

Access Arrangement Policy

Key staff involved in the policy:

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Katie Pragnell
Head of Centre	David Lloyd

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as 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 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'.

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010* requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the cost of the adjustment
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body
- involves unreasonable timeframes
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Priory School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

(JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as General Regulation.

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically she must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes 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 principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate. Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. 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)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

The assessment process

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

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The Centre's SENCo is a qualified assessor and undertakes exam access assessments. In the event that the Centre needs to use the services of an external assessor e.g. full Dyslexia Screening, DSA Assessment, recommendations will be given to parents. In the event that the Centre is contacted by another external assessor the following process is in place to check qualifications. Assessor requested to provide copies of certification/HPC or SASC registration, or other suitable evidence, confirming that they hold appropriate qualifications. These are then signed off by the Head of Centre. No student assessment can take place until the assessor qualifications have been verified and a Form 8, with Sections 1 completed, has been provided by the school to the assessor. In the event of a pupil joining the school, with learning disabilities that qualifies them for exam access arrangements, where possible, the previous school is contacted to request a current Form 8 and associated proof of assessor qualifications. These are then signed off by the Head of Centre, or SENCo.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Assessors' qualifications are held centrally in the exams office and in the exam files in the secure room, available for inspection when requested.

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

The SENCo gathers evidence to develop a full learning profile and detailed picture of need, including information from teaching staff, the pupils, parents and other professionals where appropriate. If a substantial need is identified, then the SENCo will arrange for appropriate assessment of the pupil.

JCQ regulations state that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process an application. However, SENCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.

Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENCo gathers information and evidence from teachers throughout the school year, including teacher feedback forms; discussions with the student and parents; discussions with external agencies; and from internal tests and exams. If an independent assessor contacts the centre regarding pupil assessment, then the school and assessor must work together to gain evidence of the candidate's

normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate. All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments 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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included.

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Applications are processed as close to the beginning of the course (S4) as possible by the SENCo. Form 8 and evidence are kept on file in the secure exams room. For applications which are not approved, as they require Awarding Body approval, evidence is submitted via AAO. The exams officer will liaise with the SENCo regarding the ordering of modified papers. The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. The SENCo must complete the Data protection confirmation and the Personal data consent form prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For centre delegated arrangements/adjustments, evidence of need is gathered and kept on file, including a concise form on centre headed paper, signed and dated by the SENCo, confirming the need for the arrangements.

Centre-specific criteria for specific arrangements/adjustments

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Alternative Rooming Policy

The SENDCo will decide and approve any alternative rooming arrangements for exam candidates within the centre. 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

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre. It is known to a Form Tutor, Head of Senior School/ Vice Principal, the SENCo, or DSL. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

Authorised by the Principal, Mr David EJJ Lloyd

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