

This policy was reviewed in: **October 2024**

This policy is due to be reviewed in: **October 2025**

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Helen Ness-Gifford, Headmistress
Assessor	Lisa Britnell, Head of Individual Learning
Access arrangement facilitator	Shula Hodge, Examinations Officer

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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'. (AARA¹ 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
- 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 (AARA¹, Definitions).

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

The purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Pipers Corner 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... (General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4) - this publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the Head of Individual Learning 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 Head of Individual Learning is storing documentation electronically, they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([AARA](#) 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning

difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments - 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, 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 [AARA](#) (section 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 Head of Individual Learning **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate
- access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course
- 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

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 Head of Individual Learning to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Equalities Policy (Examinations)

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

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates. 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. 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.

The Access Arrangements 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, section 7.3](#).

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

Lisa Britnell – Chartered Educational Psychologist
Registered HCPC – Practitioner Psychologist Registration number PYL18571
BSc (Hons), PGCE, MSc

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)

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.

The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- the quality of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within the Centre
- the appointment of assessors, checking the qualifications of those assessing candidates (e.g. photocopy of certificate or printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration). The JCQ is not able to approve an assessor's qualification(s) and not maintain a list of appropriate qualifications for assessors. Heads of Centre must satisfy themselves that a professional does have the required level of competence and training. The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7

Qualification check's standard procedure is to contact the primary source of the information.

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](#))

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

The assessor must:

- refer to AARA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidates learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LF, Profile of Learning difficulties)
- record the results of any tests completed indicating that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's performance
- only work within their area of expertise and in an ethical fashion
- use current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate
- report the results of their assessment within Part 2 of Form 8
- provide the Centre with evidence of their qualification(s) before assessing any candidate

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

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the Centre, for example:

Refer to AARA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidates learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LF, Profile of Learning difficulties)

- in the classroom (where appropriate)
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- literacy support lessons
- literacy intervention strategies
- in internal school tests/examinations
- mock examinations

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the Head of Individual Learning or the assessor working within the Centre. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment.

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 AARA 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by 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)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

There is not a requirement to process an application for Centre delegated arrangements using Access arrangements online. However, for GCSE and GCE qualifications the Head of Individual Learning must produce a short concise file note on Centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the need for Centre delegated arrangements to an JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. This must confirm the nature of the candidate's impairment and that Centre delegated arrangements reflect their normal way of working within the Centre.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Examinations)

An examination 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 examinations 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. See Word processor Policy.

Alternative Rooming Policy

A decision where an examination candidate may be approved alternative rooming within the Centre will be made by the Head of Individual Learning.

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)

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations. Decision will be based on an individual's profile and history of need and whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect on their outcomes. For example: nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

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)