



# **Holmer Green Senior School**

## **Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)**

November 2020

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**Key staff involved in the access arrangements process**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
<b>SENDCo</b>	<b>Claire Hawkins</b>
<b>SENDCo line manager (Senior Leader)</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Head of centre</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>
Exams Officer	<b>Vicki Widdowson</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Robin Whitby</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Tracy DaCosta</b>

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## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### Access arrangements

**"Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment.** They allow candidates with 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 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." [AA Definitions, page 3]

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Holmer Green Senior School "explores and provides access to suitable courses through the access arrangements process" complies with its "...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements..."

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4 5.5]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as 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'.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

This policy **must** be read in conjunction with these documents.

### Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in the Equalities Disability policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equalities Disability Policy (exams) is held by the exams officer and electronically stored on the school IT network and is available for inspection (GR 5.3 x)
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"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"*

[GR 5.4]

The access arrangements 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 AA 7.3.

### **The qualification(s) of the current Assessor(s)**

The current Assessor is **Robin Whitby**. The relevant qualifications held are: **MA Ed, Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing Level A** (Level 7 CCET & AAC from Real Training Ltd), British Psychological Society registration number: **RQTU409025**.

### **Checking the qualification(s) of the Assessor(s)**

The Assessor is registered with the British Psychological Society as a registered test user. The Assessor's registration number is checked against the BPS database. In addition, certification of all relevant qualifications is held by the exams officer on behalf of the SENDCo. The SENDCo is also adequately trained in the assessment process and is able to check the assessment process. Other Senior Leaders at Holmer Green Senior School are also available to check for proper assessment processes with the SENDCo.

*"...have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their specialist Assessor(s) but that the assessment process is administered correctly...*

**(GR 5.4f)**

*...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...**" 5.4e*

[GR 5.4]

*"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 SENDCo."*

[AA 7.7 7.3]

### **How the assessment process is administered**

A flow diagram of the assessment process is included in Appendix 1.

Upon referral initial feedback is sought from teachers and LSAs. Permission to assess is obtained from parents. Previously held scores are also consulted. If no previously held scores from the Lucid GL Exact are available, or if these are out of date, the Lucid GL Exact assessment is completed as a screener.

Private or external reports are considered and acted upon as appropriate. These are **not** used as evidence for access arrangements unless they have been specifically organised by Holmer Green Senior School. A full written explanation is given to parents by the SENDCo or the specialist Assessor if these reports will not be used for any purpose within the centre, for example where they are not used to inform intervention strategies.

If a cause for concern is raised by any of these steps in depth assessment is arranged. The purpose of the assessment is determined by consulting the pupil profile and screening scores. A variety of assessment tools are available. Candidates can be assessed for processing attainment or speed, vocabulary attainment, general attainment, general ability and handwriting attainment. All assessment tools are standardised assessments and are suitable for use as core evidence for JCQ requirements or for painting the picture of need.

Scores of assessments are scrutinised and appropriate intervention and access arrangements are organised. On occasion, the Lucid GL Exact screener score is used as core evidence as permitted by JCQ. More in depth assessment evidence is normally used but where this is not practical the Lucid Exact assessment is sufficient evidence.

Only assessment scores obtained when a student is in year 9 or later can be used for access arrangement applications. These must be obtained from an assessment undertaken by the Assessor.

All students in year 9 are screened in order to ensure that no student has been overlooked. This is completed in the presence of the Assessor using the Lucid GL Exact assessment.

If a student enters Holmer Green Senior School as an EAL student who has been resident in the UK for less than 3 years they are offered the appropriate access arrangements. Parents must confirm in writing the level of prior education completed in English in order for the extra time element of this arrangement to be considered. For the bilingual dictionary element, there is no need to process via AAO unless 10% extra time is required.

Parents of students receive a full written report for all in depth assessment and a copy of all screener results upon request. Parental permission and student permission for access arrangements is sought before putting these in place for either internal examinations or external examinations.

Assessment materials and accompanying reports are held securely until candidates reach the age of 25. 31

*"...the assessment process is administered correctly..."*

[GR

5.5]

Note for **private candidates** the centre must

*"...undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate, such as **This includes distance learners and or a home educated students**. The centre, where required, **must** lead on the assessment process. The candidate **must** be assessed by*

*the centre's appointed Assessor. In some instances, depending on his/her needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre, for example at home..."*  
[GR 5.4]

## Recording evidence of need

Evidence is recorded on Form 8 as required. In addition, history of need documents (Appendix 2) are completed by all relevant staff for each student who requires such a body of evidence. Evidence of need is recorded in reports written following assessment and in spreadsheets stored within the centre.

The access arrangements facilitator, Assessor or SENDCo complete Form 8, collate history of need documents and complete forms as required for awarding bodies and JCQ.

Other documentation held by Holmer Green Senior School, such as assessment results or logs of intervention received are used to inform the completion of Form 8 and are held securely until candidates reach the age of 25 31 with all other records of need. This complies with GDPR.

Private or external reports are **not** used as evidence for access arrangements unless they have been specifically organised by Holmer Green Senior School.

For **private candidates** these systems are the same.

### **Note**

*"Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties...*

*Only Form 8 is acceptable. Spreadsheets, e-mail messages, centre devised equivalents of Form 8, educational psychologists' reports and other reports are not acceptable for inspection purposes..."*

[AA 7.6]

*"A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online.*

*The SENDCo must provide the assessor with complete at least a 'skeleton' Section A part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed (Section C of Form 8)... Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.*  
[AA 7.3.6]

Evidence of need is passed on to subsequent settings in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

## Gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

Teachers are required to complete the history of need document (Appendix 2). This demonstrates the normal way of working for candidates. Records of all assessments and the way of working used are also kept on these documents and in spreadsheets within Holmer Green Senior School. Normal way of working within interventions is also recorded. These provide details of all those whose normal way of working is not to hand write without additional support.

In rare situations, where **private candidates** are entered for examinations, the history of need document is completed by those responsible for the daily learning of the candidate and this is checked by the specialist Assessor of SENDCo for accuracy via spot checks or work scrutiny.

The *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†, for example:*

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *literacy intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *mock examinations.*

*This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Section A part 1 of Form 8 by the SENDCo or the Assessor working within the centre.*

*SENDCos and Assessors must refer to section 7.6.1, page 87, for information on how to confirm 'normal way of working'. †The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment ..."*  
[AA 4.2.5]

## **Processing access arrangements**

### **Arrangements 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 listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

AAO applications are submitted throughout the academic year as need arises. This is the responsibility of the Assessor and the SENDCo, who are assisted by the Access Arrangements Facilitator. In order for these to be submitted it is necessary for the assessment and investigation process to be complete with a record of teaching staff feedback and involvement. Prior to application, data protection statements must be signed by candidates to give permission for their information to be shared with JCQ in this way and for this purpose. All required information must be available and Form 8 documents must be in place for the student.

Most cases gain automatic approval, once this approval has been obtained a printed record is kept within the candidate's file and parents are informed of the access arrangements that are in place.

For cases that do not gain approval or those that require referral to awarding bodies the guidance within AA are followed to ensure that the correct information is submitted in good time to the relevant awarding bodies. The SENDCo signs supporting letters and documents (on school headed paper) that are required for these applications as necessary, checking for accuracy of information.

### **Centre-delegated access arrangements**

For centre delegated arrangements, Form 8 is not required. However, detailed records are kept for each candidate that document their needs and the access arrangements in place to meet these. These documents are kept in the candidate's file. They often take the format of a written report of an assessment undertaken by the Assessor. Letters sent to parents to explain these access arrangements are kept within the candidate's file and records are kept both in printed format and digitally of the reasons for awarding these access arrangements. History of need is determined and is collated if required by JCQ for specific access arrangements.

For example: a candidate may be offered the use of a word processor in exams. The word processor policy is adhered to and records of assessments are kept in the candidates file. In addition, records are kept of when this access arrangement is utilised by the candidate.

### **Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements**

#### **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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

This policy is held by the exams officer and stored digitally on the school IT network.

#### **The criteria Holmer Green Senior School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations**

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

#### **Awarding word processors**

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working (not including the 1:1 devices scheme) and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- ▶ a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- ▶ a medical condition

- ▶ a physical disability
- ▶ a sensory impairment
- ▶ significant planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- ▶ poor handwriting that renders work illegible

Word processors are only awarded following assessment by a specialist Assessor who determines that a word processor does not give an advantage to the candidate and that failing to use a word processor would place the candidate at a substantial disadvantage. Standardised tests are used to inform this decision wherever possible.

### **Allocating word processors**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors with dedicated network log in credentials that ensure that the user experience is exam-compliant will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCo and the exams officer. At least 60 exam-compliant word processors are available for each examination.

In **highly exceptional** circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

Statement produced by: **Claire Hawkins, Assistant Headteacher (SENDCO)**

Statement date: 15/11/2017 15/10/2020

### **Separate invigilation within the centre**

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

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]

At Holmer Green Senior School, separate invigilation will only be available where a candidate has a substantial and long term impairment that has an adverse effect on their attainment and when it is their normal way of working within the centre.

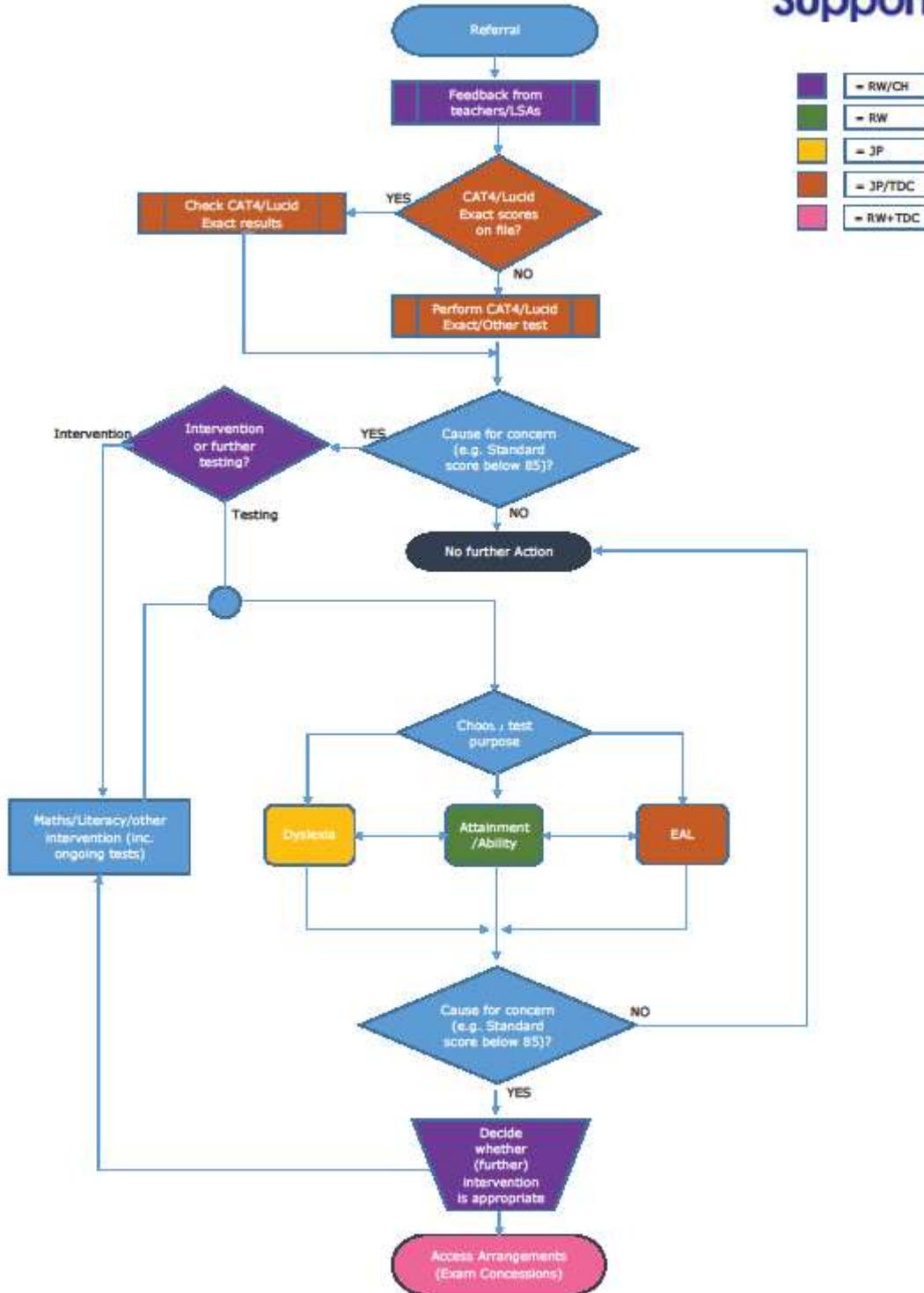
This is not limited to students who have been assessed within the centre for access arrangements and may be offered to students for a range of reasons at the discretion of the exams officer and SENDCo.

The need for individual invigilation will always be determined in advance of the commencement of examinations and discussed in detail with candidates and their parents. The arrangement should be withdrawn if the needs of the candidate change and allow this.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

SEN Testing/Assessment process



## Appendix 2

Check list regarding student's **normal** way of working  
Additional evidence to support Access Arrangements

Name of Student:                      Name of Teacher:                      Course:  
Date:

TIME	YES	NO
Always finishes tasks after others		
Needs extra time for assignments		
Needs time to formulate an answer to a verbal question (slow responding)		
Needs careful explanations in straightforward language of tasks/assignment titles		

READING	YES	NO
Needs reader in class		
Avoids reading out loud		
Has problem following written instructions		
Finds it difficult to quickly get the idea of what s/he has read		
Finds it hard to remember what s/he has read		

WRITTEN WORK	YES	NO
Handwriting difficult to read		
Has difficulty copying from the board		
Finds taking notes hard		
Works on laptop/computer rather than writing		
Needs support with planning written work		
Can explain verbally without problems but struggles to write anything down		
Needs support with spelling		
Grammar and punctuation insecure		

MEMORY & CONCENTRATION	YES	NO
Has difficulty following oral instructions		
Has difficulty concentrating for long periods		
Has difficulty remembering message, appointments		
Needs to have instructions repeated		
Needs to have instruction written down		

PRACTICAL TASKS	YES	NO
Good with practical tasks		
Prefers practical tasks to written ones		
Understanding better if able to consolidate learning through practical experience		

