



Examination Access Arrangements Policy

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Sherburn High School

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EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This is intended as a guidance document.

The Examination Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

DEFINITIONS

DISABILITY

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'*.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A candidate has "special educational needs" as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a 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'.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend upon a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment requiring authoritative support and at the discretion of the examining body.

Access Arrangements at Sherburn High School

Sherburn High School aims to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long-term, substantial SEND/or ALN which fall into the following four categories: -

1. *Communication and interaction.*
2. *Cognition and learning.*
3. *Social, emotional and mental health.*
4. *Sensory and/or physical needs.*

We will do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines. These are updated every year on 1st September and run through until 31st August. The currently released document will always be the first reference point in determining the correct access arrangement for a student. We believe it is important to abide by the JCQ regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school. Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND/ALN and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate. Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom (within reason), internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'.

Students cannot be removed from the main examination room to sit their exam elsewhere unless this arrangement has already been agreed or there are exceptional circumstances. This decision can only be taken by the Head of Centre (the Headteacher or their nominated representative), the Senior Leader with responsibility for examinations or the SENCO.

When might students need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam.

What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from a Specialist Teacher or Specialist Assessor completed no earlier than the beginning of Year 9
- Previous EAA from Primary Schools/other education providers (*please note a Form 8 will still need to be completed for GCSE and A-level examinations*)
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests, standardised psychometric testing
- Evidence of normal way of working

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

A growing number of parents have their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submit the reports to the SENCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or an additional form of EAA. These assessment reports are often very detailed but also cost a significant amount of money. This means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is '*either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged*' by any arrangements in place. Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive EAA which can be in conflict with the history of need seen in school. The school will accept private assessments provided that:

- a) The parents have informed us that a private assessment is taking place

- b) The private assessor makes formal verbal or written contact with the SENCO to discuss the student and the school's perspective of her potential needs.
- c) The details of the private assessor, including details of their appropriate qualifications, have been passed on to the school

A private assessment, even if it meets the criteria outlined above, will only be accepted as an application for an internal investigation into an access arrangement.

If the advice of the private assessor for EAA conflicts with the centre tester (a member of staff holding a current formally recognised qualification enabling them to assess for EAA) then the recommendations of the centre tester will take precedence.

Procedures

How students would be identified for Exam Access Arrangements:

- They have had EAA at KS2 for their SATs
- CAMHS assessment/diagnosis or Educational Psychologist report
- Parental referral
- Subject teacher referral
- Information from previous school/education provider

An important principle is that just because a student has received EAA in the past, it does not necessarily follow that they will continue to receive EAA as their needs may very well have changed. For example, for whom baseline testing at KS2 shows a reading speed score below the threshold required for EAA may not qualify for the EAA at KS4 as their reading speed may have improved to the extent that it no longer meets the exam board criteria.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by sending a "round robin" to the child's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

As with Parental Referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student's current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has EAA?

- Staff are informed of changes to the SEN list via email and notification in the weekly staff briefing.
- Parents will be contacted by the SENCO to discuss what they are entitled to, why and when.

How are Exam Access Arrangements applied for?

Students need to be tested at each Key Stage for EAA. Just because they were entitled to EAA at KS2 does not automatically entitle them to it at KS3, KS4 or KS5 (Sixth Form).

The member of staff qualified to assess for access arrangements will use a variety of nationally recognised tests.

The test that the assessor uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further EAA, the assessor will arrange this. Following a report produced by the assessor an application is made to the Awarding Bodies for permission to implement the specified arrangement(s).

There are some considerations with this access arrangement application:

- The authorisation granted by the Awarding Bodies lasts 26 months.
- A reapplication must be made in Year 12 in order to cover Year 12 and 13. Per the JCQ guidelines, it is possible to “roll forward” the application for EAA, however the student ideally should be re-assessed to provide up to date information for the SENCO to be considered alongside history of need when considering the case for reapplication.
- There is a deadline imposed by the Awarding Bodies for when exam access arrangements can be applied for.
- “Normal way of working” is a very important principle, sometimes even considered the *most* important. An application for EAA made late in Year 11 or Year 13 lacks validity as there is little evidence of whatever EAA is granted being the “normal way of working”. While Parental Referrals are valuable, the phenomenon of issues being suddenly and unexpectedly raised in the weeks and months before external examinations is a valid concern.

