

Information for Parents and Carers

What are Exam Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments?

The Equality Act 2010 was established to ensure that no person in the United Kingdom was disadvantaged due to a learning need or disability. To comply with the act, the exam bodies use access arrangements and reasonable adjustments to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are agreed before an assessment. All pupils with specific needs such as; special educational needs or disabilities are able to access the assessment and show what they know without changing the demands of the assessment. Although, in normal practice they are awarded to pupils with long standing difficulties, in some circumstances they can also be applied for pupils with temporary conditions such as injuries. There are a variety of different access arrangements and reasonable adjustments that can be applied which are detailed later in this document.

How do we award access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be applied at any point during the pupil's education including their time at primary school. The awarding of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is strictly governed by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications).

The 2023-2024 JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments criteria can be accessed here: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/AA_regs_23-24_FINAL-2.pdf

JCQ specify a list of different criteria that must be met for them to be awarded:

- **Normal Way of Working** – The access arrangement or reasonable adjustment must be the normal way of working for the pupil either in the classroom or in their assessments. It is important that as a school we can evidence this is the case for a JCQ inspector.
- **The Pupil's Needs** – In order for a pupil to be awarded an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment, the school must be able to prove that the pupil has a substantial impairment or medical need. If a pupil has a medical need, we will need to provide a hospital letter or a letter from a specialist service such as CAMHS, Occupational Therapy or a Consultant letter. Be aware that this list is not exhaustive.
- **Testing Scores** – For certain access arrangements a pupil will need to complete some educational testing which aims to score a pupil on specific learning abilities. This could be their speed of handwriting, their reading ability, or their speed of processing. Testing will be completed in school by a qualified member of teaching staff. It is worth noting that some of the tests completed in school look at specific learning needs such as Dyslexia and Dyscalculia however, these tests will not provide pupils with a formal diagnosis. If you wish to seek a formal diagnosis, then you should speak with your GP.

What Access Arrangements can be awarded?

For the following arrangements to be applied, the school will need to prove that the pupil has a substantial impairment whether that be an educational need or medical need. In most cases, this will involve the pupil undergoing educational testing.

- **Extra Time** – The majority of pupils, if qualified, will be awarded 25% extra time in their assessments if they require extra time to process the information presented to them. In some cases, a greater percentage of extra time can be applied however, this will be for a very small number of pupils with very substantial impairment. For extra time to be awarded, the school must demonstrate that supervised rest breaks are not a suitable alternative to extra time.
- **Reader or Computer Reader** – If a pupil has reading or processing difficulties, they can be awarded a reader or computer reader. The pupil will have the questions in the assessment read to them so they can be assisted in understanding the task.
- **Scribe** – If a pupil has very poor handwriting or significant spelling difficulties and are not able to use a word processing device such as a laptop, they can be awarded a scribe. A scribe is a member of staff who will write the answers for the pupil to ensure they can be accessed by the examiner.

What Reasonable Adjustments can be awarded?

For the reasonable adjustments listed below a pupil does not need to undergo any educational testing however, the school will still need to prove it is the pupil's normal way of working and that there is a need for the adjustment.

- **Laptop** – A pupil can be awarded a laptop for their assessments for several different reasons. It could be that they have very poor handwriting skills, they could have a medical condition that affects their writing skills such as hypermobility or they could have a temporary injury which renders them unable to write with their normal writing hand.
- **Supervised Rest Breaks** – A pupil can be awarded supervised rest breaks if they require breaks during the exam for a learning or medical need. A supervised rest break allows the pupil to stop completing the exam and have a rest without it affecting the amount of time they have.
- **Quiet Room** – A pupil can be allowed to complete their exams in a quiet room which is usually a smaller room away from the main exam hall. The room will normally be inhabited by a small number of pupils however, a pupil may, if deemed necessary, complete the exam in a room on their own.
- **Modified Papers** – Papers can be modified in different ways to meet pupil's specific needs. Papers can be enlarged in order for pupils with visual impairments to access the paper and they can be printed on different colours to support pupils with specific needs such as Dyslexia.
- **Prompt** – A prompt can be awarded to a pupil in order to ensure that remain on task throughout an assessment. This is usually awarded to pupils who have difficulties with their concentration and can guarantee their attention is maintained during an exam.

If you require any further information about any of the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments please contact your school SEND Department.

