



## Access Arrangements Policy

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## Rationale and Foundation

- 1 Alderbrook's Policy for Access Arrangements supports and facilitates the school's aim to create a learning environment in which every student can fulfil his or her full potential and demonstrate this in examinations. This policy is based on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document. This policy should be read in conjunction with Alderbrook's Exam Specific Supplement to Alderbrook Accessibility Plan, which outlines the implementation of Access Arrangements at Alderbrook, and focuses on roles and responsibilities of all those involved with Access Arrangements.

## What are Exam Access Arrangements?

- 2 Access Arrangements allow learners with specific needs, e.g.: special educational needs, disabilities and injuries to: access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. (JCQ 2020-21 p3).
- 3 Access Arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make '**reasonable adjustments**' for any candidate who would be at **substantial disadvantage** in comparison to someone who is not disabled. (JCQ 2020-21 p3)
- 4 The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability means '**limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people**'. Therefore, a candidate with a disability or difficulty, which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations, may qualify for access arrangements.
- 5 Thus, Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments that are put in place to ensure that all students are given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in examinations, without being disadvantaged by any learning, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience, without creating any unfair advantage, or compromising the integrity of an assessment.
- 6 Access Arrangements may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it affects the integrity of the assessment, or involves unreasonable costs or timeframes.
- 7 Access Arrangements are agreed before an assessment, and must reflect a student's 'normal way of working' within the school.

## Examples of Access Arrangements (which MUST be students' 'Normal Way of Working'):

Access Arrangement	Description
Reader / Computer Reader /Reading Pen for candidates with poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading accuracy,</li> <li>• comprehension,</li> <li>• fluency</li> <li>• Reading comprehension speed.</li> </ul>	A trained adult reads the question and any relevant text for the student (but not where the skill of reading is being assessed e.g. the reading section of the English papers) and their work, if asked.  Computer reader or Exam Reading Pen may also be allowed.
Supervised Rest Breaks	Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time taken is added to the finish time. Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.
Modified papers	Specially prepared papers, e.g. enlarged to a specific font size.
Word processor /Laptop	Use of a laptop so the student can word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks disabled.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt the student with a few permitted phrases to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refocus</li> <li>• Indicate how much time is left</li> </ul>
Extra time	Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time, depending upon area of need. Between 26 and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances.
Scribe	A trained adult writes for the student. The student dictates their answers. The scribe writes exactly as the student dictates. The student forfeits any SPAG marks, unless the student dictates the spelling of every word and signals all punctuation.
Bilingual translation dictionaries (with up to a maximum of 10% extra time in some cases)	For students who have English, Irish or Welsh as an additional language The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.
Use of colour overlays / paper	Easier for some students to track what they are reading.
Practical Assistant	Help with practical tasks, for a student with a physical difficulty, such as turning the pages in music or holding a ruler in maths.
Language modifier	An adult who has successfully completed accredited training may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a student. The Language Modifier must not explain technical or subject specific terms.
Alternative site for exams On very rare occasions	The student will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, a severe medical condition or profound psychological condition which prevents them from taking examinations within the centre. In this situation, Alderbrook will ensure that JCQ guidelines are followed with regard to conduct, procedures and staffing. We must be satisfied that the candidate is well enough to take the examination and there must be appropriate evidence of need held on file.

- 8 A reasonable adjustment may not be included in the list of available access arrangements because it may be unique to an individual.

## Temporary Arrangements

- 9 Temporary Access Arrangements may be required for a student suffering from unforeseen injury, e.g. a broken arm. In these cases, Alderbrook must be informed at the earliest possible opportunity, and a letter from a GP, consultant, or other professional detailing the problem and any arrangement deemed necessary will be arranged. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

## Evidence needed for Access Arrangements and Data Protection

- 10 Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement, depending on the arrangement required.
- 11 Once the Access Arrangement is granted, all supporting evidence will be held on file and available for inspection, by JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangement Inspectors.
- 12 A data protection notice is signed by the student, as required by JCQ. It notes that all supporting evidence is held securely and can only be accessed by JCQ Inspectors or the SEN team.

## Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

### Stage 1: Early Screening –Y7-Y8

- 13 Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified early in KS3 (Y7) and added to a provisional list. This is predominantly by referral from the Special Educational Needs department or by Subject Teachers. Information from primary schools about Access Arrangements implemented in KS2 examinations, parents, and baseline testing in Year 7 is also used. At this stage needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed.

### Stage 2: Formal Testing and application – Y9-Y12

- 14 Throughout the year, all teachers are consulted regarding any potential students who may require Access Arrangements. As per JCQ regulations, all Year 9 and Y12 Teachers, of students on the provisional Access Arrangement lists, are requested to complete the necessary JCQ forms, to be used as supporting teacher evidence. This information is normally requested for Y9 in April, so immediately after the Y9 'main' exams and for Year 12 in June, immediately after their 'main' exams.
- 15 During the summer term of Y9 or Y12, a qualified Access Arrangements Assessor will assess relevant students, using standardised tests. Applications are made whilst the students are in year 10 or year 13 and parents notified by March of that year.
- 16 The exception to this, regarding deadlines, is if students are entered for early examinations, as noted in the next section. Deadlines for Access Arrangement Applications

### Private Educational Psychologists Reports

- 17 In line with JCQ guidelines, Access Arrangements cannot be applied for on the basis of a privately commissioned assessment. External Assessors are required to contact the SENCo before carrying out the assessment. The SENCo will then provide the Assessor with any existing information about previous support and current difficulties. A student's 'normal way of working', in school, is key, and Access Arrangements will not be awarded purely on the basis of a private report.
- 18 To comply with JCQ regulation, when Alderbrook chooses to accept or reject a privately commissioned report, from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.
- 19 Medical letters will prompt an investigation, but not override the evidence seen at Alderbrook.

### Stage 3: Ensuring Access Arrangements are the student's 'normal way of working'

- 20 Appropriate Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration, where possible, in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments.

## Internal Deadlines for Access Arrangement Applications

### Year 11

- 21 The school deadline to submit evidence and request Access Arrangements for a student in Year 11 is the beginning of October half term. This allows the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any Access Arrangements. The Year 10 examinations should provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have. Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or require AAs after the deadlines. These are very much the exception and each student will be considered on a case by case basis, by the SENCo.

### Year 10

- 22 If Year 10s are sitting early exams, so in November or January, (e.g. Btec PE, Btec Music, OCR Nationals, Health and Social, Design and Technology), then the deadline to submit evidence and request Access Arrangements is the end of June, whilst they are in year 9.
- 23 If year 10 are sitting exams in June of Y10, then the deadline is the start of October half term, whilst in Y10.

### Sixth Form

- 24 Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator during the autumn and spring terms. Trial Access Arrangements are put in place for the mock examinations in January of Year 12. Teachers give feedback from the mocks to the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator (did students use them? Were they effective?). The mock examinations also provide a final chance to recognise any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.

- 25 Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, Year 12 exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.
- 26 The deadline for sixth form Access Arrangements requests is the end of June of Year 12, as long as a body of evidence has been collected by teachers in advance of this. Year 13 is too late to make requests for Access Arrangements as no history of need or provision is in place.

### AS Levels.

- 27 If students are sitting AS levels, then the deadline to request Access Arrangements is the start of October half term and November to submit evidence.

## Evidence Held and Malpractice

- 28 Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations.
- 29 Examples of malpractice include:
- Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their 'normal way of working'
  - Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient supporting teacher evidence

## Further Information

- 30 Further information can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)
- 31 If you have questions about Access Arrangements, please contact the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator, using [senco@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:senco@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk).