

**Beech Lodge School**  
**DISABILITY POLICY (EXAMS)**  
**2020/21**

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

<b>Approved/reviewed by</b>	Lucy Barnes
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2021

**Key staff involved in the policy**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Names</b>
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<b>Head of Centre</b>	<b>Lucy Barnes</b>
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<b>Access arrangement facilitator/Exams Officer</b>	<b>Laura Solari/ Sarah Johnstone</b>

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## **Purpose of the policy**

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how the centre

*“recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates...*

*†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”*

[section 5.4 of the current JCQ publication [General regulations for approved centres](#)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

## **The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability**

A definition is provided on page 4 of the current 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 [AA](#).

## **Identifying the need for access arrangements**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Head of centre**

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangement process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor is appointed and that evidence of the qualification of the person is held on file
- Ensures that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- Ensures that opportunities are made for the specialist assessor to undertake yearly training with specific regard to access arrangements
- Support the SENCo/exams officer in determining the need for implementing access arrangements
- Ensures the qualified assessor has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments

## Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)
- Ensures the need for access arrangements put in place for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments

## Specialist Assessor/Exams Officer

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)
- Undertakes regular CPD training relevant to the role
- Ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams
- Leads on the access arrangement process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidates *normal way of working* within the centre
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre inspector, evidence of the assessors qualification
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes the appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

## Teaching staff & support staff

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Ensures the need for access arrangements put in place for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the needs(s) of a candidate
- Provides information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate

## Use of word processors

A copy of the centre's word processor policy (exams) is held in a separate exams folder in the administration room and a second copy is held by the exams officer. Electronic copies are also held on the staff drive for all staff to access. In addition, an electronic copy is available on the school website for parents and candidates to view.

The official centre statement as required under JCQ publication AA 5.8 is shown below.

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates at Beech Lodge School, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

### **Awarding word processors**

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability/impairment
- a sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand – this may stem motor planning issues such as Dyspraxia or alternatively language processing issues
- Poor/illegible handwriting

It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions ie. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. The need to use a word processor may be considered on a subject by subject basis as some examinations require more simplistic answers and are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet.

Conversely, other examinations require a significant amount of writing or place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers and these are where candidates will frequently need to type.

### **Allocating word processors**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer.

## **Requesting access arrangements**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Exams Officer/Specialist Assessor**

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) Section 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)
- Applies for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (*Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning*)

*difficulties*), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre

- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed by hand and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of [AA](#), are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- Makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:
  - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
  - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
  - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - in addition, for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#) (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- Following the appropriate process (AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of [AA](#); *JCQ Form 7* or *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

## Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

### Roles and responsibilities

#### External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE).

#### Head of centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Is familiar with the *Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#) (page 44)

- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)
- Ensures a record of the training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for enquiries about results has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates as detailed in [ICE 7](#) and [8](#)
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Liaises with the EO and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Liaises with the EO to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Liaises with the EO regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the EO regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures that the facilitator only has access to the papers 60 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Liaises with the SENCo/EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

### **Exams Officer**

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Is familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#) (page 44)
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures that the facilitator only has access to the papers 60 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time

- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Ensures that arrangements are in place in accordance with the JCQ ICE publication to print a script where a word processor is used and that the script is printed off under secure conditions
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early where preparation is required by the facilitator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter only)
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
  - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

### **SLT, teachers and support staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's emergency evacuation procedures may need to be in place to facilitate the arrangements for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

### **IT manager**

- Ensures that sufficient word processors are available and in good working order for all candidates who have been allocated use of a word processor in exams.
- Ensures that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination. Charging leads must also be provided.

- Ensures that the word processor satisfies the JCQ regulations in that it must not be connected to the internet or any other means of communication.
- Ensures that the spelling and grammar check/predictive text are disabled unless the candidate is permitted to use a scribe
- Ensures that any previously stored data has been cleared, as must any portable storage medium used.
- Ensures that any assistive technology relating to access arrangements such as electronic readers or voice to text software is working correctly prior to the exam.
- Arranges for the word processor to either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium.

### **Internal assessments**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

*“Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as ‘NEA’.”*

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments](#), Foreword]

### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)/Exams Officer (EO)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Provide the SENCo/EO with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Liaise with the SENCo/EO regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

### **Internal exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)/Exams Officer (EO)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

- Provide the SENCo/EO with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

## Facilitating access - examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations  Supervised rest breaks	<p><i>SEnCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p>
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader	<p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p>

	<p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p>	<p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>Original Form 8, signed by hand and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice</i></p>
<p>Persistent and significant difficulties with writing in an exam</p>	<p>Use of a word processor</p> <p>Use of voice to text technology and separate room</p> <p>Human scribe</p>	<p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Either word processor or scribe sourced for use in papers</i></p> <p><i>Original Form 8, signed by hand and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice</i></p>
<p>Significant difficulty in concentrating</p>	<p>Prompter</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p> <p>Supervised rest breaks</p>	<p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room)</i></p> <p><i>Candidates will be accompanied by a member of centre staff</i></p>
<p>A wheelchair user</p>	<p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>	<p><i>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment</i></p>