



Access Arrangements Policy

Policy adapted from (if applicable):

Governing Body Sub-committee

Name:

Curriculum & Performance

Date approved:

24 May 2018

Introduction

This policy should be read on conjunction with the following Belper School policies:

- Equality Plan
- SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Word Processor Policy

Up to date versions of all these policies are available on the school website

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements (AA)

“Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual 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’.”*

[A A Definitions, page 3]

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.”

[AA Definitions, page 3]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Belper School & Sixth Form Centre complies with its “...*obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...*” [Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, 5.5. This publication 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*. This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor(s) is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

The current assessor is Ros Conroy and her qualification is ‘IQ Level 7 Organisation Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements’ (PAPAA)

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

The school has facilitated a member of staff acquiring the relevant qualifications and she had been appointed by the Head of Centre to this role. This qualification has been confirmed with the relevant awarding body. A record of this is held with the approved Access Arrangement record in the Exam Office ready for inspection.

In Belper School the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) works in conjunction with the assessor to gather all the relevant supporting evidence, completing and validating the applications made on behalf of our students. This is good practice to ensure quality assurance of this process.

How the assessment process is administered

Students are identified for access arrangements by various means. Those with arrangements in place for KS2 are identified on transfer. Other students are identified as part of the Y7 assessment screening process that takes place on entry to the school. In all cases subject teachers are made aware of the students possible needs within the classroom.

It is for subject teachers to confirm the student's usual way of working within the classroom and evidence how this enables the student to adequately and fairly demonstrate their abilities. A clear picture of need must be established around the student.

Some student needs are not apparent during the assessment screening process. In these cases, the subject teachers contact the Learning Support Department to make them aware of the student's usual way of working within the class.

In all cases the student's needs are then further assessed by the school's assessor to confirm that they meet the appropriate level's required for access arrangements to be applied for.

Note for **private candidates** the centre must

"...undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate. **This includes distance learners and home educated students.** The centre, where required, **must** lead on the assessment process. The candidate **must** be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor. " [GR 5.4]

Recording evidence of need

Evidence of student need is recorded on Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD (Learning Difficulties) Profile of Learning Difficulties. Section A of this form is completed by the SENCO and a skeleton outline must be completed prior to assessment of the candidate and completion of Section C. The evidence needed for private candidates must be recorded in the same way.

This form can be supported by the following supplementary evidence (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Emails from subject/support staff
- Centre devised recording of needs observed by subject teachers
- Centre devised test recording sheets identifying impact of access arrangement under test conditions

- Reports from external medical agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS), Speech & Language etc.
- Reports from external Local Authority agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, Disability Outreach Teachers
- Private commissioned assessments (although those taking place during the secondary phase of education must be done in consultation with the school)

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the Head of Centre or the SENCO should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.

[AA 7.3]

Gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*

Evidence relating to being able to demonstrate the candidate's *normal way of working* is something that should be gathered throughout the student's school life. Subject teachers will receive transfer information from the Learning Support Department relating to students who received access arrangements during KS2. During the Y7 screening process they will be made aware of other students with the potential to require access arrangements. For those students whose needs develop over the time of their secondary education, or who transfer in from other secondary schools without prior information, subject teachers will need to monitor their progress in the classroom and make the Learning Support Department aware of any observed needs.

Subject teachers can make the Learning Support Department aware of student needs in the following ways

- Emails detailing the *normal way of working*
- In-school assessment feedback forms attached to scripts detailing the impact of the access arrangement

This information will be used to form the *body of evidence* to support the application for access arrangements.

Private candidates should still have a *body of evidence* to support their application for access arrangements. This will be gathered via liaison between the SENCO, assessor and the tutor.

Bear in mind *normal way of working* as defined by JCQ...

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, for example:

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *literacy intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *mock examinations.*

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8 by the SENCO or the assessor working within the centre.

SENCOs and assessors must refer to section 7.6.1, page 87, for information on how to confirm ‘normal way of working’. †The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment ...”

[AA 4.2]

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications listed on page 2 of AA. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

In Belper School the process for application using Access arrangements online is the responsibility of the SENCO and assessor together. These applications are submitted as soon after the beginning of the course as possible. The application process is triggered once the SENCO feels a sufficient *body of evidence* has been gathered and that the *normal way of working* has been established.

Access arrangement files containing signed Form 8s, all supporting evidence and record of approved arrangements are kept in the schools Exam Office.

Some access arrangements (atypical ones) may require direct submissions to exam boards. These are also kept with the above mentioned files. Records of all cases that did not gain approval are kept in a separate file, but still in the Exam Office.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

In Belper School the processes for dealing with centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded) is as follows.

The student still requires a *body of evidence* to support the *normal way of working* for the access arrangement. This can take the form of the following

- Emails detailing the *normal way of working*
- In-school assessment feedback forms attached to scripts detailing the impact of the access arrangement

This arrangement is then recognised by a 'Note to File' on school headed note paper and signed by the SENCO. The Note contains the access arrangement granted, recognition of *normal way of working* and the need to be overcome e.g. illegible handwriting, lack of focus etc.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word processor policy (exams)

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. An up to date version of school's policy is available on the school website

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCO. However, this has to be a reasonable adjustment and may be subject to the school's rooming and staffing availability.

The decision will be based on

“whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect and the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.” [AA 5.16]

Separate invigilation within the centre is appropriate for those students who fall into the following categories:

- Students receiving Out of School Tuition as arranged by the school in recognition of an acknowledged medical need and who is able to attend school for the purpose of external assessments
- Students who have had sustained input from outside agency e.g. CAMHS and at the recommendation of the practitioner and who no longer attend mainstream lessons
- Students who attend school, but do not attend mainstream lessons due to their needs

This access arrangement **must** reflect the candidate's normal way of working and is not something that can be requested after the mock exam process has been completed for KS4.

It is recognised that some students may be receiving CAMHS input, but the separate invigilation does not reflect their *normal way of working*. For these students, their views will be sought as to the most appropriate area the school has to meet their needs and still be invigilated as part of the school population e.g. appropriate seating in the Sports Hall or the Gym, etc.

For some students even separate invigilation is beyond their capacities and arrangements are made for these students to sit their external assessments off-site but still under the supervision of the school. The decision will be made by the SENCO and is only suitable for those students who

- Are receiving Out of School Tuition as arranged by the school in recognition of an acknowledged medical need and it is their normal way of working to be assessed off-site
- Have an emergency medical need that requires off-site administration of external assessments

Management of the Policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Curriculum & Performance Committee of the school's Governing Body if there are changes to be made. These changes will be in response to changes made in the JCQ guidelines issued annually. Should there be no changes to make then the policy will only be reviewed every 3 years.