



Policy Statement  
on  
**ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

Revised:

Annually

Date approved by Governing Body:

October 2025

## Key Staff involved in this policy

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## **Rationale**

This policy explains the actions taken to ensure *inclusion* for all students who are eligible for examination access arrangements. Access Arrangements are a form of additional learning support for pupils with a special educational need or disability during assessments.

In order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) issues a set of annual regulations called *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020*. The Equality Act 2010 and JCQ regulations should be read in conjunction with the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

In the event that students study an alternative qualification with a board not governed by the JCQ, or which require additional processes, the SENCo will ensure any access arrangement authorised with the JCQ is replicated by following the specific Exam Board's guidelines for access arrangements e.g. BTEC, CIE, BCS and EAL.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

SEND Policy

ACES Trust SENDA Policy

## **Aims**

Hinchingbrooke School will ensure that students identified as having a special educational (SEN) or additional learning needs (ALN) are provided with and prepared for access arrangements that allow them to:

- Access the assessment at the same level as their peers.
- Demonstrate their knowledge/skills without changing the demands of the assessment.

Access arrangements meet the particular needs of an individual disabled 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.

Access Arrangements are agreed and planned for before an assessment, test or exam.

## **Procedures**

### **Student Identification**

Pupils at Hinchingbrooke School are rigorously monitored as part of the Hinchingbrooke School SEN and Disability Policy. Students are identified as having a possible need using:

- Cognitive Attainment Tests in Year 7
- Lucid Screening tools in Year 7 & 9
- Medical information supported by relevant evidence
- Specialist diagnostic testing that indicates a significant learning need
- Diagnosis of learning disability that indicates a need for exam access arrangements
- Referrals to SEND from teaching staff for diagnostic testing / review

### **Role of the SENDCo and Access Arrangements Co-ordinator:**

- Ensure that SEND Governor, Head of Centre, SLT, Examinations Manager and authorised assessors familiarise themselves with the contents of the JCQ Regulations, *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties*, *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* that is updated annually.
- Lead on the access arrangements process within his/her centre and is fully supported by teaching staff and members of the SLT.
- Work with the teaching staff, support staff and exam office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.
- Is responsible for evidencing and assessing a candidate's access arrangements.
- Will inform students and the parents of students who need access arrangements that they are in place.
- Inform subject teachers of candidates with SEND or disabilities of any special arrangements that individual candidates will need, during the course and in any assessments/exams.
- Monitors the use of the arrangements during internal test and mock exams.
- Is responsible for ensuring that applications for Access Arrangements conform to the JCQ Access Arrangements Regulations and that all applications are appropriately evidenced and each application will meet JCQ audit requirements during inspections.
- Ensure all procedures are followed to ensure students sitting an exam with a board either not governed by the JCQ or which require additional arrangements e.g. BTEC, LIBF, CIE, and EAL, are provided with an appropriate access arrangement to reflect that provided by the JCQ.

### **Role of Exams Manager**

- To oversee and co-ordinate all examination procedures.
- To organise the seating for Access Arrangement candidates.
- To organise and train invigilators and support personnel.
- To oversee support for access arrangement candidates as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations.

### **Role of Teaching and Support Staff**

- Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that access arrangements are in place for all identified students at all assessments, including formal and non-formal exams and tests
- Evidence must be kept of the use and benefit of the arrangements on the student's record as evidence of '*normal way of working*' and '*history of need and support*'.
- Subject Teachers in need of support during assessment periods should contact their Head of Department prior to the assessment with a request for Teaching Assistant or technology support.

### Evidence necessary to award Access Arrangements

- Pupils requiring Access Arrangements will be identified as in 3.1.
- Pupils are normally identified prior to the formal exam years and appropriate adjustments put in place with suitable evidence from teaching staff during lessons and tests in the years 7 - 9.
- The arrangements put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate within the school:
  - In the classroom
  - Working in small groups for literacy or reading and/or writing
  - Literacy support lessons
  - Literacy intervention strategies
  - In internal school tests/examinations
  - Mock examinations

This is referred to as '*the normal way of working*' and evidence will be required as part of the application for formal arrangements made at the beginning of either KS3 or KS4.

