



FOREST SCHOOL

Access Arrangements Policy

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Owner (Name, Title):	Matthew Key, Deputy Head Academic
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Comment:	

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
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SLT/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Matthew Key
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Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Melanie Wright

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1 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 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'.

2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Forest School has a written record that clearly shows the school is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

(General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4) This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy is maintained and held by the Deputy Head Academic/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes 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.

3 General Principles

The principles for the school to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These 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 them 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 disabled candidates.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in school.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

4 Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams), which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Senior Leadership Team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010⁷, 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 school provides to disabled candidates. Where the school is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the school **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

For any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

5 The Assessment Process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Senior Leadership Team. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualifications of the current assessors

- Melanie Wright – Level 7 PAAPA
- Amy Clifton – Level 7 PAAPA
- Estelle Shilton – Level 7 PAAPA
- Daniela de Silva – Specialist Assessor with APC

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the school, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualifications of the assessors

The Deputy Head Academic/SENCo will not only check the qualifications of their assessors but also that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

The Senior Leadership Team ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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 SENCo. (AA 7.3)

6 Reporting the Appointment of the Assessor(s)

Evidence of qualification of the assessor are held within the AA filing cabinet.

Evidence of qualification of the SENCo are held within the main files at HR.

7 Process for the Assessment of a Candidate's Learning Difficulties by an Assessor

Following identification of learner difficulties and from the history of need produced in collaboration with teaching staff a Form 8 is completed by the SENCo. Access testing can then commence, and subsequent applications made.

The Senior Leadership Team confirms that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

(GR 5.4)

Note

SENCoS and assessors working within the school 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 school and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

8 Painting a 'Holistic Picture of Need' - Confirming Normal Way of Working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8.

The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process informed by robust evidence of the holistic picture of need and normal ways of working on behalf of the pupil.

Subject teaching staff are consulted prior to assessments being carried out to confirm the normal way of working and to ensure the history of need is correct.

If an independent assessor is used, they must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

All candidates must be assessed considering the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 7.5)

9 Processing Access Arrangements and Adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for schools to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within 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.

The SENCo keeps detailed records, in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required), a record of assessments carried out and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

Applications are submitted to AAO when an assessment has been completed for a candidate and details of approvals are sent home to parents/carers.

For administration purposes, all Access Arrangements for external exam groups in an academic year, will be finalised by the October half-term of Michaelmas.

School-delegated arrangements/adjustments

School-delegated arrangements are detailed within the school Access Arrangements file along with the evidence of a history of need and is the candidate's normal way of working.

10 School-Specific Criteria for Particular Arrangements/Adjustments

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams, or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the school.

The school holds a policy on the use of word processor detailing the criteria the school uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. (AA 5.8)

11 Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the school will be made by the ALS lead/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 school (AA 5.16)

For separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are **established within the school** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Tutor, a Head of House, Head of Section, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations because of a **long-term** medical condition or **long-term** social, emotional, and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)