



# **EQUALITIES POLICY (Exams)**

Holmer Green Senior  
School

December 2025

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	<b>Sarah Wilson</b>
Senior leader(s)	<b>Alan Wooller</b>
Head of centre	<b>Ed Hillyard</b>
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Angela Pearson</b>

## Contents

Key staff involved in the policy .....	2
Purpose of the policy .....	4
Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams .....	
The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability .....	4
Identifying the need for access arrangements .....	4
Roles and responsibilities .....	4
Use of word processors .....	6
Requesting access arrangements .....	6
Roles and responsibilities .....	6
Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams .....	6
Roles and responsibilities .....	6
External assessments .....	6
Internal assessments .....	7
Facilitating access - examples .....	8
Monitoring and Evaluation .....	9
Communication with Students and Parents/Carers .....	10

## Purpose of the policy

Holmer Green Senior School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination in all aspects of school life, including examinations. This policy supports our values of 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Have Passion' by ensuring all students have equitable access to assessments.

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the Holmer Green Senior School equalities/disability/accessibility policy/plan which details how the centre will:

- recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments 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

(JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements')
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

## The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided in the JCQ publication (Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments** 2024-2025 (*Definitions* section).

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

## Identifying the need for access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

#### Senior leader(s)

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

#### Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA
- Teaching and support staff will receive regular training on identifying candidate needs related to access arrangements and on the importance of providing evidence of normal way of working.

## Teaching staff

- Inform the /SENCo of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Provide evidence via a History of Need online form

**Support staff** (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working for a candidate

## Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication AA

When the information contained in this table is understood – highlight the table and select delete to remove the table and its contents from your policy

*Determine the responsibilities of each of the roles above. The list of roles is not exhaustive; add additional roles as identified in your centre. Add responsibilities as bullet points under each role. An example has been provided under each role above to demonstrate.*

*Responsibilities might include some of the examples listed below (this list is by no means exhaustive); the same responsibility could be assigned to more than one role.*

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for **all** candidates are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of AA
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements
- Produces and annually reviews a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance

- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

## **Use of word processors**

A word processor cannot simply 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 needs. The criteria for their award are:

1. a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
  2. a medical condition;
  3. a physical disability;
  4. planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
  5. poor handwriting.
  6. Use of a word processor confirmed as their normal way of working within the centre.
- This list is not exhaustive.

## **Requesting access arrangements**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **SENCo**

- Determines 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

#### **Exams officer (EO)**

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role

## **Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams**

### **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 instructions and/or the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

The school will ensure that all exam information (e.g., JCQ notices, exam timetables) is provided in accessible formats tailored to the needs of disabled candidates, including large print, Braille, or electronic formats as required.

#### **Head of centre**

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

### **SEnCo**

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)

### **Exams officer**

- Understands and follows instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in the current ICE

### **Other relevant centre staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

*Other relevant centre staff could include:*

- Staff responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
- Estates/site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

### **Internal assessments**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

However, 'NEA' is not limited to internal assessment as externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are also classified as 'NEA'.

### **SEnCo**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Internal exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a precursor to external assessments.

### **SEnCo**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

## Facilitating access - examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to:

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations  Supervised rest breaks	<p><i>SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home and for SRB (Supervised Rest Breaks)</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements which should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP</i></p> <p><i>An on-line submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations in the following qualifications...</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member</i></p>



		<p><i>of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p>
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	<p>Reader/computer reader</p> <p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Alternative rooming arrangements</p>	<p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>AAO application for approval processed</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the SENCo form kept on file</i></p>
Significant difficulty in concentrating	<p>Prompter</p> <p>Alternative rooming arrangements</p>	<p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>AAO application for approval processed</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal consent form, and completed Data protection confirmation by the EO or SENCo form kept on file</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for alternative room)</i></p>
A wheelchair user	<p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>	<p><i>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal consent form, and completed Data protection confirmation by the EO or SENCo form kept on file</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment</i></p>

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The SENCo and Exams Officer will regularly monitor the effectiveness of access arrangements and gather feedback from candidates and staff to inform policy review and practice improvements.

## **Communication with Students and Parents/Carers**

The centre will ensure clear communication with students and their parents/carers regarding access arrangements, including the rationale, processes, and any responsibilities they may have to support the arrangements.

Approved by Governors: December 2025

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