Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment Policy

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Committee: **Teaching & Learning Committee**

This document is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance: 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments,' which can be found via the link below:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

What are Access Arrangements?
These are arrangements (for instance extra time, reader or scribe) that are put in place to make sure that all students have a 'level playing field' when sitting Assessments. They are only available to students with substantial, long-term difficulties that are known to have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities **in school**.

Examples of Examination Access Arrangements (further details can be found on the JCQ website)

Extra time of 25%
Reader/Computer reader
Scribe
Laptop
Supervised Rest Breaks – refer to page 5
Prompter
Smaller Room
Separate Room
Practical Assistant
Bilingual dictionary

According to JCQ guidance, "the Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body (examination board i.e. AQA, OCR, EDEXCEL, WJEC) to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, **who is disabled as defined in 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."

"The intention behind an Access Arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment."

JCoSS is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. This means ensuring that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in Assessments. The school abides by the strict regulations set out by the JCQ.

For the purposes of this Policy, "Assessments" are defined as:

1. Public examinations;
2. Controlled assignments/Non Examined Assessments ("NEAs");
3. Formal whole year mock examinations (from year 10 upwards);
4. End of year examinations (year 9 upwards, and including those students in years 7 and 8 in exceptional circumstances, which will be agreed in conjunction with the SENCo);

How do we know who needs Access Arrangements?

On entry to JCOSS, it is important that parents alert the school to any pre-existing conditions which their child may have that impacts on their ability to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in an assessment. Parents are responsible for ensuring that JCoSS is provided with relevant documentary evidence in order to build up a picture of the student's needs. Such documents may include evidence of Access Arrangements for SATS; school reports; personal plans/pen portraits/Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and reports written by professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and speech and language therapists. Students will be monitored once at JCoSS to consider whether Examination Access Arrangements may be needed from Year 9 onwards.

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will automatically get Exam Access Arrangements based on their needs. We will still get teachers feedback to support the application.

Concerns about a student's ability to access Assessments should in the first instance be raised with the form tutor or Head of Year (HOY) who will investigate whether concerns persist across the curriculum or are specific to a particular subject. Depending on this, concerns may then be raised with the Learning Support Department.

Students with a history of the following needs may need Access Arrangements:

- Cognition and Learning Needs (e.g., General and/or specific learning difficulties).
- Communication and Interaction Needs (e.g., Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)
- Sensory and Physical Needs (e.g., Hearing Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Physical Disability, Vision Impairment)
- Social, Mental and Emotional Needs (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Conditions)
- English as an Additional Language
- **Please note that a diagnosis alone cannot entitle students to Access Arrangements unless there is supporting evidence from school. This is a requirement of the JCQ.**

Access Arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by the JCQ if the school has been aware of the student's medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place. For students who require temporary Access Arrangements due to medical problems such as broken limbs, the school must have a medical letter before the arrangement can be put into place and the school Exams Officer must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible. Medical letters relating to anxiety or depression which the school was not made aware of **before the deadline** for Access Arrangements will not be considered. The deadlines for GCSE/GCE examinations and vocational courses with public examination components are set annually by the JCQ. Parents can contact the Exam Office for more information relating to deadlines.

For students transferring from other schools during the course of their secondary schooling, relevant documentation regarding existing conditions and examination Access Arrangements must be provided. This must be sent on by the previous school or provided by parents within the first month of term. The following documents will be required if the Access Arrangements are to be considered at JCoSS:

- Form 8 (a JCQ form held by the previous school) assessor's certificate and any report which was used as evidence;
- Application Approved (a JCQ form held by the previous school);
- Supporting documents such as up to date medical letters and professional reports, if necessary;

- Anecdotal evidence from teachers regarding the need for Examination Access Arrangements;
- Pieces of work showing the use of extra time by means of a different coloured pen.

In order for JCoSS to demonstrate an ongoing need for Access Arrangements, current in-school evidence will need to be sought in addition to the documents listed above.

