



Parent Support Guide

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements for Examinations

The Thomas Aveling School receives a number of requests each year regarding Access Arrangements for students in public examinations. Every year, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes the updated requirements and evidence needed for students to qualify for Access Arrangements. We have therefore created this document to clarify for parents and carers these requirements and make clear the evidence the school needs to provide to the Examination boards in order to support any claim for Access Arrangements.

Access Arrangements - Access Arrangements are non-standard arrangements approved before the examinations take place in order to enable candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments. *The Equality Act 2010* requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate would be **at a substantial disadvantage** in comparison to someone who is not disabled

The examination boards will not consider applications in respect of long-term conditions that are submitted only weeks before the exams. It is essential therefore, that we are informed of existing circumstances that might justify Access Arrangements as soon as possible, **preferably on joining the school or by the end of Year 9 at the latest.**

Arrangements can then be made to screen the students, test them and accommodate the particular needs of students in internal exams. This will allow us to test the effectiveness of such arrangements, and will provide grounds for their implementation at GCSE and A Level.

When applying for Access Arrangements we are required to work within the framework laid down by the JCQ.

These regulations are very complex, and are updated each academic year with often some significant changes. The current guidance for 2022-2023 can be viewed on the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/

Key members of staff at The Thomas Aveling School :

Role	Name(s)
Specialist Qualified Assessor & SENCo	Raffaella Rosina
AHT for Inclusion	Rebekah Chew
AHT in charge of assessment & exams	Mike Baker
Exam Officer	Kerry Clark
Assisstant SENCo	Samantha Laker
SENCo & AA Administrator	Jessica Milliner

Please use senco@thomasaveling.co.uk if you wish to contact the school about Access Arrangements.

How are students identified as needing Access Arrangements?

Students are generally identified by teacher concern and then referred to the SENCo team and the Specialist Assessor. Parents or carers can also refer students. Following a referral, the SENCo team will liaise with key subject teachers and members of staff to start collecting evidence of needs. The Specialist Assessor will then screen the students and, if required, carry out assessments in the following areas: single word reading, reading comprehension, reading speed, spelling, typing speed, writing speed and cognitive processing speed. Following the assessments if a student is identified to have substantial difficulties it will be recommended that they are allowed to trial an Access Arrangement dependent upon what their specific difficulty is.

Privately commissioned reports

The school has to present a '**compelling**' case that the student's learning difficulty has '**a substantial and adverse effect**' on the student's performance in exams. Any private report will only form part of the school's evidence and the school will then have to carry out testing on the student. It is the results of the **testing carried out by the school** that will be used in the application with reference made to the scores within the private report that has been submitted. As per JCQ regulations, it is the SENCo who will have the final decision if and which Access Arrangements to award based on the test scores, the evidence submitted and in discussion with the student's subject teachers.

Additional evidence required

For all Access Arrangements the SENCo must also produce a document that, according to JCQ, 'paints a holistic picture of need'. This confirms a student's **normal way of working** in school and could contain the following:

- Arrangements used in assessments at the end of primary school;
- Comments and observations of teaching staff;
- Interventions used during years 7,8 and 9 (tuition, targeted support given, small group work);
- Screening test results;
- Reasonable Adjustments used when working in the classroom.

Definition of each Access Arrangement:

Reader – for students who have significant reading difficulties. A trained member of staff will read the words or sentences in the examination paper that are requested by the student. A Reader is not allowed to explain the meaning of words. A Reader may only read word for word what is printed on the examination paper. A reader is allowed in all subjects **except** GCSE English Section on Reading and Modern Foreign Language Reading exams.

25% Extra Time – for students who have at least two below average test score for processing speed or cognitive functions.

Students will receive 25% extra time in the timed examinations. Students may choose to use the extra time to proof read, complete their answers, check the quality of their work and improve their answers.

Scribe – for students who are unable to write their exam answers at a speed in line with their processing ability.

Students dictate their answers to a trained member of staff. The member of staff records word for word what the student says. A scribe is allowed in all subjects except Modern Foreign Language exams. In subjects where separate marks are being awarded for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) the student will not be credited the marks for spelling and punctuation. They will be awarded marks for grammar. Subjects that award separate marks for SPaG are:

- GCSE English/English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE History
- GCSE RS

Supervised Rest Breaks – for students with a medical or psychological condition. Students may take a break from the examination. They must raise their hand and ask an invigilator permission to take a break. The invigilator will note the time on an incident log and escort the student on a short break or allow the student to have a break from working at their desk. Students can usually take a few minutes. The time that they are out of the examination room will be added onto the end of the exam. Supervised Rest breaks are allowed in all exams except listening exams.

Bilingual Dictionary – for students whose first language is not English. Students will have a dictionary in their first language placed on their examination desk. Students can not use their own dictionary; they must be clean copies supplied by the Examinations Officer. Students can refer to the dictionary as little or as much as is needed.

A bilingual translation dictionary must not however be used in the following GCE and GCSE examinations: a) English/English Language examinations; b) Irish or Welsh Language examinations; or c) Modern Foreign Language examinations testing one of the languages of the dictionary or a similar language, for example a Portuguese dictionary in a Spanish examination. Additionally, due to the assessment of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, a bilingual dictionary must not be used in: a) GCSE English Literature examinations; b) GCSE Geography examinations; c) GCSE History examinations; d) GCSE Religious Studies examinations; and e) GCSE Welsh Literature examinations.

Laptop – for students whose handwriting is illegible or who have a medical condition that makes it difficult to write.

Students will be provided with an examination laptop for all exams except maths. They are not allowed to use their own laptop. Access is restricted to Microsoft word only. The spell check facility will be turned off. At the end of the exam, students will have their work printed off and they must sign to verify that the typed script printed correspond to the work they have produced.

Prompter – for students who have a medical condition or diagnosis resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating. A trained member of staff will act as a Prompter and will assist the student to keep focusing on the exam paper to answer a question or move on to the next question.

Accommodation – for students with Access Arrangements or students who require a smaller setting. Students will be accommodated in a smaller room for their examinations where they might be on their own or with a smaller group of students. Please be aware that point 5.16 of the JCQ regulations states: “nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.” The student’s disability needs to be established and well known to the SENCO and teachers in school before considering the need for separate invigilation.

Support for students

Subject teachers are instrumental in ensuring that students are regularly and effectively using the awarded Access Arrangements in their lessons and subject. The Specialist Assessor and the SEN team regularly update the Access Arrangement lists, discuss Access Arrangement with the students & staff in order to confirm arrangements, trouble shoot any issues and ensure students know how to make the most of the arrangements that have been awarded.

Conclusion

Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments that should level the playing field. They are not in place to create an unfair advantage, nor should they disadvantage a young person. Access Arrangements may only be provided to students who qualify as per JCQ regulations.

See Appendix below- **Deadlines for submitting AA applications to JCQ**

Links to other documentation:

- JCQ access arrangements and Deadlines for submitting AA applications to JCQ:
www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/
- Equality Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- SEND Code of Practice 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- Children and Families Act 2014
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>