



EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Approved by: Victoria Edwards

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INTRODUCTION

This is intended as a guidance document with teachers and parents being the target audience.

The Examination Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student may fulfil her potential.

DEFINITIONS

The term **Additional Learning Need** is used as an umbrella term to incorporate ALL students known to be receiving intervention Learning Support provision including those pupils identified as having SEND.

DISABILITY

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as a *‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’*.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

A candidate has “special educational needs” as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a 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’. Policy approved by Head Mistress April 2017 – updated May 2018 2

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 upon 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.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment requiring authoritative support and at the discretion of the examining body.

Access Arrangements at Oakfield Short Stay School

Oakfield Short Stay School aims to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial SEND/or ALN which fall into the following four categories: -

- 1. Communication and interaction.*
- 2. Cognition and learning.*
- 3. Social, emotional and mental health.*
- 4. Sensory and/or physical needs.*

We will do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines. These are updated every year on the 1st September and run through until 31st August. The currently released document will always be the first reference point in determining the correct access arrangement for a student. We believe it is important to abide by the JCQ regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school. Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND/ALN and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs

and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate. Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom (within reason), internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'.

When might students need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. Policy approved by Head Mistress April 2017 – updated May 2018 3

What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from a Specialist Teacher or Specialist Assessor completed no earlier than the beginning of year 9
- Previous EAA from Primary Schools/other education providers (*please note a Form 8 will still need to be completed for GCSE and A-level examinations*)
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests, standardised psychometric testing

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

A growing number of parents have their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submit the reports to the SENCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or an additional form of EAA. These assessment reports are often very detailed but also cost a significant amount of money. This means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is '*either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged*' by any arrangements in place. Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive EAA which can be in conflict with the history of need seen in school, or which would not be considered as reasonable adjustments given the nature of the child's SEND/ALN.

The school will accept private assessments provided that:

1. the parents have informed us that a private assessment is taking place

2. the details of the private assessor, including details of their appropriate qualifications, have been passed on to the school
3. the private assessor makes formal verbal or written contact with the SENCO to discuss the student and the school's perspective of her potential needs.

A private assessment, even if it meets the criteria outlined above, will only be accepted as an application for an internal investigation into an access arrangement, and the existence of such an assessment does not constitute a guarantee that an access arrangement will be granted, especially if it conflicts with the stipulation for normal way of working.

If the advice of the private assessor for EAA conflicts with the centre tester (a member of staff holding a current formally recognised qualification enabling them to assess for EAA) then the recommendations of the centre tester will take precedence. Policy approved by Head Mistress April 2017 – updated May 2018 4

Procedures

How students would be identified for Exam Access Arrangements:

- They have had EAA at KS2 for their SATs
- They received EAA for the Entrance Examination based upon evidence received by and accepted by the school
- Baseline screening in the September of Year 7 using MidYIS testing
- Parental referral
- Subject teacher referral
- Information from previous school/education provider

An important principle is that just because a student has received EAA in the past, it does not necessarily follow that they will continue to receive EAA as their needs may very well have changed. For example, students for whom baseline testing at KS2 shows a reading speed score below the threshold required for EAA may not qualify for the EAA at KS4 as their reading speed may have improved to the extent that it no longer meets the exam board criteria.

Baseline Testing on Entry to Oakfield Short Stay School

All new students are tested using a variety of assessments, which provides standardised and UK-normed scores for vocab, non-verbal, skills and maths. These tests can help identify students with weakness in one or more areas. If a major concern is uncovered at

this stage, the SENCO will, in discussion with the Site Specific SEND Link contact the parents and obtain permission for further testing.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

As with Parental Referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCO initially if they feel a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting the parents about their concerns. The SENCO will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has EAA?

- Teaching and support staff can access the SEN list using Arbor.
- The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy and are shared only on a need to know basis.
- Staff are informed of changes to the SEN list via email and notification in the weekly staff briefing.
- Parents will be contacted by the SENCO to discuss what they are entitled to, why and when.

How are Exam Access Arrangements applied for?

Students need to be tested at each Key Stage for EAA. Just because they were entitled to EAA at KS3 does not automatically entitle them to it at KS4 or KS5 (Sixth Form).

The member of staff qualified to assess for access arrangements will use a variety of nationally recognised tests such as:

- *Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2nd Edition (CTOPP2)*
- Lucid EXACT
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)

This is not an exhaustive list, and is subject to change, as the assessments are replaced/updated periodically in line with current practice. The test that the assessor uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further EAA, the assessor will arrange this. Following a report produced by the assessor an application is made to the Awarding Bodies for permission to implement the specified arrangement(s).

