



Blessed George Napier RC School

Access arrangements policy

2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	October 2024

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 particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.”*

([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 a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the need 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’. ([AA](#) Definitions)

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Blessed George Napier School has a written policy which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangement process and is complying with its *“...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...”*

JCQ *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, 5.4 This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

The policy is maintained and held by the Exams Officer/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 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. ([AA](#) 4.2)

This 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 [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 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, 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 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.

- Blessed George Napier School Equalities Policy (Exams) is available electronically on the school website, central staff share file ~ Policies and hard copies are available with the EO, DH and SENCo
- The access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

“The head of centre/senior leadership team will...

recognise its duties towards disabled 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 the England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect.” [GR section 5.4]

The Assessment Process

Assessments are carried out by an internal assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3

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

- Miss Alison Williams AMBDA/APC
- Mrs Heli Laiho-Murdoch BA (Hons), PGCE, PGSpecEd, MBA, MAEdL, CPT3A

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

- At the point that an assessor is 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.
- Assessor must provide original copies of certificates of qualifications to HoC who will check the relevance of the qualifications according to [AA](#) 7.3 *Appointment of assessors*. Copies of qualifications will be kept on file by the SENCo and EO with candidate records.

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

To ensure correct procedures are followed in accordance with [GR](#) 5.4, Blessed George Napier School will ensure that:-

- Candidates are identified by the SENCo from the SEN register, CAT's tests (completed in Year 7), referrals from teaching/support staff and performance in tests/mocks. Referrals are submitted to the SENCo with supporting evidence of NWOW and evidence of support and adjustments provided in classroom work and tests.
- Section A of Form 8 is completed using this evidence prior to testing. The in-house assessor will use age appropriate nationally standardised and up-to-date tests appropriate to the individual. Results will be recorded in section C of Form 8. [AA 7.5](#)
- Application for access arrangements in exams will be processed at the start of the course (normally Year 9/10).
- Eligibility for access arrangements in exams will be communicated to candidate, parent teaching/support staff and the Exams Officer by the SENCo to facilitate the appropriate arrangements.

Recording evidence of need –

Picture of need/normal way of working

- School forms (store with hard copies of this policy and available for teaching staff from staff share and hard copies available in the staff room) will be used to record evidence of NWOW. Completed evidence will be stored with Form 8 in the Learning Base. Copies of Form 8 will also be kept in the Exams Office for applications for non-JCQ qualifications.
- Only Form 8 is acceptable for online applications with the exception of candidates with EHCP where in addition to the plan, a substantial picture of evidence of need, must be available for inspection.
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements for exams and cannot be used to process an application using access arrangements online. However, a privately commissioned report could form part of the required 'picture of need' but must be instigated following consultation with the SENCo. Applications for access arrangements in exams will only be made following further testing and if there is sufficient 'picture of need' supported by school-based evidence and data.
- Students with a medical/psychological condition for which they have specialist support and who may require access arrangements in exams, (both centre delegated and online applications) will be required to provide 'up to date' medical evidence from a consultant or similar professional, (a GP's letter is not sufficient). These access arrangements will be kept under constant review.
- 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 the 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. [\[AA 7.5.3\]](#)

Gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*.

Evidence of NWOW is gathered from teaching/support staff to show support and intervention required:-

- *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.*
- *mock examinations.*

Questionnaires are gathered from subject teachers confirming and supporting the need for reader/scribe/extra time. Teachers are instructed to supply copies of classroom tests; copies of mock tests are kept where access arrangements have been used where candidates are instructed to complete extra time in green ink. Reports from supporting TA and invigilators are kept with mock scripts.

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

Processing access arrangements

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 listed 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 any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Candidate Personal data consent from and the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, is completed prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Applications for access arrangements are complete on-line by the centre assessor and the Exams Officer. Once completed, copies of the application are kept securely in the Exams Office and the Learning base with the candidate's file which in addition contains the evidence of NWOW, test results, signed data notice and any other relevant information. Candidates and parents are informed whether their application has been successful or not. The central file is updated by the centre assessor/SENCo and also a record of the access arrangement plus any relevant notes are added to the MIS system to provide information to invigilators during exams.

Centre-delegated access arrangements/adjustments

Candidates eligible for centre delegated access arrangements are referred by teaching/support staff. The SENCo in consultation with Centre Assessor and Exams Officer will organise appropriate provision. Evidence of need, where appropriate, is stored securely with the candidates file in the Learning base and Exams Office. The central file is updated by the centre assessor and a record is added to the MIS system.

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 Word Processor policy is attached to the end of this policy.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo and Exams Officer.

The decision will be based on: -

“Whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect and reflects the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre.” (AA 5.16)

Alternative rooming will only be provided in circumstances where the candidate’s difficulties are established within the centre, and it is the normal way of working for a candidate to work in isolation. Separate invigilation will only be provided where there are established difficulties within the centre or there is current ongoing evidence to substantiate a long-term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

Arrangements to do exams in a smaller exam room, or with other specific seating arrangement, will be decided based on the following guidelines:

1. Students with a medical/psychological condition for which they have specialist support may be considered for specific seating arrangements, including a room rather than the Hall, if required. This should also have been their “normal way of working” over time leading up to the examination period. They will be required to provide ‘up to date’ medical evidence from a consultant or similar professional, (a GP’s letter is not sufficient). These access arrangements will be kept under constant review.
2. Students whose “normal way of working” involves specific seating arrangements across the board in lessons and / or doesn’t attend hall events e.g., assembly, may qualify to have a similar provision for exams (SEN/HOY will hold the paperwork and evidence of this)
3. Students with other difficulties, for whom we consider invigilation in a smaller room or specific seating arrangements to be an appropriate and reasonable adjustment in light of those difficulties, and for whom evidence over time has been collected and is held by SEN/HOY, will be seated accordingly.
4. Any student who has an extenuating circumstance that occurs in the lead up to, or during, the exam period that is likely to impact on their usual exam performance, will be considered under the usual ‘special consideration.’ arrangements by EO, evidence collected and the exam board advised if JCQ criteria are met. Seating arrangements may also be varied at the last minute on these occasions and in consultation with the student.
5. The candidate’s difficulties must be established within the centre (chapter 5 paragraph 5.16 page 69 [AA](#) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.
6. Separate invigilation must reflect 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, mental or emotional needs.”
7. **Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.**
(AA section 5.16)