Oakwood Park Grammar School

Access Arrangements Policy

Key Staff Responsible for Awarding Access Arrangements in Examinations

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Dr C Morrison	Examinations Officer
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This policy is written in accordance with the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments [2025/2026]* and *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025/2026 [ICE]*.

These guidelines and this policy are updated annually. Their purpose is to outline how decisions are made for awarding our students access arrangements for their public examinations.

Rationale for Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements support students who are unable to demonstrate their ability in an assessment due to a learning and/or physical difficulty, a medical condition or other disability, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. These students would be at a substantial disadvantage to their peers and as such, reasonable adjustments are made to support.

Reasonable adjustments must not:

- change the demands of the assessment
- compromise the validity or security of the assessment
- give students any unfair advantage.

Access Arrangements must:

- reflect a student's normal way of working
- reflect the demands of each subject [thus students may have different arrangements for different subjects]
- be awarded according to evidence of need. This must be a history of need and current need from teachers first and foremost, supported by assessors' data and/or medical practitioners. It is stressed that medical letters will prompt an investigation, but do not automatically override the evidence seen in school. Thus, a student with a diagnosis of ASC does not automatically qualify for Access Arrangements purely on the basis of diagnosis. Teacher evidence of need must be in place for an arrangement to be applied for.

Access Arrangements available

There are a wide range of arrangements available for students in need. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Extra time
- Reader [live or computer reader]
- Scribe or speech recognition software
- Supervised rest breaks
- Sitting the exam in a separate/smaller room
- Exams printed on coloured paper [after alternative suitable arrangements have been explored]
- Word processing exams
- Prompter

All Access Arrangements are tailored to the individual student.

Access Arrangements cannot be granted in assessments where they will directly affect the focus skills being assessed. For example, a student cannot receive extra time in a practical examination with a timed component [eg a 2 minute Drama monologue], or a live reader for an English paper assessing reading.

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Stage 1: Early Screening

- Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified early in KS3 from Year 7 onwards. At this stage students are screened and needs identified, rather than formal assessment taking place.
- Adjustments to teaching within lessons are made according to need, to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring these adjustments.

Stage 2: Formal Testing

- Formal assessments for Access Arrangements are done in school by an external assessor who is appropriately qualified according to the JCQ guidelines. There is no cost to parents. Please note that these are not full diagnostic assessments and should parents require their child to be investigated for Dyslexia or other conditions, we will make a referral to external agencies accordingly.
- Formal assessments usually take place during Year 9 and Year 10.
- Permissions for Access Arrangements expire after 26 months and so we do not assess formally in Year 7 or Year 8 to avoid the need for re-testing later on. If students have undergone a formal assessment elsewhere during this time, or earlier at primary school, they will need to be re-tested when they reach Year 9 to comply with JCQ regulations. This is also the case for students with a diagnosis of Dyslexia.
- If students have a formal assessment outside school during Years 9 and 10, conducted by an assessor who does not meet JCQ qualification criteria, JCQ dictates that we will not be able to accept the assessment as evidence for Access Arrangements.
- Students with medical needs and diagnoses do not necessarily need to undertake formal testing.

Stage 3: Formal Application for Access Arrangements

- The outcomes of the formal assessments are recorded and summarised on JCQ Form 8 Part 2 by the assessor. These are then analysed and scores interpreted before making a decision to apply for an Access Arrangement.
- Students with medical needs or physical disability may not need to undergo a formal assessment if their diagnosis meets JCQ criteria. The SENCo will instead complete Form 9 to record evidence of need along with accompanying specialist evidence.
- *JCQ criteria states that supervised rest breaks are often more effective and appropriate than 25% extra time for candidates who experience anxiety or attention difficulties. They may better address the needs of neurodivergent candidates, such as those with ADHD or ASD, as well as those with a medical condition or mental health needs. SRBs need to be trialled and exhausted before extra time can be considered.*

- An online submission is then carried out by Student Development & Support. Feedback is instant and permission for the Access Arrangement is recorded and held by us in the student's digital folder.
- The student and parents/carers are notified in writing of the arrangements in place for the PPEs, other mock assessments and final examinations. We require these to be signed and returned to us, acknowledging that the arrangements may adjust according to any evidence of change of need.

Stage 4: Ensuring Access Arrangements are the student's 'normal way of working'

- Where formal Access Arrangements are awarded, the SENCo, in collaboration with teaching staff, will monitor and ensure that they continue to be normal working practice for the student. This means that the agreed Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments.
- If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change, or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then Access Arrangements can be removed.
- It is the responsibility of the SENCo to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the Examinations Officer and wider staff body.
- The SENCo and Examinations Officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in place for inspection purposes.