What do we need to evidence Access Arrangements?
JCQ inspections require all schools to have the required evidence for every student that has been awarded Access Arrangements. Schools are subject to at least two unannounced inspections from the JCQ every year. If the school fails to provide sufficient evidence, in line with JCQ regulations, then the student in question **could have marks deducted due to their unfair advantage and our status as an approved examination centre could be jeopardised.**

The required evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a **substantial** and **long-term** effect i.e., history of need/history of provision.
- Evidence that the difficulties are **persistent** and **significant** (this will be ascertained from progress data)
- Evidence from school staff of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has **had long term impact** on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Confirmation that the student will be at a **substantial disadvantage** when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the Assessment.

For Access Arrangements awarded on **medical grounds** the school will <u>also</u> need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made:

- A current Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.
- A letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- A Letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service.

A letter from a GP is not sufficient.

The school must be made aware of any on-going medical problems as soon as they have been diagnosed. If the school is not made aware of the student's medical history, then Access Arrangements cannot be put into place for Assessments.

The JCQ stipulates that Access Arrangements must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis, therefore they may vary between subjects due to their different demands. If this is the case, then Access Arrangements may be awarded only for specific or particular subjects e.g., a laptop may be required for longer written exams such as History but not for a Maths exam. Where formal Access Arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration in all Assessments. An Access Arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulations. **If a student chooses to continually not use their Access Arrangement, then the SENCo will remove these Access Arrangements in Assessments.**

When are Access Arrangements awarded?
If the school has been provided with sufficient evidence that a child has recognised, genuine needs requiring Access Arrangements, these will be reviewed by school to ascertain what Access Arrangements may need to be put in place at JCoSS at the school's discretion. These may differ from what was in place in primary school due to the change in setting, and because secondary schools, unlike primary schools, are strictly regulated by the JCQ. This includes the use of laptops.

In Year 9, students with a school history of persistent and significant difficulties impacting on their learning may be screened in school for eligibility for Access Arrangements in line with current JCQ regulations. After this screening, parents will be informed only if an Access Arrangement is going to be offered in preparation for Key Stage 4.

Access Arrangements awarded for GCSEs will not automatically roll forward for GCEs. The JCQ requires evidence from school to demonstrate there remains a need for Access Arrangements.

i. Existing JCoSS students who have progressed to the Sixth Form should refer to the procedure under Appendix 4.

ii. Sixth form students who are new to the school will complete an application form and interview, which will ask about SEN and any Access Arrangements awarded during their GCSE examinations. During this interview, it is important that JCoSS are made aware of any Access Arrangements granted for GCSEs. This information will not jeopardise a student's application but will be passed onto the Access Arrangements Coordinator. Students are responsible for providing the **original, hand signed JCQ Form 8, and a copy of the JCQ approval document** from their previous school. Once this is received, a new picture of need and normal way of working will need to be demonstrated and the candidate will then be assessed as a new Access Arrangements applicant see Appendix 1.

Who can assess and how are decisions made?
Decisions regarding GCSE/GCE Access Arrangements are determined by the outcome of the JCoSS Access Arrangement Screening Processes, described in the Appendices of this policy. The Head of Centre is ultimately responsible for appointing an appropriately qualified Access Arrangement Assessor with a certified level of competence as dictated by the JCQ.

JCQ rules dictate that schools must only work with external assessors with whom they have an established relationship, and the centre receives evidence of the qualification to assess before assessing the candidate. In any event, schools are not obliged to accept private reports. Private assessors must contact school to request evidence of the student's normal way of working and relevant background information prior to undertaking any Access Arrangement screening assessments. Private assessors are responsible for providing JCoSS with a copy of their up-to-date practising certificate which the school must keep on file in preparation for JCQ inspection. Access Arrangements screening assessments cannot be completed without JCQ's Form 8, Part 1 **first** being completed by the school. This will only be done if in the school's opinion there is a sufficient history of need; this must be supported with school data and evidence. If there is insufficient school evidence, the school will reject the assessor's recommendations and notify parents in writing of this decision. **Final decisions regarding Access Arrangements are made by the school.**

A privately commissioned Access Arrangement screening assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school, even including evidence of qualification, cannot be used to award Access Arrangements or to process an Access Arrangement application.

Assistive technologies
Where possible students should work towards greater independence; scribes should only be considered when a student does not have sufficient word processing skills to use a laptop, and readers should only be considered after the possibility of using a computer reader has been explored. Access Arrangements must reflect the normal way of working and therefore only students identified as 'SEN Support' will be considered for a scribe or 1:1 reader.

