



Kingswood House School

External Examination Access Arrangements

This Policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and must be read in conjunction with other relevant Kingswood House School policies.

Related Policies:

- All External Examination Policies
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

This list is not exhaustive.

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Head of Study Centre and Senior SENCo, Miss Harriet Wilson

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Key staff involved in the policy

Head of Study Centre, Senior SENCo & Assessor:	Miss Harriet Wilson
SENCo line manager & Head of Centre:	Mr Duncan Murphy
Access Arrangement Facilitator and Exams Officer:	Mrs Katie Edwards

Contents

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?	3
Access arrangements	3
Reasonable adjustments	3
Purpose of the policy	3
General principles.....	4
External Examination Equalities Policy	4
The assessment process	4
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	4
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties	4
Checking the qualification(s) of the SENCo (the assessor)	4
Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s).....	4
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor.....	5
Painting a ‘holistic picture of need’, confirming normal way of working	5
Processing access arrangements and adjustments	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval	6
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	6
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments	6
Word Processor Policy (Exams)	6
Separate Invigilation Policy	6

What are 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'. (AA Definitions)

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'. (AA Definitions)

*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

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Kingswood House 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... (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 Senior 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.

General principles

The principles for the centre 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 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 disabled candidates.

The SENCo **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 the centre.

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

External Examination Equalities Policy

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

Kingswood House School's External Examination Equalities Policy can be found on the school's website, the school's internal shared drive and on request from the Exams Officer.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], 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 (GR section 5.4)

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

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor

Miss Harriet Wilson, Head of Study Centre and Senior SENCo (the assessor) qualifications:

- Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements Level 7

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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 SENCo (the assessor)

The head of centre will ensure that evidence of the SENCo's (the assessor's) qualification(s) is obtained at the point of employment, prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR 5.4)

Evidence of the SENCo's (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)

Before employment is offered, compliance with AA 7.3 requirements are ensured. Please refer to AA 7.3 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The Senior SENCo (the assessor) was recruited internally and a copy of their qualifications are kept on file by the SENCo, the Exams Officer and their personal file in the Bursar's Office

Please refer to AA 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors) for future recruitment plans.

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

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs that the SENCo (the assessor) is painting a picture of need and demonstrating the candidate's normal way of working and completing Section 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Pupils are identified as potentially requiring Access Arrangements by class and subject teachers and the SENCO. The appropriate assessments are carried out in line with the pupil's presenting needs and normal way of working. A history of need is demonstrated as part of this process. In doing so, Kingswood House School confirm that:

The correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4).

Kingswood House School will only consider private candidates such as a distance learner or a home educated student in special circumstances and will follow the process as set out in GR 5.4

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Prior to the candidate's assessment, the SENCo (the assessor) considers the background information which paints a picture of need as required in Section 1 of Form 8. The SENCo (the assessor) ensures a consistent process.

In the case of parent's opting to use a private assessor, the assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and any relevant background information. This must take place prior to the candidate being assessed.

The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo.

The responsibility to request access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo.

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. (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.

Applications for AAO are submitted ahead of the deadline set by JCQ in the year which exams take place. The SENCo will collaborate with the Exams Officer in order to ensure the appropriate arrangements are in place for doing so. The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or 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) and a signed data protection notice for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

Please refer to AA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) for further clarification on the process requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

In the case of centre delegated access arrangements, appropriate evidence is stored on file including evidence of normal way of working.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

External Examination Word Processor Policy

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply 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 centre.

Kingswood House School's External Examination Word Processor Policy can be found on the School's website, internal shared drive or on request from the Exams Officer.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations." (AA 5.8).

Separate Invigilation Policy

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

The SENCo must note that candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, 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 as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)