

The Whitby Secondary Partnership Access Arrangements

Governance Status

This policy has been adopted by the Governing Body. It will be reviewed annually.

Review dates	By Whom	Approval date
October 2023	Staff and governors	21 November 2023

Signed by the Chair of Governor:



Access Arrangements Policy: - Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of access arrangements are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ).

Rationale

The Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the College / School for all candidates with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND). The term Additional Learning Need is used as an umbrella term within the College / School to incorporate ALL candidates including those identified as having SEND. The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual learner may fulfil their full potential.

An access arrangement must reflect the support given to a Learner in the College / School across the curriculum so they must have the access arrangement:-

- in the classroom; or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or maths
- literacy/numeracy support lessons; or
- literacy/numeracy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal College / School tests and trial examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working' lessons should be differentiated to support whatever difficulty the student has. Access arrangements are not intended to give a student an advantage but as a means of enabling students with a "severe and persistent" need that places them at a disadvantage the same opportunities.

If a Learner has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is not his/her normal way of working it will be removed by the SENCo. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations only. (The College / School/School will monitor the use of the arrangement in classrooms internal College / School tests and trial examinations.)

What are access arrangements? An Access Arrangement (AA) is an adjustment offered to support a learner (subject to exam board approval) in a national/public exam. Examples of these include:-

- A scribe: A word processor with spell check enabled would normally be issued. In exceptional circumstances this could also be a trained adult who writes for the learner. The learner would dictate their answers and the scribe would write exactly what they say. This is becoming rare and electronic devices are preferred.
- A reader: An electronic device such as a reader pen would normally be issued. In exceptional circumstances it could be a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the learner on request. The learner would then write the answer/s themselves.
- ICT: access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the learner would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled and a special exam account would be used with no internet access. In some exceptional circumstances candidates may be entitled to use a spell check enabled computer.
- Extra time: candidates may be entitled to an allowance of up to 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher. In some exceptional circumstances candidates may be entitled to an allowance up to 50%.
- Supervised rest breaks: where candidates are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time. This is NOT thinking time/.
- Prompter: where a learner has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the learner on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

When candidates might be given Access Arrangements?

Scribe	Where there is a physical disability; where their writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • speed is too slow to be able to complete the examination in the allotted time
Reader	Where there is a standardised score of 85 or below in an approved reading assessment tests delivered by Specialist Teacher (100 is the average in a standardised test). These tests do not count for reader.
Word Processor	Where there is a physical disability; their writing would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time
Extra Time	Where a learner's ability to process information is slower than average or write w.p.m.
Rest Break	Where a learner has a physical disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time. Exam boards state there must be evidence before considering extra time and state the nature of the impairment on form 9 .
Prompt	For a learner who loses concentration /focus, and is not aware of time
Alternative rooming arrangement	For a learner with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall

Access arrangements for examinations and controlled assessments will be planned and implemented where there is sufficient evidence that individual candidates have additional educational needs that are severe and persistent as outlined in the Equality Act. Access arrangements are put in place to ensure that a learner is not significantly disadvantaged during assessments due to an additional educational need, thereby ensuring equal opportunities. Access arrangements are not intended to give candidates an unfair advantage, but to give all candidates the equal opportunity in which to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Procedures

How would candidates be identified for an Access Arrangement?

- They would have had AA at KS2 for their SAT's

- From baseline testing completed at the start of Year 7 & 9
- Subject Teacher Referral
- SENCo Identification
- Diagnosis of SEND – could lead to assessment

If candidates had AA at KS2, it does not mean that they automatically receive them in KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a learner who had a Reader for KS2 may not qualify for a Reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria. They have to be formally assessed at KS4 and they need two standardised test scores of 84 and below or 1 below average score and 1 average score. They are not assessed at KS2, they are teacher delegated.

Assessments are used to help identify those candidates with low reading & spelling ages and the SEN office contacts parents where this is the case, to seek permission to do further testing, and if necessary put an appropriate intervention into place. However if a learner is coping well in lessons then no support will be required.

Parent Referral

Parents can contact the College / School to ask for advice and express any concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SEN Department will then investigate their concerns by sending a questionnaire to the child's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to seek testing from a Specialist Teacher. If there is a medical diagnosis then the SENCo can consider if some centre delegated AA are appropriate.

Teacher Referral

All teachers are sent a questionnaire to refer their learner to the SEN Department where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a learner in their class. Then a second one is sent out asking for the normal way of working for the learner in the classroom. All of the learner's current teachers will be asked to give feedback on the form and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a learner for AA.

The role of the SENCo/ Senior Leader responsible for whole College / School SEND provision:

- The SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with Special Educational Needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.
- Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of SENCo.
- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo with support from the Exams Officer.
- Alternative rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.
- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access

How do staff and parents know whether a learner has any Access Arrangements?

- All subject teachers and support staff are given access to the Access Arrangements (AA) Spread sheet. This can be found in the SEND folder on the shared area in i/drive. The SEN register and Access Arrangements (AA) are updated whenever candidates become entitled to keep staff up-to-date with changes and modifications. Staff are informed of any changes to the SEND register and Access Arrangements (AA) via internal College / School communication systems. It is updated whenever changes have been made to the learner's entitlements. The information about results of assessments for AA are kept confidentially in line with College / School policy and are shared on a need to know basis.
- Parents will be informed of any tests results via a letter home from the SEN department which states what they are entitled to, why and when.

Internal subject specific tests

Access Arrangements reflect the support that is given to the learner in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as a 'normal way of working.'

To allow all candidates with an additional learning needs equality of access to internal subject tests and exams the following reasonable adjustments are followed:

- Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that all candidates in their subject areas have full equality of access to their AA's during lessons, all internal tests and mock exams.
- Where and when appropriate, the exam officer can provide alternative rooming arrangement, access to a word processor, a reader and a scribe with the required amount of notice. In the case of extra time, subject teachers, where ever possible, should ensure candidates who need extra time are able to do this in the normal learning environment. This will require other candidates to remain quiet, whilst the learner completes the test in exam conditions.
- When this is not possible, the teacher should make arrangements with the exam officer for the learner to complete the test. Subject staff are asked to liaise with the exam officer two weeks' prior to an internal tests/mock exam so that appropriate support can be provided for candidates who require it during class tests / assessments / exams.

What support is given to candidates with AA from the SEN Department?

Candidates with AA can take part in small group sessions to show them how to effectively use their AA. In addition, candidates with AA are encouraged to use their AA during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using it effectively. Candidates who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations. It is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader / scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give. Electronic support should always be used wherever possible to avoid bias.

Candidates with extra time are encouraged to use the additional time allowance effectively during class and internal assessments so that they can apply the techniques and strategies given effectively. This can be demonstrated by switching to a different coloured pen during mock exams. This is also required as evidence for the inspector from JCQ.

Candidates with AA are monitored regularly through the use of data from Progress Reports, Trackers and exam results.