Supervised Rest Breaks
The JCQ state that supervised rest breaks **must** always be considered **before** making an application for extra time. To qualify for rest breaks medical evidence must be on file before the deadline(s). Rest breaks are the appropriate provision for a range of difficulties including:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- A medical condition
- Sensory and physical needs
- Social, mental and emotional needs

The candidate must have an impairment which is substantial, long term and established within the centre.

English as an Additional Language
Up to 25% extra time may be awarded for students in rare and exceptional circumstances who have lived in the UK for less than three years, providing they arrived in the UK with no prior knowledge of English and English is not the spoken language at home; the extra time is for the use of a bilingual dictionary. Due to the nature of the Assessment objectives this provision will not be awarded in the following GCSEs: English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, and Religious Studies. Furthermore, extra time is not awarded for GCEs. Extra time must not be awarded to a candidate using a bilingual translation dictionary in order to compensate for difficulties in reading and writing in English.

Data Protection

Students who are granted Access Arrangements must sign a Data Protection Notice allowing the school permission to make an application online to the JCQ. Failure to do so will mean that an application cannot be made and Examination Access Arrangements will not be granted. A new Data Protection Notice will need to be signed when a candidate progresses from GCSE to GCE/Cambridge Technicals.

Appendix 1. Access Arrangements Screening Process

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	• Is the student at SEN support on the Student Support Register, or • does the student have an EHCP, or • have concerns been raised with Exam Access Arrangements Coordinator/Learning Support by teaching staff, or • are there concerns about a student's mental health and has there been involvement from outside agencies? • **If yes**, move to Stage 2
2	Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to seek information and feedback from all teachers to establish normal way of working in lessons, with a focus on the student's needs. • If several concerns are raised, move to stage 3 (for medical impairment move to stage 4) • If there are no or limited concerns, the process will end.

3	Student is screened by a specialist assessor in school using recognised standardised tests in order to establish any below average standard scores as outlined by the JCQ.
	  • If below average standard score(s) are identified, move to stage 4
	  • If there are no below average standard scores, the process will end.
	
	If an Access Arrangements screening assessment has been carried out by an external assessor **with prior consultation with school**, the results should identify below average standard scores as above. A separate screening in school will not be carried out.

4	All evidence will be collated and appropriate Access Arrangements will be discussed and decided with key staff in school. The final decision for all Access Arrangements rest with the SENCo and/or Head teacher.
5	The Exams Officer and Exams Access Arrangement Coordinator will apply to JCQ for specific Access Arrangements in preparation for any public examinations (N.B. Any Access Arrangements will expire 26 months from date of application to the JCQ). Teachers will be informed of the Access Arrangements Parents will be informed of approved Access Arrangement(s) from the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator.
6	Teaching and Support staff, the Exams Officer, Invigilating team and Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor effective use of Access Arrangements after each Assessment. Findings from this will determine whether the Access Arrangements will remain in place or be removed by the SENCo as advised by the JCQ. If an Access Arrangement is removed, the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will inform the student and the SENCo will inform parents by letter.

Appendix 2. Laptop Statement

Principles for using a word processor during examinations

JCoSS complies with Joint Council for Qualifications regulations and guidance as follows:

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. This includes, for example, a candidate with:
    - a learning difficulty which has a substantial & long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
    - a medical condition
    - a physical disability
    - a sensory impairment
    - planning & organisational problems when writing by hand;
    - poor handwriting.

  This list is not exhaustive.

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

- The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Candidates are subsequently aware that they **must** use a word processor as their normal way of working in the classroom and for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework. Failure to do this will result in the candidate not having a word processor in examinations as it will not be considered the candidate's normal way of working.

- The Centre has a screening process for authorisation for laptop use and a laptop will only be authorised once the process has been completed and the candidate has satisfied all of the criteria.

- The Centre will monitor the use of laptops in the classroom, assessments and during formal exams and if it is found that use of a word processor is not used correctly or is proved unbeneficial for the candidate this Access Arrangement will be removed by the SENCo.
- Year 12 students are authorised to use a laptop in class and for home learning. However, only students with Exam Access Arrangements for a laptop may use one for in-class assessments, formal and public exams.

