

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Rationale

Our Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) Policy explains the activity undertaken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all pupils with Additional Learning Needs, which will include those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND).

The policy supports and facilitates the school's aim to create a learning environment in which every pupil can fulfil his or her full potential.

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Exam Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a pupil accessing an examination caused by learning, physical, sensory, medical, or psychological difficulties, without creating any unfair advantage or compromising the integrity of an assessment.

These arrangements are agreed before an internal or external assessment and **must reflect a pupil's normal way of working within the school**. EAA are strictly regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and this body's regulations are reviewed and updated annually.

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. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has **a substantial and long-term effect on performance in examinations** may qualify for exam access arrangements.

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

Available Exam Access Arrangements include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe
- Word processor – see Word Processor Policy (Exams)
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. enlarged or modified papers)
- Practical assistant

There are other reasonable adjustments which may not be included in this list of available exam access arrangements because they may be unique to an individual.

Other exam access arrangements

The use of some EAA such as: supervised rest breaks; a prompter; read aloud and/or the use of a reading pen; the use of a word processor; coloured overlay; colour naming; fidget toy; and alternative rooming or seating of pupils for their exams is not subject to an on-line application and is awarded at the discretion of the school. However, this should be reflected in the pupil's **normal way of working** in class and internal assessments.

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Pupils will be identified for consideration for EAA in at least one of the following ways:

- they had EAA in KS2 for their National Curriculum Tests
- screening tests (reading comprehension and spelling) on entry in Year 7 for all pupils
- parental referral
- subject teacher referral
- information from previous schools
- they are on the SEND Register of Concern for SEND or Additional Needs

Teachers are encouraged to communicate to the SENDCo/EAA Assessor any access needs that they feel should be explored further.

Parents can use the referral form in the SEND pages of the VLE which should be completed and sent to the Individual Learning Department.

Assessing and applying for Access Arrangements

When a pupil is brought to the attention of the Individual Learning Department in one of the above ways, the SENDCo will investigate further. If a need for further assessment or screening is indicated, this will be carried out by the Exams Access Assessor.

All EAA assessors appointed by the head of centre **must:**

- have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the *JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;
- be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 to help identify the EAA that might assist the candidate in examinations and assessments;
- hold an appropriate qualification (post-graduate course at Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual, specialist assessment, or equivalent

The outcomes of the assessments will be recorded and summarised; where an EAA is recommended due to a learning difficulty, JCQ Form 8 Section C (the assessor's report) will be completed and used as evidence for an online submission of a formal EAA application to the

Awarding Bodies. The feedback is instant, and, where the EAA is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the pupil, and the parents are informed prior to any exams.

The evidence of need is held on file, and the SENDCo monitors and ensures that the EAA is normal working practice for the pupil within school.

Teaching and support staff can access lists of pupils who have been granted EAA on the staff shared resources area. Pupils who are on the SEND or Additional Needs Register of Concern will have a Pupil Passport and any proposed or approved EAA will also be indicated there.

Note on privately commissioned assessments

A privately commissioned assessment **cannot** be used to award EAA. Schools are permitted to accept such a report only as part of wider school evidence and they are not necessary for the awarding of EAA. A pupil's 'normal way of working' in school is key, and evidence for EAA should, for the vast majority, be based on in-house assessments.

However, an independent assessment can be used if the external assessor has contacted the SENDCo before carrying out the assessment, has established a working relationship within the centre and is approved by the head of centre. Before assessing the candidate, the assessor will receive as a minimum a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8, working with the SENDCo. Ideally the child should be assessed in the school setting.

Evidence required for Exam Access Arrangements

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an EAA from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), depending on the arrangement required. These include:

- Form 8 report from EAA Assessor detailing statistical assessment evidence of a child's learning difficulties as shown by two below/low average standardised scores or;
- Form 9 completed for a child with other access needs such as: a medical condition; a diagnosis of ADHD or autism; a physical or sensory disability; a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Previous EAA from other schools (e.g. in KS2 SATs or GCSEs taken at a previous school)
- Subject teachers' feedback which serves as confirmation that a pupil needs, for example, extra time, and/or examples of the pupil's work as appropriate
- Centre-based evidence of a history of need and normal way of working (e.g. Pupil Passport)
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension scores, writing tests, standardised psychometric testing (with scores in the below average range)
- Results of additional assessments conducted by the school's EAA Assessor
- Any letters from outside agencies, hospital consultant (not a GP), Occupational Therapist, registered psychologist/psychiatrist etc. confirming the diagnosis of a disability
- Copy of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Once an application has been approved, the EAA is granted, and this evidence will be held on file and available for Inspection by the JCQ, together with:

- a data protection form signed and dated by the pupil;
- a declaration from the Exams Officer that the application documentation is in order;
- on-line approval from the awarding body for the arrangement;
- a record from invigilators of occasions where the pupil has been supported by EAA

The arrangement(s) should not be granted to the candidate for the first time at the time of their final examinations.

