

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Date of Latest Review:	June 2017
Next Review Date:	June 2020
Policy Available for Staff at:	VLE
Policy Available for Parents at:	Website
Headteacher:	Ms M Roberts

What are access arrangements?

"Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ^{CIC} 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, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

This policy links to:

Equalities & Accessibility Plan

Disability Policy (Exams)

Exams Contingency Plan

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 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."

[JCQ website [An overview](#)]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Joseph's College fulfils *"its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements."*

[JCQ `General regulations for approved centres Chapter 5.5]

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'*

Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in the Disability policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

This policy is available on the school's website.

The access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments for access arrangements are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required in JCQ regulations as follows:

- *an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8*

The centre assessor is currently: Mrs C Slattery. From September 2017, Miss B Barnett will also be a specialist assessor within the centre.

An access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which must include training in all of the following:

- *the theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals;*
- *the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested;*
- *the objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered;*
- *the appropriate selection and objective use of tests of cognitive skills*
- *the ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional...*

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

A copy of the assessor's qualification is held on file in the centre. The assessor is employed within the centre.

If the access arrangement applies to a pupil who is transferring into the centre and the assessor is not known to the centre, a copy of the assessor's qualification is requested.

How the assessment process is administered

A specialist assessor will test students with a special educational need and/or a disability who have been identified, by staff in the school, as possibly requiring an Exam Access Arrangement (EAA), in advance of KS4. The SENCO, or assessor working within the centre, will complete section A of Form B prior to the assessment. Once the assessment has been completed, section B will be completed, on the basis of section A and C, before an application is submitted.

NB The SENCO will make a decision on whether or not the pupil requires an EAA based on: the specialist assessor's report; teacher feedback and the history of need of the individual. Evidence to support an EAA should be available to show that there is a need and that it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. This could be a piece of work carried out in the classroom to show that the access arrangement has had a positive impact on the pupil's ability to access the assessment.

A data form is signed by the pupil to give their consent before the application is completed on-line. This is held on file.

Any student changing courses (GCSE to GCE) or educational establishments must have a new EAA applied for online. For year 12 students who have come from another educational establishment, we require the original tests that show a need for the EAA, a photocopy of the specialist assessor's qualification certificates and a fully completed and signed form 8 from the SENCO at their previous school. The SENCO will make a decision as to whether the information is sufficient to apply for an EAA; they must be satisfied that the EAA was their normal way of working at their previous school, therefore evidence of their work, showing that the arrangement has been used, should also be provided. In addition to this, new evidence should be collated to show that it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

The SENCO has the right to not accept private reports as evidence for an EAA. This is especially pertinent for private assessors who have made no contact with the school prior to the assessment of an individual to establish their normal way of working in the classroom or to get the perspective of the individual's classroom teachers to come to any conclusions in their report.

Specialist assessors will assess students using a variety of nationally recognised tests such as:

- Access Reading Comprehension Test
- Wide Range Achievement Test
- (i) Spelling
- (ii) Single-word reading
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2
- Test of Word Reading Efficiency

Students may be formally tested in Year 9 so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for examinations. We cannot use evidence from tests completed before year 9 as evidence for EAA.

Recording evidence of need

Evidence is recorded using:

- JCQ's form 8, involving the specialist teacher known by the centre
- For centre designated decisions, a letter headed form is completed
- Records are kept of pupils' use of access arrangements in internal and external exams

Gathering evidence of *normal way of working*

Evidence is requested from teachers to show why there is a need and that the arrangement has been the candidate's normal way of working in the classroom before a formal request is made.

SEN records will show those pupils who have accessed small group &/ or 1-1 interventions due to literacy needs.

For internal assessments and exams, the arrangements are put in place so that the candidate is familiar with this way of working. Records are kept by the exams officer to show the use of the arrangements.

Should pupils not use their access arrangement, the SENCO may decide that it will be withdrawn.

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

Processing applications for access arrangements

Access arrangements online

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.

"For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online 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.

The school uses access arrangements online when it has been determined that an arrangement is required for candidates by the SENCO.

The SENCO, with the support of the senior leadership team, is responsible for access arrangements.

For most students, applications are submitted for GCSE before the start of the course.

For GCE students, applications are submitted within the first term of the course beginning.

Other applications are made as required if the SENCO has determined that there is a need and sufficient evidence to support this.

It is important to note that any application must be made before the deadlines published by JCQ.

The access arrangement file is kept in the exams office with a copy in the SEN department.

In the case of an access arrangement not being approved, the SENCO will inform parents.

A list of students who have been granted an access arrangement is generated and distributed to all relevant staff.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

The SENCO, in consultation with colleagues, will determine the need for centre designated access arrangements based on evidence of need and the normal way of working within the centre.

Evidence of need and normal way of working is gathered as for those arrangements requiring an on-line application.

A centre designated form is used to record what arrangements have been granted. This is on school headed paper and is completed by the SENCO. A copy is held on file.

A list of students who have been granted an access arrangement is generated and distributed to all relevant staff.

Word processor policy

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Decisions about word processor use are made by the SENCO in consultation with colleagues. A decision to allow the use of a word processor is a centre decision and is recorded on the centre designated form as above.

Students requiring a word processor must have used one as part of their normal way of working in class, for home learning, assessments and exams.

It is important to note that the spell checker facility would need to be disabled when a candidate is using a word processor.

The school does not currently have a separate policy on the use of word processors.

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be based on whether the candidate:

- *...has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and*
- *where it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.*

Decisions about separate invigilation use are made by the SENCO in consultation with colleagues. A decision to allow the use of separate invigilation is recorded on the centre designated form as above.

Students requiring separate invigilation must have had this as part of their normal way of working in the centre.

The school does not currently have a separate policy on the use of separate invigilation.