

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy 2016-17

Written in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
Regulations document:

‘Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties -
Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’ -
with effect from 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017.

Access Arrangements (AA) Explained:

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates/learners with 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 disabled 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 Explained:

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 visually impaired person who could read Braille.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person maybe unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- The needs of the disabled candidate/learner
- The effectiveness of the adjustment
- The cost of the adjustment
- The likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate.

The responsibility of an awarding body is principally one of making reasonable adjustments for a candidate defined as disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

Duty to make a reasonable adjustment

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

Access Arrangements at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School adheres to the definitions in relation to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, disability, special educational needs and learning difficulties as agreed by the JCQ awarding bodies and the Federation of Awarding Bodies.

In line with JCQ regulations, Cardinal Allen Catholic High School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements in consideration of the following:

Definition of Disability as stated in the Equality Act 2010:

Disability: “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”

Definition of Special Educational Needs as defined in the Education Act 1996

A candidate is deemed to have Special Educational Needs (SEN) if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

A candidate has a ‘learning difficulty’ if:

- He/she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age

OR

- He/she has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of the educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his/her age in schools within the area of the local authority.

The existence of a medical diagnosis or physical disability in itself does not imply that the candidate in question has special educational needs.

Both of the above must be considered in conjunction with any given access arrangement being the candidate’s normal way of working at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School - demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement.

The process of implementing access arrangements at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School ensures a “level playing field” for all examination candidates and most importantly, ensures that the integrity of assessments is not compromised. As far as possible, any access arrangement granted to a candidate will support independent working in order to enable the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge in a manageable way.

Roles and Responsibilities: SENCO - Miss C Smith

- Will know and identify pupils who display potential needs for access arrangements from the point of entry to school - Year 7.
- Will, in conjunction with the examinations officer, monitor and collate supportive evidence from teaching staff, teaching assistants and exam invigilators over the course of a pupil's school career.
- Will work with AA pupils to advise on accessibility of KS4 courses when the time comes for option subject selection to take place in Year 9.
- Will liaise with the SEN Governor and SLT to make all stakeholders aware of current processes and procedures.
- Will either carry out Specialist Teacher Assessments or liaise with an external Specialist Assessor to determine specific needs and make a final decision on AA requirements.
- Will, in conjunction with the examinations officer, monitor candidates' usage of access arrangements and determine whether or not the **normal way of working** is being followed.
- Will complete online access arrangement applications with the assistance of the examinations officer if required.
- Will complete Form 8 where required. Where Form 8 is not required, file notes in reference to specific points from the JCQ Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments booklet should be filed in the school's access arrangements file.
- Will ensure that Data Protection Notices are signed by candidates.
- Will correspond with parents and candidates with regards to access arrangement decisions.
- Will liaise with the examinations officer with regards to ordering modified papers.
- Will have the FINAL SAY on all access arrangement decisions.

Examinations Officer - Miss C McGovern

- Will provide advice and consultation on processes and procedures.
- Will, when necessary, support SENCO in processing online access arrangement applications.
- Will arrange the logistics of access arrangements - accommodation, supervision etc.
- Will train examination invigilators and specialist invigilators in access arrangements.
- Will make emergency access arrangement applications, relating to temporary conditions such as broken bones, or temporary illness on the day of an exam.
- Will make post-exam special consideration applications for candidates who have been disadvantaged in any way during a particular exam or exams. Reasons for disadvantage can include but are not limited to recent bereavement, temporary illness of the candidate, serious illness of a member of the candidate's immediate family, personal crisis on the day of the exam, etc etc.

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians should be aware that the regulations state that access arrangements cannot be put in place purely on the say-so of a doctor or other medical professional. A medical letter will trigger an internal investigation but there is no guarantee that internal evidence would be found to support such applications. Cardinal Allen Catholic High School reserves the right to refuse applications. If there is no history of need documented within school, and no testing results to support such a request, the likelihood is that it will be rejected.

This is particularly important with regards to “quiet room” accommodation for examinations. For example, a pupil presents the examinations officer with a doctor’s note a fortnight before the start of the Summer GCSE examinations, stating that he/she is suffering with exam stress and requires a quiet room environment for his/her exams. This pupil displayed no signs of difficulties in the mock exams or in any Controlled Assessments, has had no pastoral concerns throughout Year 11, and is simply suffering with the same anxiety as 159 of his/her peers - exam stress is to be expected! The “quiet room” is for candidates who have had **substantial and long term difficulties** throughout the course of Year 11, which can be evidenced through pastoral involvement.

External Educational Psychologists should contact the school’s SENCO prior to carrying out any form of testing on any candidate, in order to identify a specific area of need for assessment. If an Educational Psychologist report is requested and funded by parents/guardians and initial contact with the SENCO prior to testing has not been made, when the report is received by the school, the request will be automatically rejected.

The **normal way of working** takes priority over any medical diagnoses, medical notes, external Educational Psychologist Assessments, parental requests, staff observations or any other form of evidence.

A “use it or lose it” policy is in force.

For example, a candidate has been awarded 25% extra time in their examinations and assessments. A potential need was identified in Year 7, and evidence has been gathered from staff which suggests the candidate has struggled to complete assessments in the allotted time, resulting in the SENCO making the application for extra time. However, in Year 10, the candidate has completed Controlled Assessment tasks in several subjects and refused to use the extra time, finishing well before the allotted time is over - in this instance, the 25% extra time allocation does not reflect the normal way of working, and the extra time would be removed.

Another example would be a candidate who was granted the use of a reader in his/her assessments as this was the normal way of working whilst in class. If the candidate refuses to make proper use of the reader during examinations or assessments, this is breaking regulations and the candidate should not be allowed the access arrangement at all for future examinations or assessments.

Misuse of access arrangements constitutes malpractice in examinations and can have serious consequences for the school, the candidate concerned, and indeed any other candidates. The school's access arrangement records can be inspected at any time by a JCQ inspector and must be thorough, well maintained, and easily accessible on request.

Records:

Appropriate evidence of need will be available at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School for inspection. Evidence will take the form of one or more of the following and should be documented from Year 7 onwards.

- Identification of potential candidates requiring access arrangements at the point of entry to school based upon information from primaries, initial staff observations, KS2 data, baseline testing results, and CAT tests.
- History of need
- History of relevant provision
- Intervention strategies
- Assessment results
- Staff observations - to include teaching staff, teaching assistants and examination invigilators

The School will:

- Provide relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on the candidate's ability to carry out day to day activities.
- Provide evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant.
- Show evidence of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Confirm that the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment
- Confirm that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working within the school as a direct consequence of their disability
- Ensure that the arrangements put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in school and therefore reflect the **normal way of working**.

The requirements of different subjects vary - an English assessment would require a greater amount of prose writing than a Maths assessment, for example. Therefore it is often the case that a candidate's difficulties mean that he/she only requires support in one or two subjects. Equally, another candidate may need support in all their subjects. The key principle is that the SENCO can show a history of relevant support and provision.

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with for example:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist
- A letter from a hospital consultant
- A letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service

- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)

All of the above will be at the request of the SENCO and no other individual

5. Assessment:

- For those pupils potentially requiring access arrangements, formal assessment and application to JCQ is carried out in Year 9.
- For all assessments carried out in all subjects from Year 9 onwards, pupils should be allowed to use the access arrangement - this enables them to become familiar with what is required and get used to the procedures before they start their KS4 courses.
- When granted access arrangements are valid to the end of the GCSE examinations and can be carried forward to further education if required.
- Any pupil with standard assessment scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements from the point of entry to school.
- Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School by an appropriately qualified assessor who attends regular update training.