St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Examinations Equalities Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Exams Officer

Last review: October 26

Next review: October 27

Purpose of the policy

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

- Recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, to submit applications for reasonable adjustments through the access arrangements process and to make reasonable adjustments to the service the Centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the Centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the Centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

(JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4).

This policy details how the 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

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided in the current JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA)(*Definitions* section).

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of Centre

- is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant Centre staff to current JCQ documents including the General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR) and AARA;

Senior leader(s)

- is familiar with the entire contents of current JCQ documents including GR and AARA;
- ensures a policy demonstrating the Centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place;
- produces a word processor policy, which details the criteria the Centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments;
- 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 all candidates are clearly defined and documented;
- ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before they assess candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file;
- defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements;
- ensures the need for access arrangements put in place 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.

Exams Officer (EO)

- is familiar with the entire contents of the current JCQ GR document and is aware of information contained in AARA where this may be relevant to the EO role;
- annually reviews and updates the Word Processor policy under the guidance of the Deputy Head of Data and Operations;
- supports the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements;
- supports the SENCo on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role

- has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant Centre staff to the current JCQ AARA document;
- undertakes regular CPD training relevant to the role;
- ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of AARA;
- determine the need for and implementing access arrangements;
- ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the Centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams;
- leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates;
- ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage;
- ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance;
- 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 is 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;
- conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate;
- provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate;
- completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body;
- presents, when requested by a JCQ Centre inspector, evidence of the assessors qualification.

Teaching and support staff

- (where appropriate) inform the SENCo of any concerns, observations or feedback about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate;
- provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate;
- provide comments/observations to support the SENCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working for a candidate.

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

- iSAMs appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor;
- has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication AARA.

Use of word processors

A copy of the Word Processor policy (Exams) can be found on the school website and in St Mary's Cloud.

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities SENCo or equivalent role

- 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 Access Arrangements Online (AAO) including (where required) the completion of JCQ Forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required;
- follows guidance in AARA (chapter 8) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included;
- applies for approval where this is required, through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO;
- ensures that where approval is required the application is processed on time and no later than the awarding body's published deadline;
- ensures that the full supporting evidence is in place and the data consent form is signed before an online application is processed;
- reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangements;
- ensures where JCQ forms are required to be completed, forms are signed (an electronic or typed signature is permissible) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes - this may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version;
- holds all supporting evidence and presents such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request;
- ensures that the agreed adjustment has been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal tests and mock examinations;
  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);
- maintains an e-folder for each candidate - the required documentation for a candidate will be within the candidate's folder:
  - 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;
    - a pdf of the AAO approval;
    - the assessor's HCPC registration/professional assessment certificate when appropriate.
  - presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidatesExams officer (EO)
  - maintains, with the SENCo, an e-folder for each candidate - the required documentation for a candidate will be within the candidate's folder:
    - 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;
    - a pdf of the AAO approval;
    - the assessor's HCPC registration/professional assessment certificate when appropriate.
  - if the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised;
  - liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order/download 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 (e.g. copying onto coloured paper, enlarging to A3, etc.;
  - orders published modified papers by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series where these may be required for a candidate.

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.

SENCo or equivalent role

- is familiar with the instructions for 'Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements' and 'Access arrangements' in ICE;
- ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for them 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 impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested;
- ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates;
- liaises with the EO regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams;
- liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues;
- 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

- is familiar with the instructions for 'Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements' and 'Access arrangements' in ICE;
- 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;
- liaises with the SENCo and other relevant Centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams;
- 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 where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant has to be used, a separate invigilator is always present;
- ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate;
- 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;
- ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators;
- ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to their exams;
- ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans and invigilators are informed of those candidates and made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded;
- 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);
- where required, makes modifications that are permitted by the Centre (e.g. a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper, etc.)) 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;
- understands that where permitted/approved, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
    - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare;
    - the Sign Language Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare;
    - a Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening examination 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare;
- provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers;
- prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for particular arrangements (e.g. scribe cover sheet);
- has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the

time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation;
- liaises with the SENCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams;
- where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where any qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO;
- ensures that any previously stored data, for the WP users, has been backed up and cleared.

IT support staff
- are responsible for IT or other specialist equipment that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate;
- ensure that sufficient word processors are available and in good working order for all candidates who have been allocated use of a word processor in exams;
- ensure that the word processor satisfies the JCQ regulations in that it must not be connected to the internet or any other means of communication;
- ensure that the spelling and grammar check/predictive text are disabled unless the candidate is permitted to use a scribe;
- ensure that any assistive technology relating to access arrangements such as electronic readers or voice to text software is working correctly prior to the exam;
- arrange for the word processor to be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off;

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;
- estates/site staff are responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate;
- senior staff are responsible for the Centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated;

Non-examination assessments (NEA)

Non-examination assessments (NEA) are normally set by a Centre, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the Centre and externally moderated by the awarding body. However, the 'NEA' category is not limited to internal assessment as externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across Centres are also classified as 'NEA'.

SENCo/Examinations Officer
- liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates;
- ensures Centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking their first formal supervised assessment;
- ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments;
- ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination;
- ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s);
- ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators;
- 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;
- provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required;
- liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate.

Internal exams/assessments

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the Centre, normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

SENCo/Examinations Officer

- liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

Teaching staff

- support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates;
- provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate;
- provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required.

Facilitating access - examples

The following information confirms the Centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate-by-candidate basis, consideration is given to:

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the Centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the Centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks	*SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home and for supervised rest breaks* *Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need* *Approval confirmed by SENCo (AAO approval for both arrangements not required)* *Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements which should be put in place* *EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP* *EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates* *Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood* *Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam* *EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable and confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials* *Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log* *Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam* *Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition* *EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)* *EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)* *Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested*

Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader 25% Extra time Alternative rooming arrangements	*Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010* *Papers checked for those testing reading* *Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded* *Informs candidate that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online* *AAO application for approval processed* *Supporting evidence and AAO approval kept on file*
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Alternative rooming arrangements	*Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment* *Supporting evidence kept on file* *Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted* *Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out their name to bring their attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for alternative room)*
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	*Informs candidatethat an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online* *Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed* *Supporting evidence and AAO approval kept on file* *Provides height adjustable desk in exam room* *Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities* *Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access* *Seats candidate near exam room door* *Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room* *Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment*