



St Thomas More Catholic High School

Access Arrangement Policy

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process:

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	L Warland
Exam officer	M Henderson
Associate SENCo	E Fairlamb & M Briggs

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 particular 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’.

[AA Definitions, page 3]

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 a number of 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;
- 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’.”

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Thomas More Catholic High School has a 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5]

It will be the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that they collect evidence which supports the student’s need for an access arrangement and that using their needed arrangement is the student’s **normal way of working**. An access arrangements assessor will ask for evidence of the candidate’s **normal way of working** and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Once this is established an Assessor will be able to grant the access arrangement if deemed necessary for the student.

Access arrangements should be processed at the **start of the course**. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of, or during, the **first year of a two-year GCSE** course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. [JCQ P19]

Gathering evidence to support normal way of working

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate) e.g. for extended writing;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- in internal tests/examinations;
- mock examinations- confirm that the student needs the arrangement.

This is commonly referred to as ‘**normal way of working**’ and comprises the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8”

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Certain access arrangements require JCQ to approve the student's use by using an online application process for qualifications such as 25% extra time or scribe. Applications will be submitted before the deadline of the student's first exam by the SENCo/Associate SENCo. If the application is successful all evidence as well as the successful application, scribe sheets, and all tests/medical tests or diagnosis are kept electronically in the google drive. If cases do not gain approval the student will not be allowed to use the Access Arrangement.

"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 & approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed data protection notice for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service."

AA 8 Processing applications for access arrangements

25% Extra time

25% extra time can be granted if the student has "a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, or an Individual Development Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability or an assessment (Part 2 of Form 8) carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9 by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

Two below average standardised score of 84 or less which relates to an assessment of:

- speed of reading;
- speed of writing;
- cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working.

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making a request for extra time.

Reader

A reader can be granted if a student's reading scores are below 84. However if the skill being assessed is reading then the student can't have a reader for that section of the test. Students must make the reader aware that they want to be read to as a reader can only read on

request. A reader must point to a symbol and not say 'the meaning' aloud as this is part of the examination testing understanding.

Scribe

ICT must have been deemed as not suitable before a scribe can be considered.

This is for candidates who have one or more of the following:

Illegible handwriting and cannot use a word processor;

Cannot use a pen due to their disability;

Unable to write in any detail due to specific needs;

Below average spelling on assessment rendering work illegible/ target words unrecognisable;

Incomprehensible grammar.

No marks are awarded for spelling, punctuation or grammar unless the candidate dictates these – this must be recorded on the sheet.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Word processor policy (exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of certain Access by their centre. This means there is not a need to apply to JCQ, for example a word processor. However the use of a word processor must be appropriate to the candidate's **needs** and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

"..a word processor cannot be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants 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 educational needs."

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo & Associate SENCo.

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”. [AA 5.16]

For separate invigilation students must present a medical letter from either CAMHS or their GP/ stating why they are at a **disadvantage** if they are sat in the main hall.

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

“For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate’s difficulties are established within the centre and known to SENCo. Separate invigilation reflects the candidate’s normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.” [AA 5.16]

Rest breaks and Prompt

Can be awarded if the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and (The candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.)

Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- cognition and learning needs;
- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;
- social, mental and emotional needs.

Prompt

For candidates who have:

- Poor concentration skills;
- Extreme stress/ Psychological problems;
- A medical condition.

All applications for Access arrangements must be completed and sent to E Fairlamb (Associate SENCO) using the school's application sheet.

Evidence of the access arrangement being **normal way of working** must be included before an access arrangement can be granted.