ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2026/27

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and reflects centre practice.

Approved/reviewed by	
Maxine Page	
Date of next review	October 2027

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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo (or equivalent role)	Connie Knight Maxine Page Laura Dossett
Senior leader(s)	Nicola Brooks Claire Ludlow Lee Davidson Darren Mullings Iian Conley
Head of centre	Sam Cottrell
Exams manager/officer	Natasha Bramwell
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Invigilators

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

(AARA[1], Definitions)

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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Springfields Academy 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's General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4)
This document is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENDCo (or equivalent role) alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

> Where the SENDCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **mus**t create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

[1]This document is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine and implement appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
>
> Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
>
> Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis
>
> A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
>
> Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
>
> 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 adjustment(s) 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.

> This policy will be on the Staff Share Point, All Staff-Exams-2026-27, Exam Policies 2026-27. Alternatively hard copy will be in the Back Admin Office.

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

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

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

NASENCo – Connie Knight, Maxine Page

NPQSEND – Laura Dossett

Appointment of assessors

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The assessors' qualifications and certifications have been verified by the Head of Centre and the SENDCo. Relevant documentation is maintained securely in the SENDCo files in the SENDCo office.

All assessors attend annual **Assessing for Access Arrangements** update training, ensuring they remain informed of any changes to JCQ regulations and guidance.

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

Appropriately qualified staff carry out any in-house assessments; each is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations and attend yearly update courses. The qualifications are held in the SENDCo Office.

We will assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, which will build on previous settings and Key Stages, where appropriate. Class teachers will make regular assessments of progress for all pupils.

As evidence (teacher feedback and pupil performance data) becomes available, SEND staff meet with pupils to discuss next steps. An assessment may be conducted to discover the pupils learning profile. The learning profile does not just drive the assessment process but is important for the young person to develop their own learning style as they cope with independent learning. The assessments which are administered vary depending on the young person, their age, previous assessments, and the purpose of the assessment.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Form 9 is filled out by the SENDCo. All assessment results are collated and documented on the Assessors Assessment Form to support the need. All Assessments for the JCQ application must be conducted by one of the assessors the school has named.

Gathering evidence of Need

Gathering evidence to confirm normal way of working. The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the pupil in The Springfield Academy, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- in internal classroom tests/examinations;
- mock examinations.

All teaching staff at The Springfields Academy have a responsibility to provide evidence to the SENDCo to support the normal way of working within the pupil's lesson or activity. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary

injury or impairment. The SENDCo must gather information regarding the temporary injury or impairment to 'paint a picture'.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

AAO is a shared digital service that enables centres to request and manage pre-agreed adjustments, such as extra time, readers, scribes or modified papers, for students with specific needs, disabilities or temporary injuries in a consistent and efficient way across JCQ member qualifications.

It sits within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and is used by centres to submit a single application per student, rather than applying separately to each member, helping to streamline administration while supporting regulatory compliance and data protection requirements. (www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/shared-services/#aao)

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8.1)

The SENDCo is responsible for submitting the application to AAO, and this can happen throughout the year before the deadline which is published by JCQ. The SENDCo keeps detailed records for inspection purpose in folders. The essential information file includes Data Protection consent form signed by candidate, and the Data protection confirmation by the SENDCo, EHCP, Pupil Passport and candidate approved online application.

Applications are processed for Entry Levels, Functional Skills and GCSE examinations. Access Arrangements will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangements. The SENDCo makes the application for modified paper.

Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by Maxine Page SENDCo.

Appropriate evidence where required by the arrangement is held on file by the SENDCo Maxine Page and the Exams Officer Natasha Bramwell.

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.

A pupil sitting an exam may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the pupil's needs and not simply because this is the pupil's preferred way of working. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a pupil because he/she now prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the pupil's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the pupil's needs. In order to use a word processor in both internal and external exams, the pupil must show a significant and substantial need.

The example of the type of evidence for the use of a word processor in exams are one of more of the following:

The handwriting is so messy and a high percentage of words are illegible so that someone unfamiliar with the handwriting cannot read it fluently and easily.

• The pupil experiences extreme discomfort when handwriting at length and has a medical condition diagnosed and confirmed be a practising medical professional.

• The pupil has legible handwriting but makes omissions and cannot order his/her ideas correctly so that the sense gets lost and is difficult to decipher and will significantly impact the outcome.

• The content and expression of the typed work is of a significant better quality than handwritten work.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team **must** produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy **must** be available for inspection. (AARA 5.8)

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENDCo (or equivalent role).

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 (AARA 5.16)

Pupils' learning profiles and progress are reviewed to establish substantial and long-term impairments paired with their normal way of working within the centre as it relates to the need of separate invigilation.

Teacher and pupil input is sought as is feedback from the Exam's Officer. Normal way of working within the centre is documented by teachers and SENDCo. At The Springfields Academy one-to-one invigilation and alternative rooming would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as seizures, Tourettes or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.