

Maplewell Hall School



Exam Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Policy

(adopted from Exams Office template)

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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'. (AARA¹, 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'.

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

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AARA](#) 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 Maplewell Hall 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**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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 SENCo (or equivalent role) 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. (¹AARA 4.2)

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

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 a disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **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 SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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.

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.

This policy can be found in the Teacher share area Policies sub folder Examination Policies and on the school website. A hard copy is kept in the centres Exams office.

This 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 7.3.

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

Level 7 Postgraduate Award of proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA)

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 head of centre is responsible for:

- the quality of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within the centre; and
- the appointment of assessors, checking the qualifications of those assessing candidates satisfying themselves that a professional does have the required level of competency and training (e.g. photocopy of certificate or printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration)
- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.

As set out in JCQ AARA 7.3

Reporting the appointment of assessors

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by SENCo (or equivalent role).

Make full reference to AARA 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

The centre will:

- Ensure that learners will have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) in an accessible format and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process will include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s). The centre's assessment will identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations/assessments;
- Ensure that where a student with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor as appointed by the head of centre;
- Assist the awarding bodies in the discharge of their duty to make reasonable adjustments by requesting access arrangements, where required, and effectively implementing those arrangements once approved;

The term **Additional Learning Need** is used as an umbrella term to incorporate ALL students known to be receiving intervention Learning Support provision including those pupils identified as having SEND.

Disability Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as a '*physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities*'.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND/ALN and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate.

Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.'

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 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any 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 SENCo (or equivalent role) or Exams Officer prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved, will obtain a candidate's consent through them completing a candidate personal data consent form.

The SENCo (or equivalent role)/Access Arrangements Coordinator (AAC) submits any applications to AAO in line with the JCQ requirements as set out in AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) & 6 (Modified papers).

The SENCo will 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). (AARA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

An AAO approval is not required for some arrangements/adjustments therefore we as a centre get to decide on these. These arrangements/adjustments are determined by teacher feedback, evidence provided through a candidate's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or medical letters, this will also need to be confirmed as the candidate's normal way of working in lessons, in class tests and mock exams. The evidence will be held on file and be summarised in a 'file note' that will be held on file for inspection purposes.

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.

This policy can be found in the Teacher share area Policies sub folder Examination Policies and on the school website. A hard copy is kept in the centres Exams office.

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 will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).

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 5.16)

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.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would 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)