What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the Exams Officer then applies to the Awarding Bodies, with support from the SENCO. The feedback is instant at this point the EAA is added to the EAA list and the parents are informed of the EAA.

The application will require evidence of need and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologists’ reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- Any results of assessments quoted on the Form 8

Permission from the Awarding Bodies for the arrangement(s) requires:

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester or EHCP
- A data protection form signed by the student
- For Extra Time – Evidence of need from teachers.

Deadlines for submitting applications for access arrangements and modified papers online for GCSE and GCE qualifications

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE and GCE qualifications **must** be processed using access arrangements online **as early as possible**.

The dates are set by the JCQ and we will endeavour to test students after the dates published but they will not receive dispensation for that period. This is due to allocation of time to test late entries.

From referral to point of access arrangements being awarded takes up to 4 weeks with Pearson (formerly Edexcel). Other Awarding Bodies tend to respond more quickly.

The deadline set by the JCQ is final, late entries may incur further inspections by the JCQ. The decision to apply for access arrangements is based upon evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist assessor access arrangements report.

APPENDIX 1

Common access arrangements

Seating – generally students with access arrangements are accommodated in an appropriate location.

- 25% Extra Time** – the student is granted an additional 25% extra time for the examination, usually to compensate for a below average processing, reading or comprehension speed (a score of 84 or less in appropriate standardised testing). This is evidenced by Form 8 and work gathered in school to demonstrate the normal way of working. This arrangement can also be granted by medical evidence or other evidence from appropriate third parties, such as CAMHS. In these cases, the student does not require the Form 8, but does require a signed, authorised letter (i.e. on headed paper) from the representative of the agency making the request.
- 50% Extra Time** – the student is granted an additional 50% extra time for the examination, to compensate for very low standardised scores (69 or less) in two or more assessed areas. This is evidenced in the same manner as 25% extra time
- Rest breaks** – these are non-evidenced. The student is allowed to “pause” the exam for brief periods of time. This is often to compensate for physical issues (e.g. a recently sprained wrist causing discomfort when writing), calming down (e.g. if the student is prone to panic attacks, or suffers from ADHD and needs to re-focus) or extreme cases of exam anxiety. Generally the school will limit the student to 6 minutes every half an hour of the exam, but this is adaptable to the student’s needs. This access arrangement is discretionary and can be withdrawn at any time.
- Separate invigilation** – the student is invigilated separately from the rest of the students sitting the exam. While it is very common for educational psychologists to recommend this, it is viewed as a “last resort” option due to the impact upon rooming and staffing. Students who have been granted this arrangement have received it due to medical issues (e.g. visual impairment requiring specific environmental adjustments), and specific learning needs (e.g. complex combinations of multiple severe learning needs such as ADHD, ASD and OCD). Separate invigilation will not be considered in the vast majority of cases as very often the student will be sitting normal internal assessments with their classmates, and therefore the evidence of need and evidence for “normal way of working” is not there.
- Word processors** – if a student uses a laptop in day to day lessons then it is their normal way of working and they may be allowed the use of one in an examination it will have all external communications disabled, and spelling and grammar checking disabled.
- Scribes and Readers** – They are increasingly being discouraged as an examination access arrangement. Both arrangements require a degree of familiarity between the student and the scribe/reader and need to be in place from Year 9 onwards at the very latest in order to be effective. There is also the concern that there is an implication for marks that are based on quality of communication, which are generally not attainable for the users of these arrangements.

APPENDIX 2

Use of Word Processors in Examinations

A word processor cannot be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor MUST reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

This list helps to identify candidates who might benefit from the use of a word processor, although it is not exhaustive.

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisation problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting

A word processor will be provided with the spelling and grammar checkers and predictive text facility switched off. Exam note is the software installed on word processors used for examination purposes. Word processors will be in good working order at the time of the examination.

Candidates may use their answer booklet in addition to the word processor if they wish to do so.

Candidates must save their work at regular intervals. No reminders can be given to save work.

Printing must be carried out after the examination is over, and the candidate MUST be present to verify that the work printed is his/her own.

Candidates must ensure that their centre number, candidate number and unit code are typed or handwritten on each page.

A JCQ word processor cover sheet must be completed and attached to the candidate's script.