



ALLESTREE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

ACCESS ARRANGMENTS POLICY

Reviewed & Updated: L Berridge
May / 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mrs Gemma Penny
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	Miss Leanne Berridge
Exams officer	Mrs Kerry Eaton
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs Tim Barker/Acting SENCo Mrs Kathryn Siviter

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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'. (1AA, 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'. (1AA, 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 Allestree Woodlands 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. (¹AA₂ 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.

The Equalities policy can be found on the school website and as a hard copy in the examination office.

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.

for 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)

Tim Barker (SENCO) has Specialist Assessor Award Level 7 from Communicate Ed (Sept 2017)

The assessment process

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

No external assessor is currently utilised.

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 Centre's SENDCO is a qualified assessor and undertakes exam access assessments. See preceding section for qualification details.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Should Allestree Woodlands utilise an external Assessor, their qualifications would be held centrally in the exams office and in individual student AA files.

This is not applicable for this cohort.

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

The SENDCo gathers evidence to develop a full learning profile and detailed picture of need, including information from teaching staff, the student, parents and other professionals where appropriate. If a substantial need is identified, then the SENDCo will arrange for appropriate assessment of the student. (AA, sections 7.5 and 7.6)

CQ regulations state that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process an application. However, SENDCos 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.

Any candidate entering as a private candidate will already be known to the school, as we only accept ex-students. We will therefore be aware of any access arrangements as they will have been conducted whilst the student was at school. (GR, section 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENDCo gathers information and evidence from teachers throughout the school year, including lesson observations, teacher feedback forms; pastoral information; student grade cards; discussions with the student and parents; discussions with external agencies; and from internal tests and exams.

If an independent assessor contacts the centre regarding student assessment, then the school and assessor must work together to gain evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo. (AA, section 7.5)

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JQC 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.

Applications are processed as closed to the beginning of the course as possible by the SENDCo and AAF. Form 8 and evidence are kept on file in the exams office/AAT office. For applications which are not approved, as they require Awarding Body approval, evidence is submitted via AAO. The exams manager will liaise with the SENDCo/AAT regarding the ordering of modified papers.

The SENDCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

The SENDCo must complete the Data protection confirmation and the Personal data consent form prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For centre delegated arrangements/adjustments, evidence of need is gathered and kept on file, including a concise form on centre headed paper, signed and dated by the SENDCo, confirming the need for the arrangements.

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.

The location of the Word Processor Policy is on the school website. There is a hard copy available in the 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 (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the SENDCo.

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](#))

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 SENDCo 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)