Access Arrangements Policy

Background

At the Medeshamstede Academy the provision of access arrangements is of high priority and their implementation features heavily within the curriculum and examination cycle due to the needs of our students.

*"**Access Arrangements***
Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into three distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ^{CIC} awarding body approval and others require specific exam board approval (e.g Functional skills).

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments
The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person 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/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment."

[JCQ website An overview]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that the Medeshamstede Academyfulfils "its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements."

[JCQ '*General regulations for approved centres*'Chapter5 section 5.4] GR

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication
> *'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties*
> *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
> *General and Vocational qualifications'*

[This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA]

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Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

The head of centre will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA
- ensure that processes for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements') for individual candidates is clearly defined and documented
- ensure that staff roles and responsibilities in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined in this policy
- ensure a qualified specialist assessor, where required, is appointed and that evidence of the appropriate qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- ensure that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- ensure a disability policy (known as the Accessibility Plan) showing the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place

The provision of access arrangements are co-ordinated by the Secondary Sendco in partnership with the Deputy head (Secondary) and teachers. The SS will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including AA
- lead on the access arrangements process
- Complete the access arrangements picture of need and normal way of working documentation (Form 8 must NOT be used as every pupil attending the City of Peterborough Academy Special School) and gather all appropriate evidence so the exam officer can make an application.
- if not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- ensure that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- ensure arrangements put in place reflect a candidate's ***normal way of working***[1] within the centre
- ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- present when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor's qualification and the picture of need documentation and evidence.
- provide and annually review a centre policy on the **use of word processors** in exams and assessments
- ensure criteria for candidates allowed **separate invigilation within the centre** is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main exam rooms

Teaching staff will:

- inform the SS of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- provide information to evidence the *normal way of working* of a candidate
- support the SS and EO as required in identifying the need for access arrangements

The specialist assessor will:

- conduct appropriate assessments to support the identify of the need(s) of a candidate
- provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- complete appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

[1]*Normal way of working* as defined by JCQ
"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, e.g.

- *in the classroom; or*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or*

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> - *literacy support lessons; or*
> - *literacy intervention strategies; and/or*
> - *in internal school tests and mock examinations.*
>
> *This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Section A of Form 8.*
>
> *†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3, page 89)."*
>
> [AA 4.2.5]

The assessment process, identifying the needs of candidates and recording evidence of need

The specialist assessor is employed from the Support for Learning consultancy service, who will also provide the testing materials, an assessment record and recommendations document is provided by City of Peterborough academy special school. Their qualification details are copied and held in the school office, access arrangements file and included on the bottom of each signed assessment record and recommendations document.

The qualifications are checked against the AA regulations criteria for specialist assessor. The specialist assessor will complete the relevant forms to record evidence of need and provide them to the centre to be kept on the Access Arrangements file. The SS will match this to picture of need and build recommendations of need for the EO to submit the applications using the *Access Arrangements Online* service.

[JCQ Criteria for a specialist assessor]

*"...have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualifications of those assessing candidates but that the assessment process is administered correctly..."*

[JCQ GR 5]

When students commence a pathway, the Secondary Sendco, Exams Officer, and relevant subject teachers shall meet to discuss the needs of the whole cohort's access arrangements. The SS will then arrange for assessment and all evidence gathering and form completion so that the EO can process applications accordingly. Throughout their time at the Academy the needs of the students are continually reviewed through the EHCP SEND review process where the support that required is also discussed and recorded as required applications for the candidate. Students who are using arrangements will have these arrangements listed in their EHCP as provision for normal way of working where appropriate. A robust framework of evidence will be sourced not only through picture of need in the centre and the specialist assessors diagnostic screening tests but also from Educational Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy reports alongside their EHC plans. It is in the best interests of our students to ensure we can give them the full support they need to access their accreditations.

