



TOWNSEND
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY (Exams)

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Anthony Flack	
Date of next review	Autumn 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Anna Philpott
Senior leader	Hazel Line
Head of centre	Anthony Flack
Exams officer	Gordana Kovacevic
Assessor	Anita Barker
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Gordana Kovacevic & Tracy Sibley

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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; **and**
- 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; **or**
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Townsend CoE 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.

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 they **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 JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury.

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and/or significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

The SENCo **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equalities Policy (Exams) is available on <https://townsend.herts.sch.uk/exams/>

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

The qualification of the current assessor

The current assessor **Anita Barker** has a certificate in IQ Level Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA) a copy of which is in the Access Arrangements File and in the Exam Office. This assessor was recommended to us by the school where she is employed as their designated assessor, which is part of the local consortium schools in our area.

Appointment of assessors

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The head of centre/senior leadership team have a written process in place to check the qualifications of the assessor and that the correct procedures are followed, as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

The head of centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagements/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.

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

All arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment and before the published deadline apart from applications due to temporary injury or impairment.

Access arrangements can only be applied for if the candidate meets all of the following criteria:

- They must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010
- The Access Arrangement/s being applied for must be their normal way of working
- Their disability is persistent and/or significant
- There must be evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Teaching staff must provide evidence of the need and the provision of reasonable adjustments in the classroom, to meet the candidate's needs, due to their disability
- Written confirmation must be provided to say that without the Access Arrangement applied for, the candidate would continue to be at a substantial disadvantage.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before any candidate is assessed, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information regarding their picture of need using the following process outlined in - https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/10/JCQ-Parent-guidance-information-sheet-2025_26.pdf

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of the Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.

Years 7, 8 and 9

All students who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disability at their primary school or who have been identified during years 7, 8 and 9, will be monitored to build up a history of need and provision.

Year 10

Parents/carers of students who have a history of persistent and significant need will be contacted to let them know that their child will be included in the group of students to be formally assessed before the end of the Academic Year. Following the formal assessment and if there is sufficient evidence and history of need, an application for Access Arrangements will be made, in consultation with the student and their parent/carers.

Parents/carers and the student will be informed as to whether or not the application has been approved.

Students with Access Arrangements will use them in Year 10 trial exams in the summer term as their normal way of working.

Year 11

Students with Access Arrangements will practise use them in all assessments/examinations and during trial Exams in Yr11 as their normal way of working.

All students with Access Arrangements must continue to be in need of the arrangement and use it for the duration of the examination series otherwise it may be withdrawn.

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) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre, and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place.

Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The SENCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, 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);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by SENCO and Exams Officer.

Some access arrangements/adjustments may be granted by the centre including:

- Use of a word processor
- Supervised rest breaks
- Small setting/alternative room
- Coloured overlays
- Prompts and readers
- Bilingual dictionary
- Non electronic ear defenders

Although the above arrangements do not require an online application to be submitted, centre delegated arrangements still require appropriate evidence to be held on file and must reflect the student's normal way of working.

Centre-specific criteria for particular 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.

The Word Process Policy (Exams) is available on <https://townsend.herts.sch.uk/exams/>

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCo.

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 (AARA 5.16)