



# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Head of Centre: Edward Batty	
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### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
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SLT Member and Assessor	Julia Cottam
Head of Centre	Edward Batty
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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 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. 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 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; 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'.

**Definition of disability:** Section 6 of the Equality act defines disability as 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on some one's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.



## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Sancton Wood School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ... 'obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...' [JCQ General 4 Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)].

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR. Sancton Wood also has a written process in place to not only check the qualifications(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed from the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4). This policy should be read in conjunction with our schools' Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) policy, this sets out the procedures for identifying SEND and making and evaluation provision for pupils with SEND.

## 1. General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in section 4.2 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (this publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA). These include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement 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, or an equivalent member of staff, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.



- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessment may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.
- Exam access 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 practice using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

## 2. The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

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

Julia Cottam who possesses the following qualifications: Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements (CPT3A) – equivalent to level 7, awarded by Middlesex University.

### Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

Upon the first meeting with Sancton Woods Exam's Officer and SENCo, the assessor has their qualifications verified and a photocopy is made of the assessor's qualifications. The evidence that the assessors are suitable qualified is held on file for inspection purposes.

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)



Evidence that the assessor(s) are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes.

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Exams Officer or the SENCo.

### How the assessment process is administered

The assessment process is led by the specialist external assessor, based on a referral by the centre's SENCo. The SENCo makes referrals based on observations and recommendations from teachers and support staff, observations that have been carried out in classes, and from consultations.

- The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement applications.
- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties will be completed. (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor (AARA 7.5 1)
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. (AARA 7.5.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AARA 7.5.6)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. (AARA 7.3.6)
- Any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated. (AARA 7.3.6)

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

Sancton Wood confirms

- Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo will provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5.2)
- 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.



- All candidates must be assessed in 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 with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the centre. (AARA 7.5.3).
- Teaching staff are asked to provide examples of candidates' work to demonstrate the need that has led to the application of an access arrangement being made. This work is stored in the student file in the access folder and made available for inspection.

Since the application requires evidence of need, the school will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Educational psychology reports, dated no earlier than Y9.
- Speech Therapist reports, dated no earlier than Y9.
- Occupational Therapist reports, dated no earlier than Y9.
- Letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service), dated no earlier than Y9.
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers, dated no earlier than Y9.
- Copies of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangements.
- A signed copy of Form 8 report by the Academy's designated assessor / tester.

Joint Council for qualifications (JCQ) deadlines are fully adhered to.

### 3. Processing access arrangements

Parents must declare at the time of enrolment and when completing the school application form if their child has any medical or psychological conditions, SEND needs, previous exam access arrangements at another educational institution or any other issues that may require exam access arrangements. Failure to disclose this negates Sancton Wood from their responsibilities.

#### **Arrangements requiring awarding body approval**

Access arrangements may for example include: supervised rest breaks, extra time, reader, scribe, word processor, transcript, language modifier and prompter.



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 included. (Refer to AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers). AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications can only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

### Evidence needed to apply for exam access arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam access arrangements to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports from specialist teachers carrying out exam access assessments / tests.
- Previous exam access arrangements from another school with the relevant evidence of need.
- Subject teachers' examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams.
- Results from baseline assessments and psychometric tests completed no earlier than Y9.
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability dated no earlier than Y9.
- An Educational Psychology report which explicitly diagnoses the need for exam access arrangements, completed no earlier than Y9.
- A Speech therapy report which diagnoses severe language impairment completed no earlier than Y9.

Where documents constituting evidence of need (including medical evidence) predate the time when the student was in Y9, these documents must be updated to confirm that the students' requirements have not changed. When granted, access arrangements are valid for 26 months.

### How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements?

If a need for access arrangements have been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents are informed in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded.
- Students are informed verbally.
- A list of all students who receive access arrangements is made available to all staff. This information is also placed on our schools' central data system, iSAMS).





## Centre-delegated access arrangements

- Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by the SENCo and Exams Officer. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENCo and Exams Officer.
- Candidates may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to:
- Bereavement, recent physical injuries or sickness, having an identified SEND need that would be better served in a quiet venue, behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the candidate, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

## Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

### Use of a Word Processor (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. The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Sancton Wood uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments.

### Separate Invigilation

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 will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role). The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect
- whether this is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.16)
- the type of need:
  - nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.
  - 1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)

### Modified papers

- Modified papers are ordered through AAO.



- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1).
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate
- opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her
- first examination (AARA 6.1)

### Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2.13)

Where access arrangements documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2.13)

It is the responsibility of:

- The SENCo to collect and manage the appropriate evidence of need for an Access Arrangements application and to fill in the relevant documents (Form 8 parts 1 and 3 / Form 9)
- The SENCo to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate (containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, evidence of need and a signed candidate personal data consent form) (AARA 8.6)
- The Exams Officer to collect candidates' completed JCQ personal data consent
- The Exams Officer to submit applications for approval through AAO
- The Exams Officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- The Exams Officer to order modified papers

