



Access Arrangements Policy  
(Exams)

Holmer Green Senior  
School

December 2023

## Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Centre Name	Holmer Green Senior School
Centre Number	52241
Date policy first created	09/10/2023
Current policy approved by	Governors
Current policy reviewed by	Anna Lee
Date of next review	December 2024

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Head Teacher
Senior leader(s)	Head Teacher
Exams officer	Anna Lee
ALS lead/SENCo	Laura Harris
Other staff (if applicable)	Access Arrangements Manager Assistant SENCo Deputy SENCo

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Holmer Green Senior School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

# Introduction

(AA Definitions)

## **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'.

## **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 several 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; and
- 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 Holmer Green Senior School has a written 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

## **1. General principles**

The principles for Holmer Green Senior School to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time

- providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (AA 4.2)
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- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
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- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2)
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- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate.
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- The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in Disability Equalities Policy (Exams).

## **2. The assessment process**

At Holmer Green Senior School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

### **Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)**

- The current Assessor is Laura Harris. The relevant qualifications held are: Level 7 Assessing for Access Arrangements PATOSS

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Holmer Green Senior School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

The Assessor is registered with PATOSS as a registered test user. The Assessor's registration number is checked. In addition, certification of all relevant qualifications is held by the exams officer on behalf of the SENCo. The SENCo 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 SENCo.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Exams Officer, the SENCo or Access Arrangements Manager..

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

### **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor**

Holmer Green Senior School confirms:

- 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. Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- 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. Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5)
- The SENDCo must personally conduct the assessments. She must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5)
- 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. The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AA 7.5)

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 25% 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.

- 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. A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements (AA 7.3)
- Relevant staff working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

Holmer Green Senior School confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5)

### **3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

#### **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by The SENCo and Exams Officer. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by The SEN Department under the coordination of the Access Arrangements Manager.

For centre delegated arrangements, Form 8 is not required. Form 9 is required for certain centre delegated arrangements, but not all (check JCQ AA for the most updated information).

If no form is required, 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 candidate's file. In addition, records are kept of when this access arrangement is utilised by the candidate..

- The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Holmer Green Senior School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- Alternative rooming arrangements

The Access Arrangements Policy (Exams), this policy, details the criteria Holmer Green Senior School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation).

### **Additional information:**

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 SENCo. 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.

### **Modified papers**

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

### **Roles and responsibilities**

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- the SENCo and/or Access Arrangements Manager to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate Personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- the SENCo and/or Access Arrangements Manager to complete the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application
- the Access Arrangements Manager to submit applications for approval using AAO
- the SENCo and/or Access Arrangements Manager to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a

- completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AA 8.6)
- the Access Arrangements Manager to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
  - the Exams Officer to order modified papers

Approved by Governors: December 2023

To be reviewed: December 2026