

Exams Access Arrangements Policy

2023/24



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Education Intent Statement

At Fen Rivers School we want every learner to achieve a state of wellbeing in which they realise their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses and strains of everyday life; can work productively and fruitfully and are able to make a contribution to their community.

To enable our students to make progress and experience success in their learning and go on to further training or employment, we achieve this through engaging **people** positively with their **purpose** through learning and future life aspirations. All our pupils achieve positive outcomes, thrive and enjoy a quality education that is delivered by skilled, passionate people with high expectations in a **place** that is safe, high quality and appropriate. We call these our three P's.

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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Fen Rivers 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as **General Regulations**. This policy is maintained and held by the ALS Exams Officer and SENCo alongside the individual files of each student, that hold the details of their access arrangements. Each file/e-folders 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. (AA 4.2) 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**. This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

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 them 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 a disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, 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 adjustments 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.

See Equalities Policy : The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates. This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.

For any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR section 5.4) The Access Arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail. (General Regulations 5.4)

The Assessment Process

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

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

Level 7 Assessor obtained through the University of Warwick

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 qualification certificate is checked by Heidi Leggett Exams Officer and Amanda Fewkes Head of Centre on an annual basis. A copy of the certificate is kept in the Access Arrangements / Exams Officer's file.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The assessor's qualifications are held in the Access Arrangements file. Our Assessor is Jodie Reedman, Assistant Headteacher and SENDco, who also holds NASENCo and Level 7 Access Arrangements Qualifications. She has been appointed by the school and works with all staff to ensure normal ways of working are reflected in access arrangements for students so none are unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in line with expectations in Access Arrangements regulations. (AA 7.4 Reporting the appointment of assessors.)

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

Significant effort is made to ensure that the assessment process is administered correctly. Students are identified as requiring Access Arrangements through baseline assessments or by classroom teachers. This is confirmed through the gathering of evidence by the classroom teacher. Once sufficient evidence is gathered students are asked to sign Data Protection statements and the first section of the form eight is completed. The assessments are made by an individual who holds the appropriate qualification who is then able to make recommendations regarding the appropriate access arrangements. The Form eights are then completed and the online applications are made.

The school ensures "... that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments..." [GR 5.4]

Note... 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 (AA 7.3)

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

All Evidence is kept within the Exams Officer's examination folder. The evidence is discussed on a half termly basis with the SEN meeting held between the class teams and SENCo to determine quality and relevance. There is an expectation that these files are added to as more evidence is gathered through all subject teachers. Students are supported in lessons through laptops, JCQ compliant reading pens / e-readers, overlays and modified tasks. The outcome of these tasks is used to produce an evidence file that is kept within the school on the child's record on provision map. This evidence can be used to demonstrate a student's normal way of working as defined by JCQ.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor (if not the SENCo) must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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.** 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. (AA 7.5)**

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. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

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.

All assessments and data are kept within the exam officer's office within the Access Arrangement file along with the applications and their outcomes. Data and evidence pertaining to student for which access arrangements were applied for but not awarded are kept within the access arrangements file. The SENCo has responsibility for the information.

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. (AA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

All centre delegated access arrangements are provided on the basis of relevant and applicable evidence being gathered through teachers and a clear indication that the arrangement provided represents the students 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.

See Appendix 2 of Exams Policy

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors... A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. (AA 5.8)

Separate invigilation within the centre A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the ALS lead/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 [AA 5.16]

The centre will provide separate invigilation for all students where it is evident that being within a room with other students will impact upon their own or others attainment. Invigilators may be in the room in a one to one situation although a second invigilator will be in the very near vicinity if required. For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)

Policy Owner and Contact Details

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Next Review Date: September 2024