



**Saint Benedict**

A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Part of the Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust

# **Equalities Policy (Exams)**

## **2022/23**

**This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations**

**Reviewed by: Annet Johnson**

**Date of next review: February 2024**

**Key Staff involved in the policy**

| Role             | Name(s)                          |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| SENCo            | Annet Johnson                    |
| Senior leader(s) | Claire Groom                     |
| Head of centre   | Hazel Boyce                      |
| Assessor(s)      | Kathleen Joyce and Annet Johnson |
| Exams officer    | Gail Wilson                      |

## Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide* equalities policy statement and *accessibility plan*. This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements')
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

## The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 9 of the JCQ publication (Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023.

## Identifying the need for access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including General Regulations for approved centres (GR) and Access Arrangements (AA).
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for **all** candidates are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of AA
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams

#### Senior leader(s)

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

#### Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication for Access Arrangements. Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre

- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments

### Teaching staff

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Trial the various AA available to ensure the candidates is uses an arrangement that is suitable for him/her in that subject

### Support staff (Learning Support Assistants/ HLTA's) and Communication Support Workers)

- (Where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working for a candidate
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### Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication on Access Arrangements.
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

### Use of word processors

The centre's word processor policy (produced by the assistant headteacher's in charge of exams is located on the school's website under the exams section.

### Requesting access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### SEnCo

- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of JCQ Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), and/or centre based evidence including concise file note(s) on centre headed paper, signed and dated, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. (Form 8 must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties who are not subject to an EHCP who require 25% ET and / or a scribe including candidates who require a computer reader/ reader and 25% extra time and / or a scribe or where a Language Modifier is required)
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the form is signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will be in hard copy within the candidate's file that will include:

- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
  - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
  - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - in addition, for those qualifications covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval and a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
  - Data protection confirmation (where applicable) prior to an application being made online.
- Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

### **Exams officer**

- Follows guidance in AA (chapter 8) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included
- Applies for approval where this is required, through Access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures that where approval is required the application is processed on time and no later than the awarding body's published deadline
- Ensures that the full supporting evidence is in place before an online application is processed
- Reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement
- Ensures that the agreed adjustment has been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal tests and mock examinations
- If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper from CCEA, OCR and WJEC ( or to download a PDF copy of the standard question paper where provided by AQA and Pearson) or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the awarding body's published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- Following the appropriate process (using AAO for those qualifications included in the tool; using Form VQ/EA), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate
- Confirms by ticking the '*Confirmation*' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the '*malpractice consequence statement*' has been read and accepted
- Ensures the names of all assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO are entered onto AAO to confirm their status.

## Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

### Roles and responsibilities

#### External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations **(ICE)**.

#### **Head of centre**

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional)
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator

#### **SEnCo**

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Monitors, internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

### **Exams officer**

- Understands and follows instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in ICE 2022/23
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher but where the candidate's own subject teacher has to be used, ensures a separate invigilator is always present
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate.
- Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans and invigilators are informed of those candidates with access arrangements and made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room

- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam

#### **Other relevant centre staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Staff responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate, prepare these before the exams
- Estates/site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate, prepare these in advance.
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

#### **Internal assessments**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

#### **SEnCo**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidate

#### **Specialist assessor**

Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment

Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

#### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments

#### **Exams Officer**

- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required



- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

### Facilitating access examples.

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

| Example of candidate need(s)   | Arrangements explored  | Centre actions   |
|--|--|--|
| A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre | Alternative site for the conduct of examinations<br>Supervised rest breaks | <p><i>SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP</i></p> <p><i>An on-line submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations in the following qualifications...</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   |  | <p><i>EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p>   |
| Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text | <p>Reader/computer reader</p> <p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p> | <p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>A short concise file note produced on centre headed paper, signed and dated kept on file, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre</i></p> <p><i>(25% Extra time - Form 8 completed as appropriate)</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval and signed candidate personal data consent form kept on file</i></p>                      |
| Significant difficulty in concentrating                           | <p>Prompter</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p>                                     | <p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room)</i></p>   |
| A wheelchair user   | <p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>  | <p><i>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment</i></p> |

**(Note AA (section 5.16): Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.**