



Saint Benedict
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Access Arrangement Policy 2021-22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by: A.Johnson

Date of next review; October 2022.

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Annet Johnson
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Claire Groom
Specialist Assessors	Kathleen Joyce / A. Johnson

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'.

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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy 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.

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

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.

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are summarised below. 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 a disabled candidate.
- 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 the centre.
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

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. This is located on the school's website.

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.

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(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualifications of the current assessors are

The Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA) -SENCO (A.Johnson)

Certificate of Psychometric testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A) – Specialist assessor K. Joyce

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 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... (GR 5.4)

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 SENCo. (AA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s) The SENCo / Exams officer holds the evidence which shows that the assessors are suitably qualified.

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

The specialist assessor working in the centre will follow the procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments assessing a candidate's learning difficulties.

The guidelines in the general regulations (section 5.4) will also be followed as it pertains to a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student

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 required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

An independent assessor **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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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

An independent assessor **must** discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 7.5)

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.

In this centre the exams officer makes the AAO applications at the request of the SENCO.

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 candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

All centre delegated arrangements are approved by the SENCO and the relevant supporting evidence supporting this is held on the pupil's file by the SENCo.

Centre-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 centre. More information about the use of word processors can be found in the policy on the schools website.

Separate Invigilation within the centre

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 (e.g. a **long-term** medical condition or **long-term** social, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16) which has an adverse effect **and**
- The candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations in the centre. (AA 5.16)

