ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Directors	
Date of next review	September 2026

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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	**Jemini Lakhman**
Senior leader(s)	**Paul Connolly** **Robert Crossland** **Mark Rome**
Head of centre	**Pritam Vekaria**
Exams officer	**Alexandre Silva**
Assessor(s)	**Alexandre Silva**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Alexandre Silva**

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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'. (AARA[1], Definitions)

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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA[1], Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that **Whitefriars 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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, 5.4)
This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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.

> Where the SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **mus**t create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([1]AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

[1]This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

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

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (4.2). These include:

> The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly 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.
>
> Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
>
> 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 practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

Our Equalities Policy Exams related can be found on our Whitefriars School website.

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

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)

Level 7 OCR and CPT3A + AAC

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)

Overtype here the process followed to check the qualification(s) of the assessor(s).

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AARA including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will… have a **written** process in place to check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*… (GR 5.4)

The head of centre **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AARA 7.3)

Make full reference to AARA 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of assessors

The qualification is available at the school sharedrive for Access Arrangements.

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

Overtype here details of the process followed in your centre.

Make full reference to AARA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

By detailing this, you should be confirming …that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

Note… SENCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider 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)

Also detail any process (where relevant) for a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student (refer to the requirement in GR 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process... (AARA 7.5)

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments 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 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 **must** 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)

> The SENCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes:
>
> - a copy of the candidate's approved application;
> - appropriate evidence of need (where required);
> - evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)
>
> Make full reference to AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

> The SENCo must keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes: -Normal Way of Working form completed by the teacher; -Evidence of normal way of working; -Any medical document necessary to prove the delegation the AA.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Word Processor Policy is available with exams policies.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

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 **and**
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.16)

> Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations.
>
> Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.
>
> The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** 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)