Alternative Arrangements

The school must be responsible for making decisions about appropriate arrangements for candidates. Outside agencies (GPs, psychiatrists, CAMHS, social workers, mentors, counsellors, medical consultants, parents, guardians etc) cannot dictate access arrangements for a pupil.

JCQ Regulations:

- *Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre.*

Alternative Rooming for Examinations

Provision of alternative rooming for examinations is at the school's discretion. The school must make a balanced judgment, taking into consideration the availability of rooms and the ability to invigilate the cohort, as well as supporting the candidate. The quietest and calmest space for examinations is always the large exam spaces, which are located away from potential disturbances and overseen by a team of invigilators. The school will always follow the advice from JCQ when making a decision about alternative rooming which is detailed below.

JCQ Regulations:

- *Invigilation and the use of an alternative room would only apply where a candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourettes or significant behaviour issues which would disturb candidates in the examination room."*
- *Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is **not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation with the centre.*

Deadlines for EAA Applications

In most cases, a need for EAA is identified at KS3 and is decided by the end of Year 9, in preparation for the start of GCSE courses.

Information on final deadlines is included below.

Trialling EAA

The school's working deadline to submit evidence and request EAA for a pupil in Year 11 is October Half Term. This allows the SENDCo, the EAA Assessor and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations, which are the last opportunity to trial any EAA.

The Year 10 and Year 12 examinations should also provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a pupil may have, that were not identified earlier in the school.

Sixth Form

When a pupil progresses from GCSE to A-level qualifications, a re-submission of the application for EAA must be processed. The SENDCo and EAA Assessor must be able to show updated centre-based evidence of a continuing need for EAA.

New entrants

For pupils joining the school in Year 12, the EAA Assessor will liaise with the previous setting where EAA were in place for GCSE exams. In order to use assessment data on a Form 8 from the previous setting, there must be an established working relationship with the feeder school in order to 'roll forward' the previous EAA. The school must obtain evidence of the EAA Assessor's qualifications from the previous setting and the new centre's EAA Assessor must be satisfied that the Form 8 stands up to inspection. If not, then the EAA Assessor may need to re-assess the pupil to begin the process in the new centre.

The deadline for Sixth Form EAA requests is the **end of Year 12**, providing a body of evidence has been collected by teachers in advance of this. It would be extremely difficult, and in most cases impossible, to prove a history of need for the first time in Year 13.

The reason for this is that the awarding of extra time is a long, drawn-out process as follows:

- Students who have a learning difficulty are identified for exam access arrangements (EAA) in Year 12. They are almost always those on the SEND/Additional Needs Register of Concern and have had a Pupil Passport throughout school – in other words, they have a known history of need. They would almost certainly have had extra time at GCSE
- Students who are raised as a concern (by either parents or teachers) during Y12 (and who have not previously had extra time) are assessed on processing speed
- To qualify for extra time, in these assessments the student must have two scores that are below average in tests of speed – writing, reading, processing, working memory etc.
- Following the results of this assessment, feedback is gathered from teachers about the student's needs as observed in class. Without this triangulation, it is not possible to establish that this is a student's 'normal way of working'.
- If the above criteria are satisfied, students are given the opportunity to trial these arrangements in class, in Year 12 exams and Year 13 mocks.
- Feedback is provided from invigilators to confirm whether a student used the proposed EAA or not – this can be used as supporting evidence
- Once a picture of need has been established, an on-line application (which meets all of the JCQ criteria) is processed before final A Level exams

The JCQ guidelines make it quite clear that this should be a tried and tested route. If a student has not had extra time at GCSE but feels that timing was an issue, it is assumed likely that they would report this to parents and/or teachers or that teachers would observe this and contact us in Year 12. In addition, Year 12 exams are an ideal opportunity for these students to appear on our radar.

The school is subject to JCQ inspections and must operate within the regulations. In fact, even if a student gets a late diagnosis of ADHD, ASD, dyslexia or a medical condition for example, we would be expected to apply the same rigour to any application so that any EAA that is granted serves merely to level the playing field and does not confer advantage.

Post-18

When a pupil leaves the school, they will be contacted and asked to provide a signed 'consent to share' form. If a post-16 provider contacts the school to request copies of the EAA documentation for an individual, and the consent has been given, then the EAA Assessor will share that information.

Further Information

Further information can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:
www.jcq.org.uk

If you have questions about EAA, please contact the SENDCo and/or EAA Assessor at the school.

Glossary

EAA – Exam Access Arrangements

EHCP – Education, Health & Care Plan

JCQ – Joint Council for Qualifications

SENDCo – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment