

Blatchington Mill School

Examinations Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment Policy 2017 - 2018 (currently under review)



What are Access Arrangements?

These are arrangements (for instance extra time, reader or scribe) that are put in place to make sure that all students have a 'level playing field' when sitting examinations.

Why? The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body (examination board i.e. AQA, OCR, EDEXCEL) to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled as defined in 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 person who could read braille.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principle way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustment'.

Blatchington Mill School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. The school abides by the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ, 2017-2018) Regulations document.

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

The identification of students who may need access arrangements are as listed below:

- Cognition and Learning Needs (e.g. General and/or specific learning difficulties)
- Communication and Interaction Needs (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)
- Sensory and Physical Needs (e.g. Hearing Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Physical Disability, Vision Impairment)
- Social, Mental and Emotional Needs (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Conditions)
- English as an Additional Language

Access arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by JCQ if the school has been aware of the student's medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place. For students who require temporary access arrangements due to medical problems for instance broken limbs, the school must have a medical letter before the arrangement can be put into place and the school Exams Officer or SENCO must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible. Medical letters relating to anxiety or depression which the school was not made aware of before the deadline for access arrangements will not be awarded. **The deadline for the current academic year is February 2018.**

What evidence do we need to have to secure Access Arrangements?

JCQ inspections require all school to have the appropriate evidence for every student that has been awarded access arrangements. If the school fails to provide sufficient evidence, in line with JCQ regulation, then the student in question could have marks deducted due to their unfair advantage. The appropriate evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extend of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term affect i.e. history of need/history provision.
- Evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant i.e. assessment results/provision.
- Show evidence of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Confirm that the student will be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.

For access arrangements awarded on medical grounds the school will also need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made as well as JCQ inspection:

- A letter form CAMHS or a clinical psychologist; or
- A letter from a hospital consultant; or
- A Letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or

- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Needs Service; or
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

The school must be made aware of any on-going medical problems as soon as they have been diagnosed. If the school is not made aware of the student's medical history then an access arrangement cannot be put into place for public examinations. In cases when GP's provide medical letters for anxiety or depression, then the evidence must show that the school has been aware of this and has been working with the student to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. If the school is unable to provide this evidence, then the Access Arrangement will not be awarded.

Access arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subjects. If this is the case, then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects or adapted for those students who require arrangements for all subjects.

Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in all internal and external assessments. An access arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulation. If a student chooses to continually not use their access arrangement, then the access arrangement will be removed for public examinations.

English as an Additional Language

Up to 10% extra time may be awarded for students who have lived in the UK for less than three years, providing they arrived with no prior knowledge of English. English should not be spoken at home; the extra time is for the use of a bilingual dictionary. Due to the nature of set assessment objectives this provision will not be awarded in GCSE:

English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, and Religious Studies. Furthermore, extra time is not awarded for GCE.

Assistive technologies

Where possible students should work towards greater independence; scribes should only be considered when a student does not have sufficient word processing skills.

Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making an application for extra time. To qualify for rest breaks medical evidence must be on file before the deadline 21st February 2018. Rest breaks are the appropriate provision for a range of difficulties including:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- A medical condition
- Sensory and physical needs
- Social, mental and emotional needs

How are Access arrangements awarded?

Students transferring from primary school with an EHCP plan will normally be eligible for access arrangements this will be discussed at the students' annual review.

Baseline assessments of students in year 7 are carried out at the beginning of term to test reading, spelling and writing speed. Using this data, students are identified who have standardised scores of 84 and below. Appropriate intervention and access arrangements for that academic year are discussed and put into place by the school's qualified Access Arrangement Assessor/SENCO.

A letter will be sent out to parents/guardians informing them of decisions; arrangements are agreed for each key stage. As children progress through school their profile can change and therefore, access arrangements will be awarded at each key stage to reflect the child's need at that time, in accordance with JCQ regulations. This may mean that a child may have an access arrangement in Year 7 but has improved and no longer requires this in Year 10.

