



THE BEWDLEY SCHOOL

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Access Arrangements Policy

Adoption Date: February 2024
Person Responsible: Mrs D Bridges

Key staff involved in the Policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS Lead/SENCo	Mr J Hickman
ALS Lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Mr P Willis
Head of Centre	Mr D Hadley-Pryce
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	

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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 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. ('AA, 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'. ('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 The Bewdley 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 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 ALS lead/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. (¹AA, section 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**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as 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 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 his/her 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.

Appendix 3 of the Exams Policy available on the 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...

†or 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 AA, section 7.3.

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

The Bewdley School currently commissions a specialist assessor to carry out exam access arrangements. The specialist assessor holds a current practising assessment.

Wendy Robins - SPLD Assessment Practising certificate - patoss

Wendy Robins – OCR Level 7 Diploma in Teaching and Assessing Learners with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties.

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)

A written process is in place to complete qualification checks before assessors are appointed to work at the Bewdley School.

Evidence of the assessor's qualifications is held on file by the SENCO for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ inspector when required.

The Bewdley School ensures that candidates with a learning difficulty have been assessed appropriately by a qualified assessor.

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, section 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, section 7.3)

Make full reference to AA, section 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The Assessors certificates are held electronically by the SENCO for reference and inspection. These can be found on the shared area under, SEN, For Curriculum Support, Access Arrangements for Exams, Assessor Information.

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

Exam Access Arrangement processes are administered with regard to the Equality Act 2010 regulations and the SEN Code of Practice (2014).

The school makes every attempt to identify students needing exam Access Arrangements as early as possible.

Teachers, Teaching Assistants and the SENCO identify students needing exam arrangements through:

- The use of ongoing formative and summative assessment (teacher assessment)
- Information from primary school (or previous educational establishment) at the time of transition to The Bewdley School
- Ongoing tracking and monitoring information (reading assessments, spelling assessments.
- Feedback from class teachers about identified classroom difficulties, in class provision and any existing Access Arrangement being used as standard practice for the identified student.
- Information from external agencies (including, for example, LST, SALT, EP, Community Paediatrician, CCN team, and CAMHS...)
- The school does not currently have accommodate private students, have students distance learning or enter any students being educated at home (private students).
- After identifying level of student need, the form 8 is completed to include **information about a student's difficulties, in class and assessment support and the proposed Access Arrangement and the reason for this.**

Make full reference to AA, sections 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 in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*...

(GR, section 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, section 7.3) Also detail any process (where relevant) for a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student (refer to the requirement in GR, section 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

From entry to the school, students in need of extra support are identified through ongoing monitoring of teacher summative and formative assessment as well as guidance from any external providers.

During year 9, the Curriculum Support Team commence a thorough data collection activity. This involves asking and expecting all classroom teachers to complete an audit of student need. This includes identifying students who experience classroom difficulties and how students are supported both through quality first teaching and to access any assessment opportunities. This information is collated centrally by the Curriculum Support team. The data collected is reviewed and considered in conjunction with data such as student reading age, spelling testing results, reading comprehension skills. The Curriculum Support team also ensure that medical conditions which may necessitate particular extra Access Arrangements are taken into account.

Prior to assessment by the external assessor, the SENCO and Curriculum Support team ensure that all relevant documentation and evidence is collated and that the Form 8 and LST application is completed as fully as possible. This enables the assessor to assess the student with as full a picture of need and provision as possible.

Students with approved Access Arrangement applications will have these arrangements in class tests, mock examinations and assessments. Student voice is taken into account, with students with identified Access Arrangements being asked to identify whether (or not) they have used the Access Arrangement and whether this same Access Arrangement is required for all examination entries. Information on the Access Arrangements for students is shared with invigilators who feed back to the Exams Officer/SENCO about student use of identified Access Arrangements. This is particularly important for monitoring whether a student would benefit more from supervised rest breaks or from 25% extra time.

All exam Access Arrangement assessments are completed by the end of the first term of year 10, wherever possible. As students join the school, or subsequent areas of need are identified, further testing may take place. This may be done after the first term of the year 10 course.

Prior to applying for any Access Arrangement, the proposed arrangement is discussed with the student.

Information about approved Access Arrangements is produced in a spreadsheet and made available to all teaching colleagues. There is a procedure for colleagues to

request TA support to act as a reader, scribe or practical assistant for ongoing assessment opportunities. It is also possible for departments to request a student takes an exam in an alternative space (usually a smaller room in Curriculum Support, if taking an exam in a separate exam space is standard practice for that student.

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

Make full reference to AA, sections 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 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 AA, 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.

In accordance with JCQ regulations, the SENCO makes the appropriate AAO and PPAO applications in advance of the published deadline.

The SENCO prints off a paper copy of the online application and stores this with the LST referral documentation and the summary of LST findings, the form 8, the data protection form, as well as any other supporting and supplementary documentation. For students with an EHCP, this is included in their file as key evidence. All live Access Arrangement files are stored in Curriculum Support.

In the event of an assessor deeming a student ineligible for any Access Arrangement, the SENCO ensures that a copy of the LST referral documentation and summary of findings, the form 8, the data protection form as well as any other supporting and supplementary documentation. Where an application is declined by the JCQ online site, the SENCO would review whether an individual awarding body referral is required, giving supplementary information as required.

Students are told verbally of any Access Arrangements which are to be applied for in advance of the application being made. Information about the outcomes of the Access Arrangements application is shared with students verbally.

Information about approved Access Arrangement applications is collated on a spreadsheet which is reviewed by Curriculum Support staff and shared with all teaching colleagues. This spreadsheet includes information about Access Arrangements which require awarding body approval and arrangements which are centre-delegated.

Candidate Personal data consent form and the requirement for completion of the **Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENCo must 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, section 8.6)

Make full reference to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The school follows JCQ guidance when providing centre delegated Access Arrangements. The identification of students who may benefit from centre delegated Access Arrangements is the same as for Access Arrangements requiring awarding body approval.

Evidence of student need for the centre-delegated Access Arrangements is recorded in the students Access Arrangement folders which are kept in the Curriculum Support admin office.

Centre-delegated Access Arrangements are identified during a student's year 9. The evidence collated is used to inform any decisions. All centre-designated Access Arrangements information is shared with colleagues via a centrally located spreadsheet (on the school system). The spreadsheet is compiled and maintained by the Curriculum Support team. Student usage of centre-devised Access Arrangements is tracked and monitored throughout the exam courses to ensure that this remains both a student's normal way of working as well as being the most appropriate support for a student.

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.

See Appendix 6 of The Exams Policy

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AA, section 5.8)

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) 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, section_5.16)**

The need for alternative rooming arrangements must be substantiated by appropriate evidence of need. This may take the form of a letter from a GP, CAMHS, EP, evidence within an EHCP or under guidance of the SENCO or a Head of Year (for students with social, emotional or mental health difficulties).

Students requiring alternate rooming are identified where possible by the end of the first term of year 10. These students are identified on the whole school Access Arrangements summary spreadsheet. These students should be permitted to complete assessments under separate invigilation wherever possible. Teaching colleagues can request support from Curriculum Support to facilitate this Access Arrangement.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form 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 separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)