

Testwood School

Access Arrangement Policy

Key Responsibility area:	Alison Wheeler
Last Review:	February 2023
Next Review:	February 2024



Revision History

Version	Date	Amendments	Initials
V1.0	05.01.22		JB
V1.1	11.01.23	Revised Dates and AW replaces CSi (responsibility of policy)	JB

The policy is divided into sections:

1. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?
2. Purpose of the policy
3. General principles
4. Equalities policy (exams)
5. The assessment process

The qualifications of the current assessor

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

6. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements and adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Centre-delegated access arrangements/adjustments

7. Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word processor Policy (exams) **see separate policy**

Separate invigilation policy

8. Appendices

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.

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. (For example a candidate using a yellow keyboard due to being visually impaired) This 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
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 then not 'reasonable'

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Testwood School has a written record which clearly shows Testwood School 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 SENDCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangement candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all of the essential information that is required to be help according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure the processes 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 Testwood School 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 the barriers to an assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being paced 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 SENDCo 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
- They must always be approved before an examination or assessment
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate at Testwood School
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangements/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 for identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mobility impairment mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

Definition of disability:

Section 6 of the Equality Act 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'.

Identification:

- In line with JCQ regulations, Testwood School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment, which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working. Appropriate evidence of need will be available for inspection.
- Identifying the need for access arrangements within Testwood School, students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 and 5 are identified as early as possible in KS3. At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to Quality First Teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments. Formal assessments for Access Arrangements takes place in year 9 during the first half of Autumn Term.
- Students who have had access arrangements at KS2 are screened for exam access arrangements at this stage. Although they may have received access arrangements at KS2, it does not necessarily mean that they automatically receive

it at KS4 exams because their needs may have changed. AA Policy 6 For example, a student who had a reader at KS2 may not qualify for a reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA section 7.3.

The qualifications of the current assessor

Mrs Julie Spillar - OCR Level 7 Diploma in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) (Sept 2007)

On-line Webinar for JCQ changes for 2020/21

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is employed at Testwood School, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against current requirements in AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking an y assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualifications of the assessor

- Heads of Centre must satisfy themselves that a professional does have the required level of competence and training
- The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment of equivalent to Level 7
- A head of Centre will appoint a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss
- All assessors must have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements/Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved
- They must be familiar with the Equalities Act 2010
- The assessor should ideally be employed in Testwood School
- **A privately commissioned assessment** carried out without prior consultation with Testwood School cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access Arrangements online.
- The SENDCO must provide the assessor with at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

- Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by Testwood School, the head of Testwood School or SENDCo should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer
- The SENDCo and assessor working within Testwood School should always carefully consider privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within Testwood School and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.

Reporting the appointment of assessor(s)

- SENDCo and the exams officer hold the file for inspection purposes to demonstrate the evidence that the assessor is suitable qualified

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

- The SENDCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by Testwood School's appointed assessor
- Before the assessment, the SENDCo must provide the assessor with background information (picture of need) They will then work together to ensure a joined up and consistent process
- The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy/cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments, they must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application
- Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores must be used, where published
- The candidate's chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age.
- Results must be provided in standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores must be converted into standard
- Scores.

Reading Skills

- Reading comprehension: For candidates potentially requiring a Language Modifier (see section 5.11 in AA) reading comprehension must be assessed using a recognised test or text or sentence comprehension
- Reading speed: a candidate with a history of reading difficulties, whose reading accuracy (at single word level), or reading comprehension, is within normal limits for his/her age, may read slowly because he/she:
 - i) Takes longer than expected to decode the words, leading to slow reading (slow reading speed)

- ii) Needs to re-read text many times to absorb its meaning (slow reading comprehension speed)
- There are various ways of assessing test level reading speed
 - i) A test which assesses speed at a text level (known as reading rate or reading speed)
 - ii) A test which combines test level speed and accuracy (sometimes known as reading fluency)
 - iii) A test that assesses the time taken to both read the text and to answer the questions on what has been read. The test must provide a score for reading comprehension speed, not just reading comprehension
- Where a candidate reads independently, text level assessments of reading speed may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time. The results will be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 under 'Reading Speed'
- Tests which measure single word reading speed and efficiency are not appropriate in this context. However, they may contribute to cognitive processing measures for extra time, as recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 under cognitive processing or in 'other relevant information'.

