


# Access Arrangements Policy 2025/26

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
 J Bates	
Date of next review	December 2026

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	B Hughes K Bairstow
Senior leader(s)	N Robertson A Smith M Balal L Parkinson
Head of centre	J Bates
Exams officer	C Markham
Assessor(s)	K Bairstow
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	M Leatham, L Butler, K Pickering, N Waite, S Taylor, J Taylor

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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<sup>1</sup>, 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<sup>1</sup>, 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 West Craven High 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 **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (<sup>1</sup>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**'.

<sup>1</sup>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.

The policy can be found in the Policy folder in the Exams Officer's office.

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)

Post Graduate Certificate in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)

### 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)

West Craven High School's assessor is an in-house assessor employed as a specialist teacher in the school. Their qualifications have been checked by the interview panel as part of the employment process and prior to any assessment of a candidate being undertaken.

The centre understands its responsibilities outlined in AARA related to the level of the assessor's qualifications and has fulfilled these responsibilities.

### **Reporting the appointment of assessors**

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) are held on file for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector on request by the SENCo, or by a member of the SLT if the SENCo is not available.

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

1. Year 6 – The feeder schools and parents provide the SENCo with any history of need/provision in transition meetings.
2. EAA information is added to SIMS and shared with staff.
3. Teachers monitor students closely and gather evidence of need for EAA. EAA are trialled in tests/exams and subject based assessments. This evidence needs to be passed to the SEND dept. Respond to emerging needs as curriculum demands increase.
4. Form 8 completed based on evidence supplied by teachers.
5. Specialist Assessor then tests students, applies online and informs the examinations officer.
6. EAA in place and being used regularly.
7. Teachers to submit evidence to support regular use of EAA. Mock examinations are the last chance to trial EAA in formal examination setting.
8. If EAAs are not being used they will be withdrawn and a letter will be sent home to the parents/carers explaining the reasons behind this decision.

### **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.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

## **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)

#### **Year 11**

The deadline to raise concerns about a student is generally November of Year 11. This allows the SENCo and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 Spring mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any EAA in a formal examination setting. JCQ set a deadline for applications in their annual published update to schools.

The SENCo will keep detailed records of essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

## Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Information about centre delegated arrangements are held on file with the appropriate file notes (where needed) which are signed by the SENCo or Headteacher.

## 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.

A separate Word Processor policy is available from the exams officer and is reviewed annually in conjunction with this policy.

### 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 tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

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)

## Appendix 1 Types of Access Arrangements and possible evidence

Expression of concern form (pale yellow form)

Access arrangement	Why apply for this?	What to include on Expression of concern form
Coloured overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner experiences visual disturbance and uses an overlay in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the Expression of concern form confirming that the overlay/coloured paper helps the student with reading etc.</li> </ul>
Prompter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Difficulty or medical condition that leads to lack of focus, easy distraction or poor time estimation that will lead to exam performance being seriously impaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the nature of the problem, its impact in class and what measures are in place to support in class</li> </ul>
Separate invigilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social, emotional, mental health need, medical condition, physical disability, psychological need that will lead to impaired performance within normal exam conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the nature of the need and how it is supported within the classroom</li> <li>Include medical or other evidence where possible</li> <li>Discuss the option of being in a small group and record the outcome of this discussion</li> </ul>
Supervised Rest Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning difficulty, social, emotional, mental health need, medical condition, physical disability, psychological need that leads to learner needing rest breaks in order to sustain performance in exam conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the nature of the need and how it is supported within the classroom</li> <li>Include medical or other evidence where possible</li> <li>Confirm that having frequent breaks is the learner's normal way of working</li> </ul>
Use of Word Processor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow rate of writing, illegible handwriting or handwriting that deteriorates under stress</li> <li>Injury, physical disability, normal way of working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the nature of the learner's difficulties</li> <li>Provide evidence of handwritten and typed scripts (ideally mock exam questions) and note differences in quality of language or rate of writing</li> <li>Confirm that word processing is the normal way of working within the classroom for this learner</li> </ul>
Extra time 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning difficulty, medical, physical or physiological requirement or visual or hearing impairment which has an adverse effect on the candidate's speed of processing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicate the nature of the learner's processing problem and how it is supported in the classroom</li> <li>Include examples of unfinished timed assessments</li> <li>Discuss with learner how extra time will be used and record this on referral form</li> <li>Confirm that it is the learner's normal way of working to use extra time</li> </ul>

Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visual impairment or learning difficulty that leads to learner performing significantly less well than peers in either reading accuracy, comprehension or speed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe nature of learner's need – indicate that the learner performs significantly below peers in reading accuracy, comprehension or speed</li> <li>▪ Describe how this is supported in class and confirm that reading support is the learner's normal way of working</li> </ul>
Scribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physical disability, medical condition or recent injury preventing writing</li> <li>▪ Visual impairment and cannot touch type or use a braille</li> <li>▪ Learning difficulties that means that writing cannot be read by others</li> <li>▪ Writes so slowly that answers cannot be fully recorded even with extra time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe the nature of the difficulty – include examples of handwritten and scribed work (where appropriate) and comment on quality of language</li> <li>▪ Describe how need is supported in class and confirm that using a scribe is the learner's normal way of working</li> </ul>