



# Access Arrangements Policy 2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

**Approved/reviewed by**

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## Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mr. Keith Middleton
Assistant SENCo	Mrs. Nicola Dowell
Head of centre	Mr. A. Ali
Assessor(s)	

## 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’.

[AA 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, page 3]

## **Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Chessington 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

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.

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

## **Disability policy (exams)**

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Disability policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, 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)**

### **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 qualifications for Chessington School were verified by the SENCo.

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

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

### **How the assessment process is administered**

The SENCo collects evidence of students requiring access arrangements and contacts the assessor to visit the school to administer the appropriate tests to the students. Form 8s are completed and signed and applications submitted to JCQ for approval.

### **Recording evidence of need**

JCQ inspections require all schools to have the appropriate evidence for every student that has been awarded access arrangements. If the school fails to provide sufficient evidence, in line with JCQ regulation, then the student in question **could have marks deducted due to their unfair advantage**. The appropriate evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term affect i.e. history of need/history provision.
- Evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant i.e. assessment results/provision.
- Show evidence of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom.

- Confirm that the student will be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.

For access arrangements awarded on medical grounds the school will also need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made as well as JCQ inspection:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist; or
  - A letter from a hospital consultant; or
  - A Letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or
  - A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or
  - A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).
- 
- The school must be made aware of any on-going medical problems as soon as they have been diagnosed. If the school is not made aware of the student's medical history then an access arrangement cannot be put into place for public examinations. In cases when GP's provide medical letters for anxiety or depression, then the evidence must show that the school has been aware of this and has been working with the student.
  - Access arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subjects. If this is the case then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects or adapted for those students who require arrangements for all subjects.
  - Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in all internal and external assessments. An access arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulation. **If a student chooses to continually not use their access arrangement then the access arrangement will be removed for public examinations.**

### **Gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working***

Students transferring from primary school with an EHC plan will normally be eligible for access arrangements this will be discussed at the students annual review.

Baseline assessments of students in year 7 are carried out at the beginning of term to test reading, spelling and writing speed. From these and the CAT's data, students are identified who have standardised scores of 84 and below. Appropriate intervention and access arrangements for that academic year are discussed by the SENCo and Access arrangements coordinator.

A letter will be sent out to parents/guardians informing them it has been decided that their child qualifies for an access arrangement for that academic year. As children progress through school their profile can change and therefore, access arrangements will be awarded on a yearly basis to reflect the child's need at that time in accordance with JCQ regulations.

This may mean that a child may have an access arrangement in Year 7 but has improved and no longer requires this in Year 8.

Students who have diagnoses for Cognition and Learning needs may have Psychologist report; this alone may not be enough evidence for Access Arrangements. Approved JCQ diagnostic tests and teacher evidence will be needed to support the report.

What is teacher evidence?

Teachers need to demonstrate the student is not able to complete the classwork/assessments/ tests in the set/reasonable time or that the handwriting is illegible. Sample of questions asked:

<b>Does the student have difficulty with the following?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Completing tasks in lessons			
Running out of time in exams/timed assignments			
Writing speed			
Legibility of work			
Spelling			
The length of his/her work compared with peers			
Answering the exact question set			
Producing written work			
Written work matching his/her verbal ability			
Understanding and/or following instructions			
Handing in homework on time			
Other organisational skills			
Practical work or tasks			
Concentration in class			

Psychological reports have a shelf life, which means that they must be completed when a student is in year 9; reports from KS3, year 7 and 8 will not be accepted. Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 must be identified at the beginning of KS4

Once the necessary testing is completed and relevant evidence gathered from teaching staff and/or a medical professional, an application is made to JCQ and all examining boards who agree a suitable access arrangement for the student's need.

Access Arrangements are agreed before an examination takes place, allowing students with Special Educational Needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access an assessment and show what they can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

### **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. (See separate Word Processor Policy)

"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." [ICE 14.20]

### **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]
- ▶

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.)

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) 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."