

# **Disability and Access Arrangements Policy**

## **November 2023**

Approved by Local Governing Body

Chair of Governors: John Garner

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# 1. Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide accessibility policy which details how the centre will:

“recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms 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.

†for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”

[Quote taken directly from section 5.4 of the JCQ publication General regulations for approved centres 2023-2024]

This policy details how the Ruislip High School, as an exam centre, facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- Identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- Requesting access arrangements
- Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- Good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

## 2. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 9 of the JCQ publication adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties access arrangements and reasonable adjustments 2023-2024 (click [here](#)).

## 3. 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. 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'.

This section is adapted from page 7 ([click here](#)).

## 4. Identifying the need for access arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during Key Stage 4 (KS4) and 5 are identified early in Key Stage 3 (KS3). These may be access arrangements that have carried over from Key Stage 2 SATs exams or because teachers have recognised a specific need and made adjustments accordingly. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

Formal assessments for access arrangements take place **no earlier** than the second half of the Year 9 summer term. Students who have had previous access arrangements in KS3 are screened for access arrangements at this stage.

Ruislip High School can only accept privately commissioned assessments where the external assessor has, before assessment, an established relationship with the centre. This is set out in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre **cannot** be used to award access arrangements.

Although a student may have received access arrangements at KS3, it does not mean that they automatically receive these for KS4 exams because their needs may have changed. 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 that it does not meet the exam board criteria.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place

### The senior leader in charge of exams

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Supports the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

- Ensures that all assessments are carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments

### **The examinations officer**

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and that arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

### **Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)**

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- Presents, when requested by a JCQ centre inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per JCQ publications
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (access arrangements policy)
- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

### **Teaching staff**

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Support the SENCo as required in identifying the need for access arrangements

### **Support staff** (for example, learning support assistants, teaching assistants and communication support workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working for a candidate

## **Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties**

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication

## **5. Use of word processors**

A decision regarding whether a student uses a word processor instead of writing by hand in examinations will be made by the SENCo in collaboration with class teachers and teaching assistants. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a student because he/she prefers to type rather than write or because he/she can work faster on a word processor.

The use of a word processor may be considered for students who have:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition that affects their handwriting
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Illegible handwriting

This list is not exhaustive.

The use of a word processor for examinations must reflect the student's normal way of working with school. The school will always look to give a word processor rather than a scribe in the first instance. This is to allow for greater independence for the student and to allow the student to access marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

## **6. Requesting access arrangements**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Teaching staff**

- Will inform the SENCo of the need for access arrangements for a student and their normal way of working during exams for their course
- Will provide the SENCo with information outlining the difficulty the student presents with during assessments and within the classroom setting

#### **Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)**

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Applies for approval where this is required, through access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed (an electronic signature is

- permissible) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version).
- Makes an awarding body referral through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
  - Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
  - Maintains a electronic e-folder for each candidate that will include:
    - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
    - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
    - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - Presents the electronic folder when requested by a JCQ centre inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

### **Exams officer**

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- Following the appropriate process, orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

### **Parent/Guardian concerns**

It is important if you think your child may require access arrangements for a course, that you talk to their teacher as early as possible to ensure the examination board's deadline dates are met. Only where there is evidence of the students' need or usual way of working within that course can access arrangements be considered.

Your child's teacher will discuss the need for access arrangements with the SENCo who will determine if the evidence present meets with JCQ criteria.

Parents and guardians may be required to obtain letters from other professionals to support an application when a student requires arrangements due to psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties.

Parents and guardians should be aware that the regulations state that access arrangements cannot be put in place purely on the evidence of a medical professional.

## **7. Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams**

### **Roles and responsibilities - external assessments**

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE).

#### **Head of centre**

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

#### **Senior leader in charge of exams**

- Is familiar with the instructions for invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and access arrangements in [ICE 2023-2024](#)
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues

### **Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)**

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Is familiar with the instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in [ICE 2023-2024](#)
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not have an impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with the EO to ensure the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Liaises with the EO to ensure a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

### **Exams officer**

- Understands and follows instructions for invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and access arrangements in [ICE 2023-2024](#)
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be



- made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam

### **Other relevant centre staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

## **Roles and responsibilities - internal assessments**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

*"Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as 'NEA'."*

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication [instructions for conducting non-examination assessments](#), foreword]

### **Exams officer**

- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

### **Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

## **Roles and responsibilities - internal exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a precursor to external assessments.

### **Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

## 8. Appeals regarding centre decisions relating to access arrangements and special consideration

Ruislip High School will:

- Comply with the principles and regulations governing access arrangements and special consideration as set out in the JCQ publications **access arrangements and reasonable adjustments** and [a guide to the special consideration process](#)
- Ensure that all staff who manage and implement access arrangements and special consideration are aware of the requirements and are appropriately supported and resourced

### Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

In accordance with the regulations, Ruislip High School

- Recognises its 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
- Complies with its responsibilities in identifying, determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Failure to comply with the regulations have the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on a candidate's result(s).

Examples of failure to comply include:

- Putting in place access arrangements/adjustments that are not approved
- Failing to consider putting in place access arrangements (which may be a failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments)
- Permitting access arrangements/adjustments within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence
- Charging a fee for providing reasonable adjustments to disabled candidates AARA (importance of these regulations)

### Special consideration

Where Ruislip High School can provide signed evidence to support an application, it will apply for special consideration at the time of the assessment for a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on the candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment.

### Centre decisions relating to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

This may include Ruislip High School decision not to make/apply for a specific reasonable adjustment or to apply for special consideration, in circumstances where a candidate does not meet the criteria for, or there is no evidence/insufficient evidence to support the implementation of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment or the application of special consideration.

Where Ruislip High School makes a decision in relation to the access arrangement(s), reasonable adjustment(s) or special consideration that apply for a candidate or candidates:

- If a candidate who is the subject of the relevant decision (or the candidate's parent/carer) disagrees with the decision made and reasonably believes that the centre has not complied with its responsibilities or followed due procedures, a written request setting out the grounds for appeal should be submitted
- A formal email or letter addressed to the head of centre should be sent within 14 calendar days of the decision being made known to the appellant

To determine the outcome of the appeal, the head of centre will consult the respective JCQ publication to confirm the centre has complied with the principles and regulations governing access arrangements and/or

special consideration and followed due procedures.

The appellant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within 14 calendar days of the appeal being received and logged by the centre.

If the appeal is upheld, Ruislip High School will proceed to implement the necessary arrangements/submit the necessary application.