**Access Arrangements Policy**

2020/2021

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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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 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 the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make ‘reasonable adjustments’. [[AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) Definitions, page 3]

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 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’. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make ‘reasonable adjustments’. [[AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) Definitions, page 3]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements that Shenfield High School has in place to support candidates in the school with Access Arrangements. It is based on the JCQ Guidance as published in “Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments” – this is usually released in August each year.

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.

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.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by the school’s SENCo.

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

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| PAPAA – Industry Qualifications |

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

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| Candidates will be identified, assessed and granted Access Arrangements before examination courses begin.  If a candidate has an EHCP:   * There is a discussion with the candidate, the parent and the teaching staff to ascertain any issues that there are and anyways that candidates can be supported. * Access Arrangements are then applied for in the usual way.   If a candidate does not have an EHCP:   * Teaching staff identify the candidates that they support in classrooms and assessments; they should be identified to the SENCo at the end of Year 9. * Once the candidate has been identified, the SENCo approaches all staff to ensure that there is a consensus amongst them that the candidate requires Access Arrangements in order to be able to access the examination. * Testing is completed and any arrangements are applied for. * The parent is sent an email to confirm the arrangements that have been put into place.   When a candidate moves from Key Stage Four to Key Stage Five:   * Students should ensure that the SENCo is aware that they have had Access Arrangements for Key Stage Four Examinations. * SENCo emails teaching staff to ensure that they feel that these are still required and that they are providing this support in classrooms. * If staff agree, and the centre is known to the school, Access Arrangements are reapplied for. * If staff disagree, the candidate and the parent are spoken to and informed that these arrangements will not be put into place again.   As per JCQ Guidance, reports from private professionals **will not** be accepted for Access Arrangements. These include, but are not limited to:   * Private Dyslexia Reports and Diagnoses; * Occupational Therapy Reports and Diagnoses; * Physiotherapist Reports and Diagnoses; * Therapy and Counsellor Reports and Diagnoses.   Parents must discuss any report, diagnosis or concerns with the school SENCo ***before*** appointments are made. The school will not pay for any private reports or diagnoses.  Reports and Diagnoses from NHS Professionals will be taken into account and used as evidence to paint a picture of need.  At all times, Shenfield High School reserves the right to refuse Access Arrangements where they feel that the evidence does not meet the necessary criteria.  As per JCQ Guidance, Shenfield High School reserve the right to withdraw arrangements where they are not being used ad/or not being used appropriately. |

Painting a *picture of need* and gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*

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| Access Arrangements are put into place so that candidates with SEND are not disadvantaged. In order to be eligible for Access Arrangements, you must meet the definitions within the Equality Act 2010 and have a substantial and long-term disability. Access Arrangements will not be granted to anyone who is not on the school’s SEND List.  Painting a picture of need is based on the documents that are held by the SENCo. These will be placed within the individual folders. |

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements 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 listed on page 2 of [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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| Once candidates have been identified, testing is completed, paperwork is completed and everything is collated.  The SENCo has the responsibility of applying for Access Arrangements and ensuring that all necessary paperwork is completed.  The Examination Officer has the responsibility of rooming examinations and ensuring that the relevant sections of ICE are followed.  All paperwork is stored electronically and there is a link to the Master Spreadsheet. This is held on the shared drive in the school so it can be accessed by all staff. This is the basis of the evidence provided to the JCQ Inspector when they inspect the centre. |

Centre-delegated access arrangements

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| Centre delegated Access Arrangements are investigated in the same way as any other arrangement. The school insist that evidence must be provided and it must be the candidate’s normal way of working. |

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

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 this is the candidate’s preferred way of working within the centre.

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| The centre’s Word Processor Policy is clear about the use of a word processor in examinations. This is replicated below:  **The use of a word processor**  The centre will   allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of  working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)   award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs  Needs may include   a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on  his/her ability to write legibly   a medical condition   a physical disability   a sensory impairment;   planning and organisational problems when writing by hand   poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4)   only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can  be maintained (AA 4.2.1)   not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment  objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)   consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word  processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)   consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate’s course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidates’  needs and ’normal way of working’ in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock  exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam  or assessment (AA 4.2.4)   provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment  components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)  The centre will not   simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to  type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a  laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)  **Exceptions**  The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered  for a candidate would be   in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or  manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start  of the course (AA 4.2.4)   where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre  provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4) |

**Illustrative Case Studies**

1. A candidate has been tested following discussions with teaching staff. The test results show that that candidate’s typing speed is quicker than handwriting speed. *Access arrangement for a word processor would be granted.*
2. In the weeks before the examination, a candidate brings in a note from a doctor to say that they have a condition which has been investigated for the last year; this affects the speed that the candidate can write at. There have been discussions with teaching staff who have confirmed that they have allowed her to use a laptop when completing classwork and assessments.  *Access arrangement for a word processor would be granted.*
3. In the weeks before an examination, a parent calls to say that they feel that their child’s handwriting is not very good and they are concerned that an examiner would not be able to read it. They request the use of a word processor. Following an investigation, handwriting is legible to staff who are not familiar with it. *Access arrangement for a word processor would be declined.*

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

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**  [[AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration) 5.16]

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| Separate and Small Venue Invigilation must be used as per the guidance above.  Where there is no normal way of working, substantial or long-term impairment, indication from staff members that this is needed or the candidate is not on the school’s SEND List; requests will automatically be declined.  Where evidence from a doctor, private professional or other outside agency is given to the SENCO, this will trigger an investigation around Access Arrangements. ***This will not automatically trigger Access Arrangements to be put into place***. Following this information, an investigation would be entered into and a decision made as per the result of this investigation.  Where evidence from a doctor, private professional or other outside agency is given to the SENCO after the Access Arrangements deadline (usually in February) ***the Access Arrangement will not be granted.*** There needs to be evidence in the school that the candidate suffers from a substantial and long term impairment before any medical evidence can be accepted to initiate an investigation. |

**Illustrative Case Studies**

1. A candidate has been sent into small rooms when there have been class based assessments and tests. This has been reported to the SENCo at the time and has been agreed. This information has been sent to teaching staff. *Access arrangement for a smaller venue would be granted.*
2. In the weeks before the examination, a candidate brings in a note from a doctor to say that they have anxiety issues and that they need to be in a smaller venue. There is no history of need and this has never been discussed with the SENCo. *Access arrangement for a smaller venue would be declined.*
3. In the weeks before an examination, a parent calls to say that they feel that their candidate is unable to go in the Hall as they don’t like it and it causes them stress. There has never been an issue before, there is no history of need and there is no other evidence in the school. *Access arrangement for a smaller venue would be declined.*

Appendices