



Fulston Manor School

Access Arrangements Policy

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Member of Staff Responsible:

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Deputy Head

Fulston Manor School - Access Arrangements Policy

What are Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and candidate's normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribe, and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of 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 on several factors including the needs of the 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." [JCQ website An overview]

General Principles

These include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her 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 does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 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) before his/her first examination.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Fulston Manor School fulfils *“its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.”* [JCQ ‘General regulations for approved centres’ Chapter 5.5]

This document is further referred to in this policy as GR.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication ‘Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments General and Vocational qualifications’ This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

Examinations Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Examinations Policy, which is also available to view on the school website. The access arrangements policy further covers the “Assessment of Need” process and related issues in more detail.

The Assessment of Need process

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Centre will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA
- ensure that processes for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’) for individual candidates is clearly defined and documented
- ensure that staff roles and responsibilities in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined in this policy
- ensure a qualified specialist assessor is appointed and that evidence of the appropriate qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file ensure that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations

The SENCO will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including AA lead on the access arrangements process including the use of Access Arrangements Online if not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- ensure that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- ensure arrangements put in place reflect a candidate’s normal way of working within the centre
- ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis
- present when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor’s qualification
- In addition, the SENCO will: provide and annually review a centre policy on the Access Arrangements provided

The Exams Officer will:

- Ensure that staff are assigned to students requiring Access Arrangements
- ensure that suitable rooms are provided for all external and internal examinations
- ensure criteria for candidates allowed separate invigilation within the centre is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main exam rooms
- maintain the Examinations Policy for the centre

Teaching staff will:

- inform the SENCO of any support that might be needed by a candidate provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- support the SENCO as required in identifying the need for access arrangements

The Specialist Assessor

The assessor is appropriately qualified as required in JCQ regulations in order to conduct appropriate assessments.

They will:

- identify the need(s) of a candidate
- provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate complete appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre.
- As an exam centre Fulston Manor School must be consistent in its decisions and ensure that no student is either given an unfair advantage or disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Therefore, should any parents submit any paperwork regarding access arrangements (obtained through private commission) we will look for evidence of a history of need.
- If the centre's diagnostic tests and evidence of need contradict privately commissioned reports, then the Academy's tests and assessments will take precedence and will inform AA decisions as JCQ regulations legally bind the school to rely on its own assessment of the candidates normal way of working.

How the assessment process is administered:

Teachers can notify the SENCO of any student who may potentially require access arrangements, and an assessment will be conducted by a qualified assessor.

The SENCO, SEND Administrator, Examinations Officer, and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.

Recording evidence of need

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with for example:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical Psychologist or Psychiatrist
- A letter from a hospital consultant
- A letter from the local Authority Educational Psychology Service
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist
- Staff information sheets/ data collection.

Gathering evidence of normal way of working:

Evidence is gathered to record normal way of working from:

- Classroom working environment
- Group work Intervention sessions
- Pre-Public examinations

Processing applications for access arrangements:

'Access Arrangements Online' is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites.

Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

At Fulston Manor School the SENCO / delegate will:

- Determine 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
- Follow guidance in centralised process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE qualifications
- Have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site to gain access to Access arrangements online
- Apply for approval where this is required, through Access Arrangements Online, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of Access Arrangements Online
- Ensure appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in Access Arrangements Online
- Confirm by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- Make an awarding body referral through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by Access Arrangements Online, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)

- ensure that arrangement, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- maintain 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 or appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre. Samples of marked timed test papers in EACH subject (for GCE) and 3 – 4 samples for GCSE.
 - For GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a printout of the AAO approval will be present in the files as requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

At Fulston Manor School the Examinations Officer will: create an exam timetable for all external exams, KS5, KS4 and KS3 internal examinations which includes suitable rooming and allows the SENCO to assign staff order modified papers.

Implementing Access Arrangements:

Extra Time in Examinations - Following an assessment, students who meet the current criteria for 25% or 50% extra time will initially be considered for rest breaks. If, in the opinion of the SENCO or the assessor, the granting of extra time will be more appropriate for the individual needs of the student, then a request for extra time will be made.

Separate invigilation within the centre - Access arrangements online is not required for this arrangement, though a SENCO note must be provided to show this is the students normal way of working in all major assessments. The Examinations Officer will ensure the appropriate rooming.

Use of a Prompter - Access arrangements online is not required for this arrangement. A prompter may be permitted where a candidate has a substantial and long-term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating.

Use of a Scribe - So as not to give an unfair advantage, a scribe will only be allowed where an impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's writing; or a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed, because of a substantial and long-term impairment.

The use of a scribe must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre in the light of their substantial and long-term impairment.

Use of an Examination Reader Pen - There is not a requirement to process an application for read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen using Access arrangements online. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes.

Supervised Rest Breaks - Access arrangements online is not required for this arrangement. The SENCO must produce a Form 9 that is signed, and dated, confirming the need for supervised rest breaks.

During the supervised rest break the candidate must not have access to the question paper/answer booklet. If the candidate needs to leave the examination room, an invigilator must accompany the candidate.

Use of Blu -Tak

The examinations team may allow students to use blu-tak as a strategy to support anxiety and fidgeting in examinations.

Movement to specific seats

Where a case of need is presented to the centre, the examinations team may be able to allocate specifically placed seats for students, however this is not in response to normal "exam anxiety" - it will be granted with a clear determined need.