Appendix 3: Laptop Eligibility Screening Process for Classroom Purposes

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	• Handwriting concerns raised by staff • School to seek medical evidence if applicable (e.g., GP letter, OT report) • Move to stage 2
2	• Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to establish level of need. • If there is no evidence of need, no further action. Parents/staff to be informed of outcome • If there is evidence of need, move to stage 3
3	• Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will consult with teachers and parents to discuss possibility of using a laptop in school (e.g., does the student have a laptop at home they can use, does the student have the necessary organisation skills?). If parents and teachers are in agreement, move to stage 4
4	• **Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to inform IT department and teachers that a student is authorised a laptop for a trial period (approx. 6 weeks)** • Student to use his/her personal laptop in all lessons for trial period • Move to stage 5 after trial period
5	• If teachers do not raise any concerns to the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator during the trial period the laptop arrangement will become permanent for the student. If teachers' feedback is negative, the laptop arrangement will be removed. Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to inform parents of outcome.
6	• Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor student's use of laptop in Assessments through the school's monitoring system. Findings will determine whether the laptop arrangement will remain in place or be removed.

Appendix 4. Y12 Access Arrangements Screening (October 2020)

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	For EAA based on learning needs: Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to determine whether or not there is a fully completed JCQ Form 8 and AAO approval print out which demonstrates that Access Arrangements were granted for GCSE based on a history of need and normal way of working in the previous Centre in addition to any other school-based evidence (e.g. monitoring grids). *For students who did not attend JCoSS in Year 11 this must be obtained by parent or student from the previous Centre.* **If there is**, move to Stage 2 **If there is not**, process will end. AA coordinator to inform parents and student. For EAA based on medical needs: • Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to determine whether or not there is evidence from a medical specialist which supports EAA from Y10 onwards • If yes, Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator may need to request an up-to-date medical letter (dated within the last 12 months). Once this is received, move to stage 2. • If no, process will end. AA coordinator to inform parents and student. • If the student has an EHCP/Statement of SEN, move to stage 2
2	• Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to seek information and feedback from all teachers to confirm that Access Arrangements should remain in place, with a focus on the student's current needs. • If a student is new to the centre, they will require screening by JCoSS' specialist assessor using recognised standardised test. If below average score(s)are identified, move to stage 3.
3	• Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to collate all evidence and share findings with key staff in school. The final decision for all Access Arrangements rests with the SENCo and/or Head teacher. • If agreed, a file note or Form 8 will be signed by the SENCo approving the re-submission of EAA. This will be kept on file for JCQ inspection. Students will be required to sign a new data protection form.
4	• The Exams Officer and Exams Access Arrangement Coordinator will apply to JCQ for specific Access Arrangements in preparation for Assessments (N.B. Any Access Arrangements will expire 26 months from date of application to the JCQ). • Teachers will be informed of the Access Arrangements by Exams Access Arrangements coordinator Parents will be informed of approved Access Arrangement(s) from the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator
5	• Teaching and Support staff, the Exams Officer, Invigilating team and Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor effective use of Access Arrangements after each Assessment. Findings from this will determine whether the Access Arrangements will remain in place or be removed by the SENCo as advised by the JCQ. If an Access Arrangement is removed, the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will inform the student and teachers, and the SENCo will inform parents by letter.

Appendix 5. Y12 Laptop Screening Re-submission Process (October 2020)

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	For EAA based on learning needs: • Is there school-based evidence which demonstrates that a word processor was granted for GCSEs based on a history of need and normal way of working in the previous Centre (e.g., monitoring grids)? *For students who did not attend JCoSS in Year 11 this must be obtained by parent or student from the previous Centre.* • **If yes**, move to Stage 2 • **If no**, process will end. Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to inform student and parents.
2	Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to consider specific subject requirements before seeking information and feedback from all teachers to confirm that a word processor is the student's normal way of working in lessons and whether it should remain in place, with a focus on the student's current needs. • If the majority of teachers agree that a word processor is used in lessons and should remain in place, move to stage 3. • If the majority of teachers disagree that a word processor is not being used in lessons and should not be put in place, Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator to liaise with student and monitor.
3	Teaching and Support staff, the Exams Officer, Invigilating team and Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor effective use of word processor after each Assessment. Findings from this will determine whether the Access Arrangements will remain in place or be removed by the SENCo as advised by the JCQ. If an Access Arrangement is removed, the Exams Access Arrangements Coordinator will inform the student and the SENCo will inform parents by letter.