

The Joseph Whitaker School Access Arrangements Policy

Mission Statement

The Joseph Whitaker School is committed to providing appropriate access arrangements to enable students with substantial and long term difficulties to fully demonstrate their ability in an exam situation.

This policy is written in line with the guidance found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'- with effect from 1st September 2018.

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on historical evidence of need and a candidate's normal way of working in class and exams.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of candidates who have a disability or learning difficulty, without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements allow candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers.

Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories:

- Some arrangements are delegated to centres
- Some require prior JCQ awarding body approval

Definition of Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

Definition of Special Educational Needs

A candidate has special educational needs (as defined in the Education Act 1996) if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act (2010) requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage when undertaking an assessment or exam, in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular student may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors, including the needs of the disabled candidate. Therefore, candidates' access arrangements will be judged on a case by case basis.

Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements at The Joseph Whitaker School

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements in Key Stage 4 and 5 are normally identified when the students are in Key Stage 3. This is due to the need for historical evidence of persistent and significant difficulties. Actions include:

- Monitoring, tracking and intervention during transition to The Joseph Whitaker School
- Informal access arrangements trialled in end of year exams in Years 7, 8 and 9
- Tracking and review of informal access arrangements
- Literacy and/or numeracy interventions
- Dyslexia screenings

At the end of Year 9, students are identified, using data from the actions outlined above, for testing for formal access arrangements. Identified students are then formally assessed, with parents/carers informed both before, and after, the assessment.

During Year 10, formal access arrangements are applied for in readiness for final exams in Year 11.

Assessment for Access Arrangements

Assessments will be carried out by the specialist assessor (Vicky Oldham) and overseen by the SENCO (Fran Haywood).

In line with JCQ regulations, all decisions will be based on whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment with historical evidence of need.

Private or independent tests/assessments e.g. by the Dyslexia Association cannot be accepted. In line with JCQ guidelines, all assessments must be conducted in the school context.

When a need for access arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed in the following ways:

- Students are informed verbally
- Staff are informed and updated via SIMs and email
- Parents are informed in writing

Access Arrangements may include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time of 25%
- Reader/computer reader
- Read aloud
- Scribe/voice activated software
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Oral language modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components
- Sign language interpreter
- Practical assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre

Withdrawal of Access Arrangements

If a student continually chooses not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be withdrawn.

If the SENCO and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the arrangements.

Useful links:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

Policy written by F. Haywood (November 2018)

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