- Access arrangements will be formalised in Year 10 and parents will be informed should their child qualify. If there is an identified medical or physical need for access arrangements prior to Year 10, these will be implemented as appropriate.
- If a candidate has never made use of the arrangements granted to him/her during internal school tests and examinations, including mock examinations, then the SEND team may consider withdrawing the arrangement, as outlined in the JCQ guidance; as use of the access arrangement is not the candidate's normal way of working.
- Formal requests for Exam Access Arrangements will be made in Year 9 for Key Stage 4 and Year 12 for Key Stage 5. If the student remains within the examination centre and needs do not change a specialist Assessor completes Form 8RF. This includes all students qualifying for an AA who do not have an EHCP or complex needs.
- The formal application made to JCQ must show a history of support and provision and the evidence will be collected throughout the appropriate Key Stages.
  - As part of the formal application made to the JCQ, the SENCo / Exam Access Co-ordinator will collate the evidence and '*paint a holistic picture of need*' confirming at least two of the below:
    - Arrangements made for Key Stage 2 SATS and assessments
    - Comments, observations and evidence from teaching staff
    - Intervention strategies (e.g. Pen Portraits or APDR documentation, SEN support) in place for the candidate
    - Screening tests results

- Diagnostic test results from JCQ approved tests (by a centre approved and appropriately qualified assessor)
  - Normal way of working in the classroom
  - Internal school examinations/mock examinations papers and exam invigilator supporting documentation.
- This information will be transferred to the JCQ Form 8 for submission in Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 5.
- JCQ Form 8 will be signed by the Assistant Principal SENDCo confirming;
  - that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance and access arrangements are approved.
- A fully completed JCQ Form 8 will be signed by the Assistant Principal SENDCo, SENCO or Exams Access Arrangements Assessor conforming to the JCQ Regulations. This will be held at the school and made available to JCQ inspectors during onsite audits.
- In cases where an EHCP/ Medical diagnosis in line with SEN Area of need is in place the SEND Team will use this information to complete the Form 9 and further testing is not required.
- When Access Arrangements are approved, all candidates are required to be informed that their data will be shared with JCQ.
  - In order for a student to receive an access arrangement, the key principle is that the SEND Team can show a *history of support and provision*.
  - The JCQ Regulations are very clear that 'the arrangement is not suddenly being granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations'. If a candidate has shown no sign of requiring support and has successfully sat their exams independently, it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement. In any case of malpractice, candidate results may be withdrawn and depending on the extent of the problem, a school may lose its registration as an exam centre.
  - If a letter is received from a medical specialist requesting access arrangements for a student the JCQ regulations state that in order for such an access arrangement to be awarded the school has to have evidence that the student has historically received the extra support.

### **Temporary access arrangements**

- In exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances, it may be possible to apply for temporary access arrangements. For example, breaking a writing hand just before an exam. In these cases, late applications can be made but they should be supported with relevant medical evidence.

### **Exam Anxiety**

- Hinchingsbrook School recognises that some pupils suffer from exam anxiety and every effort will be made to try and support pupils through these difficulties.
- Exam anxiety on its own does not qualify as a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act and therefore, does not qualify for access arrangements.

## Alternative Room Provision

**Please note:** Alternative rooming arrangements is sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room – a room for a smaller group of candidates which could contain 40 plus students (this qualifies as an alternative room).

Suitable rooming provision will be provided to accommodate the candidate's formal approved Access Arrangement: this will not necessarily entail alternative rooming provision

Students who complete exams in alternative rooming (a different room from the main cohort) again need to have this as their normal way of working. This means students complete all formal subject assessments in an alternative room throughout the school year.

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 Additional Learning Support (ALS) Lead/SENCo.

The decision will be based on whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect on:

- The candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA, section 5.16)
- Medical condition that could adversely affect either the individual or disturb a cohort in a large venue
- A student's medical condition which could require outside intervention and require easy access to medical personnel
- Student does not access normal school and is either accommodated at the Gateway or taught at home by an outside agency/home tutor due to behaviour or physical condition which could cause a disturbance to others

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 formal school exams 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)

## Word processor

It is important to state from the outset that a word processor cannot be simply granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.



Use of a word processor has to also represent a reasonable adjustment within the *Equality Act 2010* and conform to the definition of special needs within the *SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years*. These pupils will be identified through the *Hinchingbrooke Disability Policy (exams) 2019*.

### **Use of a Laptop/iPad**

For some pupils identified within the school policy above, it is recognised that a word processor may be the most appropriate method of organising and presenting their work. Hinchingbrooke school cannot provide laptops to pupils for use in school but can allow them, if a need is identified, to bring their own laptop into school to use. Pupil Premium pupils may be eligible to have a school laptop loaned to them if they have an identified need.

