



**GREATFIELDS SCHOOL**

# **Access Arrangements Policy**

## **2024/2025**

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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'. ([AARA 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'. ([AARA Definitions](#))

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

\*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 Greatfields 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...

(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 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 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. ([AARA 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.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AARA](#)

## General principles

The head of centre will appoint a SENCo and EAL staff to coordinate the access arrangement process in the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidate with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or injury.

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AARA](#) (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 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 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.

This can be found here: [Equality policy](#)

**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<sup>†</sup>, 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...

<sup>†</sup>for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR section 5.4](#))

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](#), section 7.3.

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

[Kiran Bhargal Certification](#)

## **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 certifications for the assessors have been verified by the Head of centre and the SENCo lead and are maintained in the Exams Department. The assessors attend the yearly training for Assessing for Access Arrangements updates which entails any updates from the JCQ

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

A full educational report is required and carried out by the assessor with whom we have an established relationship with.

Appropriately qualified staff carry out any in-house assessments; each is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations and attend yearly update courses. The qualifications are held in the SEND Department.

We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, which will build on previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils.

As evidence (teacher feedback and pupil performance data) becomes available, SEND staff meet with pupils to discuss next steps. An assessment may be conducted to discover the pupils learning profile. The learning profile does not just drive the assessment process but is important for the young person to develop their own learning style as they cope with independent learning. The assessments which are administered vary depending on the young person, their age, previous assessments, and the purpose of the assessment.

The range of assessments which are available to the assessors are:

- DASH 11 – 16
- GLA Baseline tests
- Internal Teacher Assessments test.

The administration of the assessments is internally moderated yearly.

Further information and outline of processes can be found here [SEND information report](#) and on our website.

### Picture of 'holistic picture of need', and normal way of working.

Prior to an assessment, Section A of Form 8 is filled out by the SENCo Lead. All assessment results are collated and documented on the Assessors Assessment Form to support the need. All Assessments for the JCQ application must be conducted by one of the assessors the school has named.

#### **Gathering evidence of Need**

Gathering evidence to confirm normal way of working. The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the pupil in Greatfields, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- in internal classroom tests/examinations;
- mock examinations.

All teaching staff at Greatfields have a responsibility to provide evidence to the SENCo to support the normal way of working within the pupil's lesson or activity. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment. The SENCo must gather information regarding the temporary injury or impairment to 'paint a picture'.

*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.*

An independent assessor **must** contact the centre and ask for 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 SENCO. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCO. (AARA 7.5)

## **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, 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.

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 and the EAL Lead is responsible for submitting the application to AAO, and this can happen throughout the year before the deadline which is published by JCQ. Where they are not able to make application, the Exam Officer will make the application. The SENCO keeps detailed records for inspection purpose electronically, and if required will have print out ready. The essential information file includes Data Protection consent form signed by candidate, and the Data protection confirmation by the SENCO, candidate approved online application, evidence of need, medical evidence where required and the assessor's qualification copy.

Applications are processed again for A Levels following GCSE examinations. Access Arrangements will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangements. Students joining in Year 12 are assessed at the start of the academic year to determine the support they need before autumn series. The SENCO makes the application for modified paper. A tracker on Teams is used as the central communication tool between SENCO, EAL and Exams officer with live updates.

*The SENCO **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. (AARA 8.6)*

### **Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Teachers and pupils can refer pupils/themselves given any concerns re handwriting, concentration/focus and needs pertaining to reading. We continually explore pupil need. We seek teacher and pupil feedback which helps to make informed decisions. This information is then used to grant centre delegated arrangements. All pupils and teachers complete an exam reflection where we discuss the awarded arrangements and the effectiveness to determine continued use.

## **Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments**

### **Word Processor Policy (Exams)**

#### **Word processor policy**

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 pupil sitting an exam may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the pupil's needs and not simply because this is the pupil's preferred way of working. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a pupil because he/she now prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the pupil's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the pupil's needs. In order to use a word processor in both internal and external exams, the pupil must show a significant and substantial need.

The example of the type of evidence for the use of a word processor in exams are one of more of the following:

- The handwriting is so messy and a high percentage of words are illegible so that someone unfamiliar with the handwriting cannot read it fluently and easily.
- The pupil experiences extreme discomfort when handwriting at length and has a medical condition diagnosed and confirmed by a practising medical professional.
- The pupil has legible handwriting but makes omissions and cannot order his/her ideas correctly so that the sense gets lost and is difficult to decipher and will significantly impact the outcome.
- The content and expression of the typed work is of a significant better quality than handwritten work.

#### **Evidence is required in all cases.**

Pupils using Word Processors at Greatfields, will be required to use the school's equipment in all examinations. The computers used for this purpose will be configured to ensure spell and grammar check are disabled unless they qualify for use of these tools within the JCQ guidelines. All pupils allocated use of Word Processor for examinations purposes are seated in the IT suites together.

A centre **must** have a policy on the use of word processors... A member of the centre's senior leadership team **must** produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. (AARA 5.8)

### **Separate rooming arrangement Policy**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate room which is purpose for small groups with similar needs is made by SENCo and EAL.

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)
- a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Pupils' learning profiles and progress are reviewed to establish substantial and long-term impairments paired with their normal way of working within the centre as it relates to the need of separate invigilation. Teacher and pupil input is sought as is feedback from the Exam's Officer. Normal way of working within the centre is documented by teachers and SENCo. At Greatfields we regard n about examinations as not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. One-to-one invigilation and alternative rooming would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as seizures, Tourettes or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) 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, emotional and mental health needs. (AARA 5.16)