There are some considerations with this access arrangement application:

- The authorisation granted by the Awarding Bodies lasts 26 months, therefore it is prudent to assess and apply for EAA in the April/May of Year 9 in order that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 10 and 11.
- A reapplication must be made in Year 12 in order to cover Year 12 and 13. Per the JCQ guidelines, it is possible to “roll forward” the application for EAA, however the student ideally should be re-assessed to provide up to date information for the SENCO, to be considered alongside history of need when considering the case for reapplication.
- There is a deadline imposed by the Awarding Bodies for when exam access arrangements can be applied for. In the academic year 2016/17, this deadline was 21st February 2017. This date can move between February and March, therefore all determinations of EAA to cover any external examinations taken in Year 10 should ideally be completed before the Christmas holiday.
- “Normal way of working” is a very important principle, sometimes even considered the *most* important. An application for EAA made late in Year 11 or Year 13 lacks validity as there is little evidence of whatever EAA is granted being the “normal way of working”. However, within this concept, Oakfield Short Stay School does recognise that the atypically high ability profile of our students, in terms of the national context, does mean that many learning difficulties can be far less apparent, and significant concerns raised in Year 11 or Year 13 will still be investigated. In these situations, greater weight will be given to in-school evidence such as Teacher Referrals and academic and EAA assessment results. While Parental Referrals are valuable, the phenomenon of issues being suddenly and unexpectedly raised in the weeks and months before external examinations is a valid concern, and it is highly likely that EAA will not be granted at such a late stage.

What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the SENCO or Exam Officer then applies to the Awarding Bodies. The feedback is instant at this point the EAA is added to the SEN list and the parents are informed of the EAA.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologists' reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Statement of Education Need or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- Permission from the Awarding Bodies for the arrangement(s) requires:
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

Deadlines for submitting applications for access arrangements and modified papers on-line for GCSE and GCE qualifications

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE and GCE qualifications **must** be processed using access arrangements online **as early as possible**.

The dates are set by the JCQ and we will endeavour to test students after the dates published but they will not receive dispensation for that period. This is due to allocation of time to test late entries.

From referral to point of access arrangements being awarded takes up to 4 weeks with Pearson (formerly Edexcel). Other Awarding Bodies tend to respond more quickly.

The deadline set by the JCQ is final, late entries may incur further inspections by the JCQ.

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based upon evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist assessor access arrangements report.

APPENDIX 1 : Common access arrangements

An explanation of assessment scores - In the following arrangements, when scores are referred to, these are the standardised scores from testing for access arrangements. They are standardised to 100 being the average for the age group of that student, with a standard deviation of 15. In other words, 67% of students will have scores from 85 to 115, with approximately 84% of students scoring 85 or above.

Access arrangements are considered for students in the 16% with a score of 84 or below.

Where possible, these scores will be obtained and put onto Form 8 via testing in school from a qualified assessor teacher. The school will also accept scores from external assessors, provided they have been correctly obtained and the assessor has maintained contact with the school as outlined in the main policy.

Where possible the scores should have confidence intervals. For example, a score of 89 may have an interval from 83 to 95. This would imply that on a “bad day” the student will experience difficulties similar to someone with a score of 84 or less, but the majority of the time we would not expect to see this. These scores *must* be presented as a 95% confidence interval i.e. we are 95% confident that the true score for the student lies in that range.

- **25% Extra Time** – the student is granted an additional 25% extra time for the examination, usually to compensate for a below average processing, reading or comprehension speed (a score of 84 or less in appropriate standardised testing). This is evidenced by Form 8 and work gathered in school to demonstrate the normal way of working. This arrangement can also be granted by medical evidence or other evidence from appropriate third parties, such as CAMHS. In these cases, the student does not require the Form 8, but does require a signed, authorised letter (i.e. on headed paper) from the representative of the agency making the request.
- **50% Extra Time** – the student is granted an additional 50% extra time for the examination, to compensate for very low standardised scores (69 or less) in two or more assessed areas. This is evidenced in the same manner as 25% extra time.
- NB: Prior to September 2016, only one standardised score needed to be below the given threshold. Any students who already had this arrangement in place continue with it to the end of their exam tier.
- **100% Extra Time** – the student is granted 100% extra time for the examination. This is exceptional and used primarily where a medical need that significantly impacts the examination exists, e.g. visual impairment. It is evidenced through medical information.