- Once a need has been established, in order to ensure that typing is efficient, accurate and of sufficient speed to be able to cope in class, typing classes are recommended. Typing should be proficient 15 - 40 words per minute and faster than handwriting.
- Typing speeds will be reviewed to ensure that it is faster than writing.
- If the pupil uses an iPad they must use the keyboard extension: normal way of working is evidenced by typing in class.
- The SEND Team will officially authorise the use of a laptop/iPad when:
  - 1) The pupil can demonstrate that they have sufficient typing speed
  - 2) Can demonstrate they know how to store their work
  - 3) Demonstrate the laptop/iPad is backed up on a regular basis. The cost of losing a term/years' work through a computer crash, particularly close or during public examinations, can be very considerable
  - 4) Parents are expected to work with pupils to ensure that work is backed up regularly

### **Purchasing Advice**

- The basic requirement is that any laptop parents buy is capable of running the latest version of Microsoft Office
- It is advised to try to minimise the size and weight of the laptop as the pupil will need to carry the laptop around with them
- Battery life needs to be sufficient to last the whole school day as the pupil may not be able to charge their laptop during the course of the day and it is unlikely they will be sitting near a plug and be able to work on the laptop whilst charging.
- A good protective bag must be provided for the laptop
- Parents/carers should ensure that they have adequate insurance to cover any loss or damage to the laptop
- Hinchingbrooke School will not accept any liability for damage to the laptop whilst on school premises
- Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals/ Pupil Premium may qualify for assistance towards the laptop and associated expenses

### **Limitations on Laptop or iPad use**

A subject teacher has the right to veto the use of a laptop/iPad in particular situations:

- Where its use presents a health and safety hazard, for example in subjects such as Chemistry, DT, Art etc

- Where particular exercises should not be done with computer assistance. e.g. maps and diagrams
- Where calculations are required without the assistance of computer functions, such as in Maths or Science
- If an individual pupil, in any lessons is using a laptop/iPad in such a way as to cause a distraction or disturbance to the learning of others
- Some school homework may still be written, to support the development of handwriting skills
- Some assessment objectives involve writing and a laptop/iPad may not be used in these situations

#### **Use of a laptop during school tests and exams**

- During internal school tests, a pupil may use their own laptop subject to agreement by the relevant Head of Department. During testing all functions on the word Processor such as spell check, thesaurus and grammar check should be turned off.

#### **Use of a laptop during Public Examinations**

- Candidates should be aware that only a desktop computer or laptop can be used during public or formal examinations
- All computers for formal public examinations will be provided by the school
- All school computers provided for public examinations will be rigorously checked by school IT Technicians and appropriate sections of software programmes disabled prior to the exam
- Any part of the word processor that automatically corrects writing such as spell check, grammar and thesaurus will not be allowed
- Candidates should be aware that the assessment objective of any course will not be changed to meet the candidate's needs. If the assessment objective involves writing then a computer cannot be used
- Further information on the use of word processors in written exams can be found in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* (commonly known as the JCQ 'ICE' booklet)

#### **Bi-Lingual Dictionaries and 25% Extra Time**

- Can be used for GCSE qualifications only and only in subjects determined by the ICE book
- Where the first language is not English, Irish or Welsh a bilingual dictionary may be used in the exam.
- Pupils whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh and have been resident in the UK for less than three years at the time of the examinations may be considered for up to 25% extra time providing that all of the following exist:
  - The candidates first language is not English, Irish or Welsh
  - The candidate entered the United Kingdom within three years of the examinations with no prior knowledge of the English Language
  - English is not one of the languages spoken in the family home
  - Prior to their arrival in the United Kingdom the candidate was not prepared for or entered for IGCSE qualifications where the question papers were set in English

- Prior to their arrival in the United Kingdom the candidate was not prepared in English for any other qualifications e.g. IELTS qualification
- The candidate has to refer to the bi-lingual translation dictionary so often that examination time is used for this purpose, delaying the answering of questions
- Bi-lingual dictionaries cannot be used for GCSE exams in RE, English Language, English Lit, Geography, History and MFL exams, testing one of the languages of the dictionary or similar i.e. Portuguese Dictionary in a Spanish exam

#### **Disclaimer**

- The above procedures reflect *the JCQ Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, with effect from 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026 (JCQEAA)*. This policy is intended to function as a convenient reference point for staff and parents, and as such does not guarantee complete accuracy.
- The Director of SEND will always refer to the JCQEAA and all decisions will be made based on the aforementioned Regulations not this policy if appropriate.