Centres need to bear in mind all relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AA , including:

"The centre agrees to:
- *ensure that it will recruit with integrity with regard to both general and vocational qualifications;*
- *ensure that learners will in an accessible format have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process **must** include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s). The centre's assessment **must** identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations/assessments"*
;

*"...ensure that where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor **as appointed by the head of centre**..."*

[JCQ GR 5]

By detailing the assessment process, you should be confirming
"*that the assessment process is administered correctly...*"

[JCQ GR 5]

JCQ forms will be used to record assessment and application information and an indication of who has to complete them etc. for example:

- MUST NOT BE USED with an EHCP; Form 8 – Application for access arrangements
- MUST NOT BE USED with an EHCP; Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements

- Form 9 – Arrangements permitted by ;the centre
- Form 11 – Notification of access arrangements Entry level
- Form 12 – Application for access arrangements Entry level
- Form VQ/EA – Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications
- Form VQ/IA - Application for reasonable adjustments; Internally assessed units – Vocational qualifications
- Non JCQ - assessment record and recommendations for all pupils as needed for Functional skills.

Gathering evidence of normal way of working

Subject leaders with Secondary SENDCo will provide a portfolio evidence per access arrangement in place for each student to demonstrate normal way of working within the centre. Where evidence is not physically demonstrable, signed statements will be obtained from the subject teacher/candidate. The Secondary SENDCo will liaise with subject leaders to provide tracking and evidence for the specialist assessor in order to ensure that the testing is in relation to the candidates normal way of working.

Disability policy

The centre's SEN and Disability Policy, and the Equality for Pupils Policy are available on our website www.medeshamstedeacademy.org. The Academy website publishes a copy of the Accessibility Plan which shows how we currently provide support (reasonable adjustments) and intend to improve accessibility for disabled pupils.

"A written disability policy setting out how the centre seeks to comply with the Equality Act 2010† and fully supporting disabled candidates must be available for inspection purposes.

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect"

[JCQ GR 5]

Word processor policy

Students may benefit from the use of a word processor during some or all of their examinations. Given the profile of needs for students with ASD this is likely to be common within our setting.

In addition to their sensory needs and processing difficulties which may have a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly, students may also have:

- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Poor handwriting linked to motor difficulties
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

In all cases the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's NORMAL WAY OF WORKING within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs. The use of a word processor will not be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers, to type, works faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop/PC at home.

Candidates must not use their school log-in on a school computer for exams. The invigilator will always give a specific exams log-in.

Candidates must not use their own computer/lap-top for exams.

Candidates are responsible for frequently saving their work during the exam time.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the pages are numbered, that each page has the centre number, candidate number and unit/component code as either a header or a footer, that the script is written with a minimum of 12pt font and there is double line spacing.

At the end of the exam, the invigilator will always have an encrypted exams memory stick to save the candidates work to. This memory stick will be encrypted with a password and treated as a secure material to be locked away with the examination papers in the secure storage facility. A student's own memory stick must NEVER be used. As well as saving on the memory stick the work must be printed and will be treated as secure material in line with the regulations, and locked away with all other examination papers.

Every effort is made to ensure that candidates cannot access spell check, their own drive and the internet during exams. However, if any student is found trying to get around the settings this will be interpreted by the school as malpractice and will be reported to the Awarding Body.

"It is strongly recommended that a centre has a policy on the use of word processors which it can articulate to parents/carers. Principally, that a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she 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 candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs..."

[JCQ AA5.8]

Separate invigilation within the centre

The special educational needs of candidates at the centre deems that they are likely to all be considered for centre separate invigilation.   Where possible we will attempt to sit candidates in one main room, however as their normal way of working within the centre includes separate invigilation during mock examinations, internal school tests and their learning is conducted usually in small groups, pairs or individually, and they all have a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect on their ability to sit an exam, it is likely that a significant number of candidates will have separate invigilation. We need to consider the impact of their presence in the main exam room as their difficulties may impact upon the other candidates.