Moving from GCSE to 6th form

- OPGS students that received Access Arrangements for their GCSE examinations do not need to undergo another formal assessment for 6th form, as long as their original assessment meets current JCQ criteria. However, for the arrangement to continue, we will require:

    - evidence from teachers that there is still a need
    - evidence from assessments and mock examinations that their arrangement is not giving unfair advantage

  and this will be recorded by the SENCO on Form 8RF. Please note that students' existing Access Arrangements may adjust or may no longer be required, dependant on their subject choices and current needs.

- Students joining us from other schools, that received Access Arrangements at GCSE *may* need to undergo another formal assessment, dependant on the following factors:
    - Whether or not their previous assessor meets JCQ qualification criteria
    - Whether or not their previous assessment covered the Access Arrangements now required.

In all cases, we will speak to the SENCo at the previous school to establish what support was in place.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities Relating to Access Arrangements

SENCo:

- Liaise with DOS, teaching staff, SENCo, SDS Assistants and parents to identify where there is student need.
- Liaise with parents and DOS where there is a wellbeing need, gather evidence [eg CAMHS, GP, medical reports] and where an appropriate access arrangement [eg small room/headphones] may be required.
- Conduct screening assessments with Year 7 and 8 students as necessary.
- Compile history of need and current need evidence files for identified students.
- Compile medical evidence and diagnoses files for appropriate students.
- Liaise with SDS Assistants to provide strategies for teaching staff to support identified students and communicate such to teachers.
- Organise formal assessments of identified students and ensure this is recorded on JCQ Form 8.
- Interpret formal assessment scores and make decisions regarding appropriate Access Arrangements.
- Ensure that the agreed Access Arrangement provisions are in place for internal assessments and external examinations and are communicated to DOS, Examinations Officer, Teaching staff
- Submit Access Arrangements applications online.
- Confirm Access Arrangements in writing to parents/carers and students.
- Ensure the agreed Access Arrangement provision is updated on the school's SIMS & Edulink software.
- Manage the day to day questions and queries regarding Access Arrangement provision.
- Ensure that they, together with the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team and Examinations Officer are familiar with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidelines and regulations.
- Have available required evidence of Access Arrangements for the JCQ inspector especially in the event of an Access Arrangement inspection.

Examinations Officer

- Co-ordinate invigilator training in relevant Access Arrangements and timetabling.

- Ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.
- Deal with any emergencies, such as accidents or medical conditions, on the day of the exam
- Provide word processor/computer facilities when needed e.g examination laptops
- Ensure exam scripts are printed and verified by students at end of each exam
- Ensure relevant cover sheets e.g. scribe, are attached to exam scripts before submission to exam boards
- Have required evidence of Access Arrangements available for the JCQ inspector.

Invigilators

- Be aware of all students with Access Arrangements in the exam room.
- Be confident of the rules pertaining to each Access Arrangement.
- Ensure students with extra time are allowed to continue after the normal end time of the exam.
- Ask students to sign a disclaimer if they did not use their Access Arrangement.
- Supervise the printing of exam scripts for word processor users and ensure they are signed by student.
- When in a room with a laptop user, ensure their work is saved to a portable medium i.e. USB. Escort the student to the exam office for work to be printed if there is no printer in the exam room.
- Report to the Examinations Officer if the Access Arrangement was either not used or abused.

Teaching Staff:

- Provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties. This includes forwarding any appropriate parental correspondence evidencing need to the SENCo.
- Show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENCo.
- Detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- Ensure that the correct Access Arrangements are in place and adhered to for internal assessments.

Support offered to students with Access Arrangements

- Students with extra time are given information on how to use the additional time allowance effectively. They are then encouraged to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal exams and assessments.

- Students using computer readers are shown a range of software to suit their needs and are given time to experiment.
- SDS Assistants liaise with teaching staff to ensure that assessment papers for students using computer readers are appropriate and usable. They re-type assessments where necessary to make them reader compliant.
- In the event that a student does not wish to make use of their Access Arrangement in any given exam, they will be required to sign a form to indicate that they were aware that the Access Arrangement was available to them, but it was their choice not to use it.

Exceptional Circumstances

Temporary Arrangements

Temporary Access Arrangements may be required for a student suffering from unforeseen illness or injury or if there is a significant wellbeing concern. In these cases, the school must be informed at the earliest possible opportunity, and a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional detailing the problem should be obtained as soon as possible. OPGS will make every effort to accommodate these arrangements.

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. The candidate will have been fully prepared for the exams, but due to some unforeseen circumstance could not demonstrate what they knew.