Writing Skills

- A scribe, word processor with the spell check enabled, or speech recognition technology will be allowed in certain subjects when a candidate's impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect.
- For examination purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as the candidate having:
 - i) A below average standardised spelling accuracy score (a standardised score of 84 or less) with unrecognisable spelling attempts
 - ii) A below average standardised score for writing speed (a standardised score of 84 or less)
- In some cases, the candidate's writing is illegible or grammatically incomprehensible, but improves significantly when a scribe/laptop is used. If these difficulties are not evidenced by a below average standardised spelling accuracy score, or a below average standardised score for writing speed, Access Arrangements online will not approve the application. The SENDCo may then decide to refer the application to the awarding body/bodies
- Where a candidate writes by hand, an assessment of writing speed may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time. The result will be recorded with Part 2 of Form 8 under 'Writing Speed'

Cognitive Processing

- Different areas of cognitive assessments would include:
 - i) Short-term/working verbal memory

- ii) Short-term/working visual memory (short-term verbal and visual memory may be combined within in a composite score)
- iii) Phonological awareness
- iv) Phonological memory
- v) Phonological processing speed/rapid naming
- vi) Visual processing
- vii) Visual/motor processing
- viii) Other measures as determined appropriate for the candidate by the assessor, for example, word reading fluency/sight word efficiency, decoding fluency/non-word reading efficiency, associational fluency
- ix) Mathematical processing - the time taken to process maths concepts. A times assessment of mathematical computation Or attainment is not acceptable. An assessment of mathematical

processing may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time in Maths exams only. The mathematical processing score must be below average. This cannot contribute to the evidence for 25% extra time in exams other than in maths.

- x) Where a candidate has cognitive processing difficulties which have a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their speed of working, 25% extra time may be awarded. These will be demonstrated by tests which result in two below average standardised scores of below 84 or less or, one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89), which relate to two different areas of speed of working. This may include two different areas of cognitive processing.

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

- Before an assessment, at Testwood either the teachers or learning support assistants will alert the SENDCO using the 'Area of Concern' form or from termly analysis of progress data the SENDCO will contact both teachers and learning support assistants to gather a 'holistic picture of need'
- All candidates will then be assessed using the process above in the light of this picture of need.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements and adjustment s requiring awarding body approval

- Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangements approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. **This will only allow a maximum of 26 months.** This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included.

Modified Papers

- Centres must order these in advance of the specific examination series.

- These are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. Modification of papers involves additional resources and so therefore Testwood School is required to provide the awarding body with an early notification that a candidate requires this.

Modified Enlarged papers

- These are only produced when orders are made by the deadline. As candidate's needs are on-going and long-term and modification of printed material reflects their normal way of working within the classroom, as assessment of the candidate is not required to determine their need for modified papers
- These are used for candidates who cannot read a standard exam paper. This then removes elements of visual complexity without changing the demands of the assessment.
- Some candidates with a severe visual impairment may benefit from using an electronic or optical magnifier with a modified enlarged paper – this does not need to be applied for.
- Testwood must apply for an A4 modified 18 point bold in a non-interactive electronic format, the awarding body should be contacted.

Coloured /enlarged paper

AQA and Pearson centres

- Where a candidate requires a question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3, Testwood School will download a PDF copy of the standard question paper from 2AQA or Edexcel Online one hour before the awarding body 's published starting time for the examinations

CCEA, OCR and WJEC centres

- Where a candidate requires a question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3, Testwood School will order via Access Arrangements online a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper
- Alternatively Testwood School will open the packet in the secure room within 90 minutes if the awarding body's published starting time for the exam.
 - i) The paper will be copied and enlarged from A4 to A3
 - ii) The question paper will be copied onto coloured paper
 - iii) The question paper will be copied with single sided print

Non-Interactive electronic (PDF) question papers

- Non-interactive question papers can be read on-screen, but not typed into. This is required for those:
 - i) Who require a computer reader
 - ii) Have a long-term or substantial visual impairment and they prefer to read on-screen, rather than on paper and this is their normal way of working

- Testwood School will maintain the integrity and security of non-interactive electronic (PDF) question papers
- Testwood School will ensure only authorise members of the centre staff have access to these papers
- Testwood School will not undertake further modification to these papers (for example converting from a PDF to Word).
- Testwood School will not use software to completely re-format the text and remove diagrams

Ordering papers and applying for access arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment, no later than the deadlines below

Exam Series	Access Arrangement	Final Deadline
Autumn 2022	Modified papers	20 th September 2022
November 2022	All other access arrangements	1st November 2022
January 2023	Modified papers	4 th October 2022
January 2023	All other access arrangements	21 st October 2022
June 2023	Modified papers	31 st January 2023
June 2023	All other access arrangements	31 st March 2023

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

See separate Word Processor Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within Testwood School will be made by the SENDCo

The decision will be based on:

- Whether the candidate has an established difficulty and long-term need (identified, assessed and documented) medical condition which has an adverse effect (see below)
- It is the candidate's normal way of working within Testwood School for all mock examinations
 - i) Social, emotional and mental health needs – for example Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Mental Health conditions – this is known to the Year Leader and the SENDCo

‘Nervousness, low-level anxiety or being worried about examinations is NOT sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre’.

This policy was approved by the Trustees and will be reviewed annually.

Date policy agreed: February 2023

Date of review: February 2024

Signature of Chair of Trustees: