

Chace Community School

Access Arrangements Policy 2025/26



Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	G. Sahin
SLT member(s)	K. Sosin, N. Slade, A. Greig, B. Terziyski, G. Sahin, C. Lynch, A. Roper
Head of Centre	Tanya Douglas
Exams officer	J. Cousins
Assessor(s)	Samantha Hall
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Student Progress Team (TAs and HLTAs)

Contents

Key staff involved in the policy	2
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?	4
Access arrangements	4
Reasonable adjustments	4
Purpose of the policy	4
General principles	5
Equalities Policy (Exams)	5
The assessment process	5
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)	5
Appointment of assessors	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor	6
Picture of need/normal way of working	6
Processing access arrangements and adjustments	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval	7
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams)	7
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy	8
Appendices	9

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'. (AARA¹, Definitions)

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. (AARA¹, Definitions)

*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 **Chace Community 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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (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 SENCo (or equivalent role) 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. (¹AARA 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**'.

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as 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 SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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 SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 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.

Our Exams Equalities policy can be found in the exams policy folder located in the Exams Officer office. Our full exams policy can be found on the school website.

The senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010*, particularly Section 20 (7).

This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

*or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

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)

Samantha Hall, Assistant Test User: Educational, Test User: Educational Ability/Attainment
British Psychological Testing Centre (RQTU Membership No. 429721)

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 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 head of centre/senior leadership team will have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR 5.4)

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AARA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

Copies of the assessors' qualifications are kept on site for inspections.

Our school assessor has been employed by the school. Her details have been added to Access Arrangements online for confirmation of their status (AA7.4)

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

On entry to Chace Community School, all year 7 students are screened for cognitive ability, and reading comprehension. It is important that parents alert the school of any pre-existing conditions on transition, and to ensure that any documentary evidence is transferred from the primary school in order to build up a picture of the students needs.

Such documents may include evidence of access arrangements for SATS, school reports, personal support plans/ pen portraits, IEPs, reports written by professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and speech and language therapists.

Concerns about a students' ability to access assessments should in the first instance be raised with the SENCO who will investigate whether concerns persist across the curriculum. Should we find the students in KS3 or KS4 are in need of additional support they will be referred to be seen by our Access Arrangements assessor.

We review provision on a yearly basis and all arrangements are organised with a view to meeting future JCQ requirements. Details of provision are held on Arbor so that teachers can ensure that the arrangement is the student's usual way of working, as appropriate.

As a school we do consider privately commissioned reports. We ensure that they are carried out by qualified assessors and do as for certification in the event this happens. We also will

ensure that strategies suggested are put in place for students' normal way of working. We also check that the timings of assessments carried out are in line with AA guidance.

Picture of need/normal way of working

As a school we will capture a student's "picture" of need 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 Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **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 the 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, section 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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers)).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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 Summary)

The SENCO will ensure that all AAO applicants are submitted prior to any assessment in line with the guidance outlined in AA8. All AAO applications will be kept in Student's files.

Candidate **Personal data consent form** and the **Data protection confirmation by the SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application, will be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

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 from inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service (AA, section 8.6)m;

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Some students at Chace, may have extenuating circumstances at times of assessments, or have adjustments made that do not require AAO applications to be made. File notes are made for these students to explain their needs at the time of assessments. These might include the use of word processors due to poor handwriting or separate accommodation for students suffering with anxiety.

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.

There is an Exams Word Processing Policy in the exams policy folder that outlines or reasoning for these students. For students to have access to a use of a laptop in exams they must have this as their normal way of working. In an emergency in exams this may be extended out to those that may have a temporary injury that stops them from being able to write. The word processor policy has been written in line with guidance from AA 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 SENCo (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)

The decisions are made in line with an individual's students' needs. Factors that are considered for this are outlined in the exams equalities and disabilities policy.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	
T. Douglas (Head of Centre) & G. Sahin (SENCo)	
Date of next review	October 2026