Who can assess and how are decisions made?

The Head of Centre is responsible for appointing an Access Arrangement Assessor with the required level of competence. This must be an Education professional who holds Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and has completed a Level 7 qualification in individual assessment, an HCPC registered Psychologist or a Specialist Teacher with a current SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate. Schools are not obliged to accept private reports and will only work with practitioners where there is an established relationship; the practicing certificates

of these professionals will be kept on file in preparation for JCQ inspection. Access arrangement assessments cannot be completed without JCQ's Form 8, section A and B first being completed by the school. This will only be done if in the school's opinion there is a sufficient history of need; this must be supported with the following data and evidence. Final decisions regarding access arrangements are made by the school; a diagnosis of a SpLD does not automatically mean an access arrangement will be awarded.

What is teacher evidence?

Teachers need to demonstrate the student is not able to complete the classwork/assessments/ tests in the set/reasonable time or that the handwriting is illegible. Sample of questions asked: does the student have difficulty with the following:

- Completing tasks in lessons
- Running out of time in exams / timed assignments
- Writing speed
- Legibility of work
- Spelling
- The length of his/her work compared with peers
- Answering the exact question set
- Producing written work
- Written work matching his/her verbal ability
- Understanding and/or following instructions
- Handing in homework on time
- Other organisational skills
- Practical work or tasks
- Concentration in class

In order to support an arrangement, teachers must first explain how work has been differentiated to meet the needs of the student within the classroom, and provide details of Departmental interventions; sample work and current data.

Students in Year 12 and 13 who are new to the school will complete an application form, this will ask about SEN and any access arrangements awarded during their GCSE examinations. This information will be passed onto the Access Arrangement Assessor/ SENCO. Students must collect 'Form 8' from their previous school and will also have to have a copy of signed qualification by the person that applied for the access arrangement. Their information and evidence will be requested from their former school by the SEN administrator. Any further testing required will be carried out and the application processed using Access Arrangements Online. Continuing students at Blatchington Mill School will have appropriate testing/up-dates as necessary.

Once the necessary evidence has been gathered from teaching staff and/or medical professionals and appropriate tests have been administered, an application is made to JCQ and all examining boards who agree a suitable access arrangement for the student's need. Access Arrangements are agreed before an examination takes place. Allowing students with Special Educational Needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access an assessment and show what they can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

Support for students

For students who have been awarded an access arrangement, there will be workshops run by the Access Arrangement Assessor/SENCO in order to confirm arrangements, trouble shoot any issues and ensure students know how to make the most of the arrangements that have been awarded.

Use of a Laptop

Laptop use is permitted when:

1. A specialist has recommended its use for a specific student and meets JCQ requirements, or it is part of the student's EHCP.
2. Students who have use of a lap top as their usual working method, should use this arrangement in curriculum based exams and assessments.
3. Students have first completed Lucid Exact typing speed test to ensure the appropriate levels of speed and accuracy are in place.
4. Student's writing speed is significantly below average for their age and 25% extra time would not compensate for this deficit.
5. Student's writing is illegible and has been a persistent problem.
6. If it has been agreed that personal lap tops can be used in school, the responsibility of insuring personal laptops lies with parents/guardians.
7. The School does not provide personal laptop storage and this remains the students' responsibility.

They may not need to use the laptop every day in each subject.

8. The award of a laptop does not mean it should be used every day in every class. The skill of handwriting should still be developed alongside the use of the laptop.

9. Students will not be permitted to use their personal laptops during official examinations. When official examinations are taking place the RM Support are responsible for providing, maintaining, setting up, printing and storing the laptops.

10. When an official examination is taking place students will only have access to Microsoft Notepad. There will be no access to spell checker or the Internet.

11. Students will be invited to and are expected to attend Access Arrangement workshops. These are scheduled throughout the year to coincide with our exam/mock timetable