a number of 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'. [AA Definitions]

*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

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Wellfield 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 for any student that may require provisions above what is traditionally offered as described in the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR Policy). This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing 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 (AA).

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 a disabled candidate.

The SENCo, 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.

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 their first examination.

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the School's Accessibility Policy which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

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](#). Access Arrangements may also be completed by an Educational Psychologist as part of a formal assessment.

THE QUALIFICATION(S) OF THE CURRENT ASSESSOR(S)

Mrs Sharon Forbes is qualified to conduct Access Arrangement testing and holds an appropriate Level 7 qualification.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS OF CANDIDATES WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

At the point an assessor is 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)

As highlighted in AA 7.3 "Appointment of assessors and candidates with learning difficulties"; assessors on site have a process in place to check the qualifications of the assessor and will keep copies of certificates on site for inspection purposes.

DETERMINING WHICH STUDENTS WILL BE ASSESSED FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

The majority of students with Education, Health and Care Plans or Statements of Special Educational Need, will likely require some form of access arrangements. Other than this, it is not an immediate expectation that because a student is on the SEND Register that they will have access arrangements in place.

From student's arriving in Year 7, a number of different factors will be considered, including:

- Previous access arrangements in place (for example for SATs examinations)
- Pre-existing medical conditions that may require adaptations to examinations
- Students consistently underperforming against target
- Interventions in place for students (e.g. handwriting support or laptop use)
- Concerns raised by staff over a period of time

When a student is highlighted for concerns in one or more of these areas, they will be placed on a tracking list and measures will be put in place to determine whether access arrangements may be appropriate for them. However, due to JCQ Guidelines, Access Arrangements, once applied for, will remain in effect for 26 months. This means that students should be formally assessed for Access Arrangements no later than the end of Year 9, otherwise they may have lapsed by the time the GCSE examinations begin.

Whilst some students will informally be granted Access Arrangements prior to this point, until it is formally assessed and applied for via the exam boards, they are not official for that student. There are many students in school who will benefit from adaptations made to the way they take assessments, but school is conscious there is a risk that a student could become too used to an access arrangement and subsequently not qualify which may ultimately place them at a disadvantage. There is also a risk that a student's change over time, along with their ability to complete different tasks and therefore an access arrangement that was once applicable to them may no longer suit their needs.

PROCESS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF A CANDIDATE'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES BY AN ASSESSOR

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs the SENCo has to paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working and completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

All procedures followed in school link to Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

Students who do not work within the Centre may also be assessed for Access Arrangements and this will be negotiated with other learning providers.

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

School will maintain a record of students who have access arrangements and details from staff explaining how these access arrangements are used within the classroom setting to support the needs of the student. A number of students with Access Arrangements will have a pupil profile and this will also detail information regarding their needs. Held within student Access Arrangement files are also copies of any relevant assessments or reports from professionals that support the application.

For every student with access arrangements, unless they have been granted in an emergency situation, there will be evidence within their file that this is their normal way of working. 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.

PROCESSING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

ARRANGEMENTS 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 listed on

page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Within the Access Arrangements file will be kept a copy of the candidates approved application along with a signed copy of the candidate personal data consent form, which will be completed prior to the application being processed under GDPR guidelines.

CENTRE-DELEGATED ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

There are some access arrangements that do not have to be formally applied for, such as:

- Students who are to be based in a small or separate room
- Students who require supervised rest breaks (though there will likely be medical evidence to support this decision)
- Students using a laptop/ word processor
- Students with a prompt
- Students with a reader

There will be a file on these students, but no formal application or Data Protection Form needs to be completed. These access arrangements will still be determined by evidence that shows normal way of working.

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 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. Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate 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. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

SEPARATE INVIGILATION WITHIN THE CENTRE

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the 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]

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, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)

SENcos must note that candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)