



STRATFORD GIRLS'  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

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Shaping Futures

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# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2025/2026

Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act	Yes
To be published on website?	No

### Policy ownership

Governor committee:	Progress & Well-being
Department responsible:	SENDCo
Post-holder: (title and name)	Mandy Hughes, SENDCo
Linked procedures	Exams Policies, Child Protection & Safeguarding
Responsible person:	Jacqui Cornell, Headteacher/Head of Centre
Implementation date:	October 2025
Planned review interval:	Annual
Planned next review date:	November 2026

## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with significant and long-term special educational needs and disabilities or those with serious 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'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Stratford Girls' Grammar 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..."

(JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo 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 SENDCo 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.

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

## **General principles**

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA. 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 SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 the centre.

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

## **Equalities Policy (Exams)**

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

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†. 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...

for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect.

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

## **The assessment process**

Assessments of working speed to identify learning difficulty 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.

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

Assessments for access arrangements are completed by a qualified assessor employed through the Specialist Teacher Services of Warwickshire County Council.

PGC in specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia) – Edge Hill University

PGC in specific learning difficulties (Dyscalculia) – Edge Hill University

Membership of AMBDA – M21910

### **Appointment of assessors**

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, 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 qualification(s) of the assessor(s)**

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

The head of centre must ensure 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 SENDCo.

### **Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)**

Evidence of the assessor's qualifications are kept on file by the Exams Manager as well as within the SENDCo's files and available for Inspection on request.

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

The administration of the assessment process follows a strict protocol so that all evidence is collected and communicated efficiently and effectively.

We endeavour to identify students who require access arrangements. Staff are trained in different types of need for access arrangements and make detailed SEND referrals where needs are identified.

The SENDCo liaises with Progress Leads to scrutinise data and target students who are underperforming in several subjects. We listen to students and parents to make sure that we provide relevant intervention. We carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to inform the process of gathering a picture of need within our setting. We also gather evidence demonstrating normal way of working within the centre, prior to any assessment of needs or recommendations for access arrangements.

Once students have been identified, we gather evidence from all subject teachers to paint a profile. (Please refer to SEND referral form or AA staff questionnaire). We trial the reasonable adjustment to gather evidence on if this supporting the student. We make sure that the assessment process is managed effectively. Parental consent is requested for access arrangements testing.

We also recognise that some students may need study intervention help rather than access arrangements. Therefore, we make sure that our identification and support is efficient and personalised for each student.

### **Note**

For private candidates, the centre undertakes the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process. The candidate will be assessed by the qualified assessor. In some instances, depending on their needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre, for example at home.

## **Painting a ‘holistic picture of need’, confirming normal way of working**

We gather evidence to record normal way of working as defined by JCQ.

Before the candidate’s assessment, the SENDCo provides the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

All candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8 by an approved assessor.

The independent assessor discusses access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo.

The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements / reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo.

The arrangements put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. All students receive Quality First Teaching and special arrangements are indicated to subject teachers through Individual Education Plans known as Learning Passports.

Those students who have been awarded access arrangements will routinely be given that provision in the classroom as their normal way of working for assessments or timed practices. The support given in the centre reflects the arrangements put in place for the exam series.

Mock examinations use students’ normal way of working as access arrangements and also provide further evidence to the centre for planned interventions. We evidence the effectiveness of using extra time in examinations by recording this on individual records. This record is then given to the SENDCo and saved as SEND evidence.

## **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 centres 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.

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.

Applications are submitted online before the JCQ deadline date. The SENDCo has overall responsibility and will process online applications with the Exams Manager. Approval is kept electronically in the student’s individual electronic file / e-folder by the SENDCo. The SENDCo has all evidence needed for inspection purposes. If approval is not awarded, the SENDCo/Exam Manager will follow this up with the Exam Board.

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

Some students are awarded 25% extra time to account for disabilities or other difficulties affecting their working speed. In accordance with JCQ regulations, a picture of need is gathered and a Form 9 is completed by the SENDCo.

In compliance with JCQ regulations, medical evidence of needs supports the SENDCo in recommending suitable adjustments and this is kept on file and accessible for inspection.

## **Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments**

### **Word Processors**

Please see Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2025-26

### **Separate Invigilation Policy**

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

Our criteria for separate invigilation within the centre is overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This involves discussion with the relevant Head of House, SENDCo and Exams Manager before a decision is made.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo 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 as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, emotional and mental health needs.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

We may also seat some students in a smaller room if we have evidence from previous exam arrangements that they have struggled being in the larger school hall or their needs necessitate a smaller room.

### **Rest breaks**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved rest breaks 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, a trial has been conducted and evidenced

Candidates will normally be escorted by an invigilator outside the exam room during their rest break. During this time, they are also permitted to use the toilet facilities.

Candidates are advised to take 5 minutes for a rest break. This is dependent on Invigilator ratios in the exam room and a candidate may be advised to take the rest break at their desk or to wait if they need to leave the room. If the rest break is taken at the candidate's own desk in the exam room, their exam paper is securely removed during the resting period and then returned when their time is recommenced.

A maximum of 10 minutes is also recommended, as being most conducive to re-joining the exam. The exception being specific medical needs taking longer to manage.

Candidates are asked not to take a rest break at any point within the first 30 minutes of the exam or the or last 15 minutes of the standard timing of the exam, in order to ensure the business of the exam room is not disrupted.

### **Prompter**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved a prompter 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 and has been trialled and evidenced

### **Earplugs / fidget toys/rings**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved for these arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENDCo, supported by existing evidence of medical need. 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 and has been trialled and evidenced
- **Non-electronic** ear defenders/ear plugs can be used
- **Non-electronic** headphones can be used

### **Listening to music/white noise due to a substantial impairment**

The SENCo must confirm the candidate's disability. This will be a candidate with social, emotional and mental health needs or a candidate with a sensory impairment, such as tinnitus or misophonia.

A candidate with ADHD or ASD may find that listening to music helps them focus and is the normal way of working

Formal evidence must be available to confirm the candidate's medical condition.

The centre must ensure that the candidate uses a device which cannot be connected to the internet and is **not Bluetooth** enabled.

The centre would provide the device, such as:

- a CD player;
- a centre laptop operated by the invigilator;
- an MP3 player;
- a white noise machine.

The candidate may choose the music or white noise. However, the music playlist must be checked to ensure an advantage is not conferred to the candidate.