Due to their needs we offer all students supervised rest breaks and 25% extra time, this reflects our standard practice for learning within the centre.

[see JCQ AA 5.16 plus centre-determined criteria]

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities
The SS will:

- Seek support from subject teachers to identify where arrangements need to be applied for and arrange for those permitted by the centre to be facilitated
- Determine if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- follow guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- ensure appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO; examples might include:
    - painting a picture of need using centre paperwork (no Form 8 nmust be used with an EHCP)
    - a completed specialist assessment to substantiate the picture of need recorded on assessment record.
    - a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- maintain a file for each candidate that will include:
    - completed JCQ(where appropriate)/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
    - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement
    - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
    - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
    - Awarding body approval for access arrangements where appropriate
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

The EO will:

- follow guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications

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- have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site in order to gain access to *Access arrangements online*[2] (AAO)
- apply for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- confirm by ticking the *'Confirmation'* box prior to submitting the application for approval that the *'malpractice consequence statement'* has been read and accepted
- make an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidates does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- ensure that arrangements, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- will support the maintenance by SS of a file for each candidate that will include:
  - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for GCSE and GCSE qualifications, through AAO by the deadline date for the November (GCSE only) and summer exam series
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Progression, ELC and Functional Skills qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form 7 – Application for modified papers* to the awarding body at least 10 weeks before the date of the assessment
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for vocational qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form VQ/EA - Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications* to the awarding body no later than 10 weeks before the date of the assessment
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for any other qualifications, by identifying and following the awarding body process by the deadline date

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[2]*Access arrangements online* is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

"For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Further information on Access arrangements online is available from:
http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online"

[AA 8.1]

Implementing access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body and/or JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

The SS will:

- liaise with the EO to appoint appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates who have been approved the use of:
  - a practical assistant
  - a prompter
  - an Oral Language Modifier
  - a reader
  - a scribe
  - a Communication Professional (Previously known as Sign Language Interpreter)

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- ensure facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ensure candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their exams and assessments
- liaise with the EO regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaise with the EO to ensure cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- liaise with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

The EO and SS will:
- liaise with the Subject teacher regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- liaise with the Subject teacher regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- ensure invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates as detailed in ICE 7 and 8 and access regulations document.
- provide cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and will ensure that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
  - print pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- (EO) will check in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- (EO) make modifications that are delegated to the centre (a question paper on coloured/enlarged paper) that may be required and will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam
- ensure that where a candidate has been approved for a computer reader, will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam
- ensure that where a candidate has been approved for an Oral Language Modifier, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time
- ensure that where the centre has granted the candidate a Live Speaker and/or a Sign Language Interpreter, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time
- have a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, apply for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

Internal assessments
These are assessments which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

The SS will:
- liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff will:
- support teaching staff in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Internal exams
These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments (exams).

The SS will:
- liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff will:

- support the SS in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Sharing of information with other centres

Information on access arrangements and specialist testing maybe shared with centres where COPASS has a strong working relationship. The information will only be shared as per the following guidelines from JCQ;

'If the candidate has now left your college and there is an **established working relationship** between the two colleges, then it is perfectly acceptable to forward the original hand-signed Form 8.

However, an established working relationship must exist: that is, for example, students from your college year in, year out, transfer/progress to the particular FE College. Alternatively, both establishments are part of a local 16-19 consortium arrangement.'

It will be beneficial to build and maintain these relationships to aid the smooth transition of students. Relationships are developed between the SS and the Sendcos/access arrangements officers in these settings, collection of any evidence that could enable support to be put in place immediately is collected by hand or sent via secure delivery to the new centres.

Documentation for Access Arrangements

Access arrangements documents which all staff (teachers, head of centre, all SENDCos and Exams officer) should be familiar with and using in the process of access arrangements are:

- Inspector notes for access arrangements picture of need folders
- EAA assessment record students with EHCP
- EHCP review key phrases and indicators for access arrangements