

Access Arrangements (Exams) Policy

Harrow Way Community School





ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (Exams) POLICY 2024-2025

This policy, like all school policies, is to be implemented in accordance with the principles and practice stated in our Equality Scheme.

Harrow Way Community School's Policy for Exam Access Arrangements is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Access Arrangements and reasonable Adjustments' booklet, applicable from 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023. These are the regulations with which the school complies and this policy outlines how we do this.

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Purpose of the policy

Our Exam Access Arrangements Policy explains the activity undertaken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), which includes those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND). The policy supports and facilitates the school's aim to create a learning environment in which every student can fulfil his or her full potential.

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs Emma Law
Senior leader(s)	Mrs Katy Woods Mr Paul Townsend
Head of centre	Mrs Dawn German
Assessor(s)	Mrs Pat Dale
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Teaching Assistants Exams Office Staff

Section 1 - What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a student accessing an examination caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties, without creating any unfair advantage or compromising the integrity of an assessment. These arrangements are agreed before an assessment, and reflect a student's normal way of working within the school.

Section 2 - 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. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.



Section 3 - Available Exam Access Arrangements include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe/Speech to text facility
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for exams
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. enlarged or modified papers)
- Language modifier

A reasonable adjustment may not be included in the list of available access arrangements because it may be unique to an individual.

Section 4 - Note on Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or other Access Arrangements. Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money, putting those unable to obtain a private report due to financial circumstances at a disadvantage. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. External Assessors are required to contact the SENCO before carrying out the assessment. The SENCO will provide the Assessor with any existing information about previous support and current difficulties. A student's '**normal way of working**' in school is key, and Access Arrangements will not be awarded purely on the basis of a private report. In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.

Section 5 - Temporary Arrangements

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main room near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is



not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

Section 6 - How do SENCOs establish the candidate's normal way of working when completing assessments?

There are a variety of sources a SENCO could use to paint a picture of need and establish normal way of working:

- refer to the candidate's responses on the centre's application form regarding their difficulties and any previous access arrangements;
- *have a detailed conversation with the private candidate, and where relevant their parent(s)/carer(s), or those with other caring or educational responsibilities, identifying their difficulties, including those which are self-reported, when working under timed conditions;
- where relevant, information from the candidate's distance learning provider or a qualified private tutor. This information could be relayed, for example, by email, telephone or video call;
- information from a previous centre which may include:
 - an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an Individual Learning Plan (ILP);
 - arrangements made for Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests;
 - arrangements made for any previous internal and/or external examinations and assessments;
 - where relevant, a copy of the approval sheet from Access arrangements online;
 - where relevant, centre-based evidence used by the previous centre to support an online application. This could include a fully completed Form 8, accompanied by evidence of the assessor's qualification;
 - any other evidence of support from a previous centre;
- *the conducting of screening tests for a candidate with learning difficulties;
- *setting the private candidate assessments (for example, awarding body past papers) to establish the need for 25% extra time or a scribe. For extra time, the candidate could be given the allocated time for the paper, then change their pen colour and continue for an extra 25% of the time allowed. This would help to establish whether extra time is used effectively;

- a work log The candidate is asked to keep a log of their working methods for assignments, for example, support with reading or spelling from another individual or the use of technology, and the time taken to complete the work;
- samples of work The candidate is asked to provide examples of their work to evidence any difficulties (e.g. issues with legibility or spelling) or support (e.g. the use of dictation software, the use of a laptop with spellcheck switched on)

*Where a private candidate is unable to attend the centre for a conversation or assessment, communication can take place, where appropriate, remotely by phone or via a video call. No specialist remote invigilation software is required.

Section 7 - Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Students will be identified for consideration for Access Arrangements in one of the following ways:

- They had an Access Arrangement in KS2 for their National Curriculum Tests
- Subject Teacher referral, specifically English teachers
- Information from previous schools
- They are known to the Special Needs department

Section 8 - Testing and applying for Access Arrangements

When a student is brought to the attention of a SENCO in one of the above ways, the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator will investigate further. If further testing or screening is indicated, this will be carried out and parents informed. The outcomes of the assessments will be recorded and summarised; where an Access Arrangement is recommended due to a learning difficulty, JCQ Form 8 Part 2 (the assessor's report) will be completed and used as evidence for online submission of a formal Access Arrangement application. The school will then apply to the Awarding Bodies using the Access Arrangements Online application system. The feedback is instant, and, where the Access Arrangement is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the student and informed in writing.

A Form 9 must be completed for the following:

- candidates with communication and interaction needs
- candidates with a medical condition (formally diagnosed by a registered specialist)
- candidates with sensory and/or physical needs
- candidates with social, emotional and mental health needs
- candidates with speech, language and communication needs
- candidates with learning difficulties who are subject to a current EHCP (England), Statement of Special Educational Needs (Northern Ireland) or IDP (Wales)

- candidates with learning difficulties who require a computer reader/reader but do not require extra time or a scribe
- all candidates requiring supervised rest breaks.

The evidence of need is held on file, and the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator monitors and ensures that the Access Arrangement is normal working practice for the student within school.

Section 9 - Evidence needed for Access Arrangements

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), depending on the arrangement required. These could include:

- Form 8 report from Access Arrangements Assessor
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers - examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. spelling, writing, reading comprehension tests
- Any letters from outside agencies, hospitals or doctors
- Statement of Educational Need (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Once the Access Arrangement is granted, this evidence will be held on file and available for inspection, together with:

- Permission from the awarding body for the arrangement
- A data protection notice signed by the student

Section 10 - Deadlines for Access Arrangement Applications Year 11

The school deadline to submit evidence and request Access Arrangements for a student in Year 11 is October half term. This allows the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any Access Arrangements. The Year 10 examinations should provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

Section 11 - Notification of Access Arrangements Outcome

The SENCO will issue two copies of the Candidate Notification Form to the student, which will provide information on the access arrangement(s) awarded and how they will be applied. The student will sign both copies – one copy is for the candidate to keep for reference and the other copy will be kept on file.

Section 12 - Training for Teaching Assessments

The Exams Officer will deliver training to the team of teaching assistants once a year in the autumn term. A record of attendees and training notes will be kept on file.

Section 13 - Malpractice

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations.

Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working
- Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Committee Responsible for Review:	Student and Curriculum
Ratified by Governing Body:	08/01/2025
Date of next Review due by:	08/01/2026