


# Access Arrangements



Author	Assistant Headteacher	Date: April 2024
Approved by:	LGB (chairs actions)	Date: April 2024
Signature of LGB Chair		
Last reviewed on:	January 2023	
Next review due by:	January 2025	

## Contents

1. Key Staff .....	3
2. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments? .....	3
3. Purpose of the policy .....	3
4. General principles .....	4
5. Equalities Policy (Exams) .....	4
6. The assessment process .....	5
7. Processing access arrangements and adjustments .....	6
8. Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments .....	6
9. Data Protection Law .....	7

## 1. Key Staff

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Mr S Berry
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Mr P Ramage
Head of centre	Mr J Fox
Assessor(s)	Mr S Berry
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Mrs L Fereday

## 2. 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'. (<sup>1</sup>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'. (<sup>1</sup>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

## 3. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Earls 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 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. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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**'.

<sup>1</sup>This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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.

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.

## 6. 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)

Mr Stuart Berry

Test User: Educational, Ability/Attainment October 2013

Assistant Test User: Educational October 2013

RQTU Membership No: 326838

### 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)

Copy of certificates held with the approved Access Arrangements.

### 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, section 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

Students are identified through a number of processes. These being: low standardised scores in reading and spelling assessments; identified SEND pupils; students with a diagnosis and teaching observations. Students would have appropriate suggested access arrangement put in place so that The Earls High School can begin to evidence the normal way of working. At the outset of Year 10 identified pupils have a full cognitive assessment and if required an application is then made to JCQ. The SENCO will ensure they refer to JCQ 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 keep records of the processes. The Earls High School undertakes 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 leads on the assessment process. The candidate is 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. [GR 5.4]

## Picture of need/normal way of working

Teachers and teaching assistants gather evidence during normal classroom activities and in formal testing and exams. These are collated and recorded on a pupil's IEP. This is used to show the students normal way of working.

Normal way of working is defined as:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- in internal school tests/examinations;
- PPE examinations. T

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded on the Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

The SENCO must refer 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 the process that reflects the requirements.

## 7. 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.

AAO are processed online by the Exams Officer and the SENCo. The form 8, evidence, personal data consent form and AB approval forms are kept on file in the SEN office. Additional detailed evidence and information concerning the student is kept on file in the SEN department.

The SENCo will supply additional information for students who do not gain approval if available. This is then processed by the Student Needs Officer.

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Centre delegated access arrangements are identified by the SENCo, with evidence recorded from teachers and teaching assistants to ensure this is their normal way of working and then disseminated to all staff.

## 8. 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. A copy of the policy is available on the school website.

## 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)
- Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)

Students identified by the SENCo requiring access arrangements for Reader, Scribe, Laptop and Supervised Rest Breaks will be allocated to the small access room to complete their examinations. Students who are allocated extra time will be individually assessed by the SENCo.

## 9. Data Protection Law

This policy adheres to the principles under Data Projection Law. For further information please review schools Data Protection policy published on schools website.