- **Rest breaks** – these are non-evidenced. The student is allowed to “pause” the exam for brief periods of time. This is often to compensate for physical issues (e.g. a recently sprained wrist causing discomfort when writing), calming down (e.g. if the student is prone to panic attacks, or suffers from ADHD and needs to re-focus) or extreme cases of exam anxiety. Generally the school will limit the student to 6 minutes every half an hour of the exam, but this is adaptable to the girl’s needs. This access arrangement is discretionary and can be withdrawn at any time.
- **Separate invigilation** – the student is invigilated separately from the rest of the students sitting the exam. While it is very common for educational psychologists to recommend this, it is viewed as a “last resort” option, due to the impact upon rooming and staffing. Students who have been granted this arrangement have received it due to medical issues (e.g. visual impairment requiring specific environmental adjustments), and specific learning needs (e.g. complex combinations of multiple severe learning needs such as ADHD, ASD and OCD). Separate invigilation will not be considered in the vast majority of cases as very often the student will be sitting normal internal assessments with her classmates, and therefore the evidence of need and evidence for “normal way of working” is not there.
- Use of assistive technologies

In all cases, the student must be used to using the assistive technologies, and must ideally have started no later than the beginning of Year 10. It is envisioned that where possible, the provision for the use of assistive technologies is in place from Year 9 onwards.

- **Reader Pens** - if “reader pens” are to be used, they must be of a type approved by the JCQ. Currently the preferred option is the “C-Pen” reader. Students using this are allowed to plug headphones in so that the pen “reads” the words to them without disturbing others. As such, they are allowed to use it in the main exam hall.
- **iPads** – these are allowed for use on a case by case basis and permission must be sought from the Awarding Bodies. The iPad must be locked into Guided Access Mode, preventing the student from accessing anything outside of the specific app required for the exam (normally iBooks or an equivalent PDF reader). The iPad must be placed in Airplane Mode (i.e. all radios switched off) and the Guided

Access Mode will be PIN-locked by the SENCO. This PIN will be made known to the Exams Officer, and the ICT staff.

- Laptops – if a student uses a laptop in her day to day lessons then it is her normal way of working and she may be allowed the use of one in an examination. The laptop will not be her “usual” one and will be provided with a “clean” image, with external communications disabled, and spelling and grammar checking disabled. Please see “Appendix 2: Usage of Laptops”.
- **Scribes and Readers** – these are very often recommended by external educational psychologists, however, they are increasingly being discouraged as an examination access arrangement. Both arrangements require a degree of familiarity between the student and the scribe/reader and need to be in place from Year 9 onwards at the very latest in order to be effective. There is also the concern that there is an implication for marks that are based on quality of communication, which are generally not attainable for the users of these arrangements.

The recommended alternative to a scribe arrangement is the use of a laptop, and the recommended alternative to a reader arrangement is the use of a reader pen. Policy approved by Head Mistress April 2017 – updated May 2018 10

APPENDIX 2 : Usage of Laptops

Introduction

This appendix to the Examination Access Arrangements policy on the use of word processors/laptops in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications “Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments” (AA) and “Instructions for Conducting Examinations” (ICE).

Throughout this Appendix, the

Principles for using a word processor

Oakfield Short Stay School complies with AA Chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

(AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

(AA 4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - in the classroom (where appropriate); or
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
 - literacy support lessons; or
 - literacy intervention strategies; and/or

- in internal school tests/examinations
- mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

The use of a word processor

Oakfield Short Stay School complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand)

(The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor 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

Word processors and their programmes

Oakfield Short Stay School complies with ICE 8.8 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used
- an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate
- where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used
- word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- documents are printed after the examination is over
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- word processed scripts are inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.

- candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc when using a word processor
- graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops and tablets

Oakfield Short Stay School further complies with ICE 8.8 instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

Centre specific processes

- Laptops use a local user account with no network access, and are blocked from accessing the internet via the school's network firewall.
- Microsoft Word is used, with spelling and grammar checking fully disabled. Font size is set to 12 and double spacing is enabled (this latter option is unavailable through WordPad).
- Headers and footers are pre-written by the SENCO/Exams Officer and the file is pre-saved with an appropriate name into the Documents folder on the laptop e.g. "[Student name] English Paper 1 – 22-05-2018.docx". This is done immediately before the exam starts.
- Autosave is set to 2 minutes.
- At the end of the exam the laptop is taken by either the SENCO or the Exams Officer to a network-isolated printer at the front of the hall, directly connected via USB cable, and the student's work printed. This printout will then be shown to the student so that they can ascertain and confirm it is their own work.

Criteria used by Oakfield Short Stay School 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 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
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENCO and the exams officer. In 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.