



RIDGEWOOD  
HIGH SCHOOL

# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2023 - 2024

Version: V3  
Date issued: 17/01/2024  
Date of next review: 17/01/2025  
Document Author: S Charles (Exams Officer)

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Key staff involved in the policy .....	3
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	3
Access arrangements .....	3
Reasonable adjustments.....	3
Aims .....	4
General principles .....	4
Equalities Policy (Exams).....	5
The assessment process.....	5
Appointment of assessors of candidates .....	5
Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s).....	5
Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s) .....	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor .....	6
Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working .....	7
Processing access arrangements and adjustments .....	7
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval .....	7
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments .....	8
Centre specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments .....	9
Word Processor Policy (Exams).....	9
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy.....	9
School SEND information report .....	10

## Introduction

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mrs J Rose
Senior leader	Mr J Cannon (Deputy Headteacher)
Head of centre	Mrs R Cope
Assessor(s)	Mrs E Parker
Exam Officer	Mrs S Charles

### 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.

## Aims

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Ridgewood High 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 as required by JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4). This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

A copy of this policy is held by the 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.

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 a disabled candidate.

The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not 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 Ridgewood High School Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. A copy of the Equalities Policy (Exams) will be provided by the school's Exams Officer upon request (please email [exams@ridgewood.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:exams@ridgewood.dudley.sch.uk)).

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](#).

### 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)

As part of Ridgewood High School's appointment process regarding safer recruitment practices, established to support safeguarding within the centre, and in accordance with and in accordance with the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*, evidence of all qualifications **must** be provided at the point of engagement.

- The SENCo is to obtain evidence of the Assessor's qualifications and check against the requirements as detailed in JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 7.3 – Appointment of assessors.
- The SENCo is to take copies of the Assessor's qualifications (eg. a photocopy of original certificates, or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SCAS registration).
- Evidence of the Assessor's qualifications is then retained on file by the SENCo for inspection purposes (to be presented to the JCQ inspector by the SENCo).

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

In accordance with Access and Reasonable Adjustments (AA) 7.4 – *Reporting the appointment of assessors*, the details of all Ridgewood High School assessors who assess candidates studying GCSE, Cambridge Nationals; Btec qualifications are entered onto *Access arrangements online* to confirm their status.

As per AA 7.4.2, in the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (Registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are not directly employed by the school, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access Arrangements Online.

The responsibility of ensuring that appropriate assessor details are recorded on Access Arrangements Online falls to the SENCo.

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

### **Formal assessments take place during Year 9/the autumn term of year 10**

Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with JCQ AA regulations 7.5 (Guidance for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties). Formal Access Arrangements expire after 26 months, after this period the student may be re-tested. The most recent assessment is binding and determines any subsequent Access Arrangement.

**Pupils are identified for AA based on their history of support, screening tests, concerns from staff and/or parents.** There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam Access Arrangements:

- Form 8 report from Specialist Teacher (assessor)
- Previous EAA from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing test

### **Formal Access Arrangements testing**

Formal assessments are carried out by a qualified specialist teacher (assessor). No one assessment can be submitted as evidence. Assessments may include:

- WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test)
- WRIT (Wide Range Intelligence Test)
- CTOPP (Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing)
- PhAB (Phonological Assessment Battery)
- Access Reading Comprehension Test
- British Picture Vocabulary Scales (2&3)

**Before the candidate's assessment,** the SENCo provides the assessor with background information and their normal way of working i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8.

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

The outcome of the assessments are recorded and summarised by the assessor, who will discuss access arrangements with the SENCo (AA 7.5). Completed forms are then passed to the SENCo as evidence for online submission.

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

The requirements set out in AA 7.5 and 7.6 are used as the foundation of the process followed to paint a picture of need and to confirm the normal way of working of students.

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified in early KS3 (yr. 7). At this stage needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed.

On entry to school all year 7 students have their reading ability assessed. **If required, support or intervention will be put in place and monitored. This history will be recorded and noted as the student's normal way of working.**

Throughout KS3, staff who have any concerns about a student who may need access arrangements should liaise with the SENCo. Wherever possible they should provide evidence of need. In addition, the SENCo will ascertain whether any diagnostic testing needs to be administered.

Where formal Access Arrangements are determined and agreed these become part of '**normal practice**'. This means that appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in every day teaching, and formally applied in any internal or external assessments.

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs have changed or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then the access arrangement can be removed.

Those students with a Statement or EHCP will automatically be considered for possible arrangements.

Independent reports (e.g. those commissioned by parents through private arrangement) cannot be considered in isolation, but will be looked at by the school. However, access arrangements **can only be considered alongside school data, history of need and the student's normal way of working**, which must be demonstrated over a significant period of time.

For additional guidance regarding support given by Ridgewood High School to students with a wide range of needs **please see Appendix 1 - Ridgewood High School Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information Report**

## 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.

The online submission is normally carried out by the SENCo (or Learning Support Lead) or in their absence, the Exams Officer.

It is the responsibility of the SEN team to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the SENCo/Exams Officer. The SENCo will monitor and ensure that access arrangements are normal working practice. The SENCo and the Exams Officer will ensure that all paperwork required to support the online application is in order.

### Procedures for processing an application

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for Access Arrangements, the SENCo or Exams Officer then applies to the exam boards via AAO (candidates having completed a Personal data consent form).

The feedback is instant and at this point the Access Arrangement is added to the list of students.

The application will require evidence of the need. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS, hospitals and Doctors
- Information from Speech and Language Team (SALT)
- Statement of Educational Need or Educational Health Care Plan

Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s:

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report
- A data protection form signed by the student
- A record of all occasions when the student has been supported by Access Arrangements
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

Certain access arrangements, for example applications for extra time in excess of 25%, are automatically rejected by the AAO platform. In such circumstances it is the responsibility of the SENCo (or in their absence the Exams Officer) to apply directly to the relevant awarding body.

Records of all Access Arrangement applications are available online via the Centre Admin Portal and AAO; however a hard copy of all applications, including supporting evidence, signed Candidate Personal Data Consent form, completed Data Protection Confirmation by the Exams Officer/SENCo form, evidence of the assessor's qualification (where needed) is retained by the SENCo in a secure file and is available for inspection by the JCQ inspector upon request. (AA 8.6).

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file, or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded), the SENCo keeps any available appropriate records and informs the Exams Officer of all arrangements prior to exams/assessments taking place, to ensure that appropriate facilities to accommodate the candidate's requirements during their exams/assessments are provided.



## Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

### 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. For full details regarding the awarding and allocation of the use of word processors in exams please see the Ridgewood High School Word Processor Policy (Exams), which is available from the Exams Officer upon request

### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, eg a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs, 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 will make arrangements for a pupil to sit their examination in a smaller room **if it is their normal way of working** and

- Written evidence is provided from a medical or mental health professional which outlines the pupil's need and explicitly recommends separate invigilation.
- The history of the pupil is known to the SENCo e.g. evidence provided by previous school.
- The pupil has mental health and/or social/emotional needs, and is accessing support within school or via an external agency e.g CAMHs.
- The pupil qualifies for an access arrangement necessitating separate invigilation e.g. scribe.
- The SENCo/Safeguarding Lead has made an assessment that the pupil will be substantially disadvantaged by sitting their examinations in the main examination room.

In **exceptional circumstances** a pupil may be granted separate invigilation in their own room if they will be significantly disadvantaged by sitting their examinations in a room with other candidates and evidence is on file. Evidence can be from:

- medical or mental health specialist explicitly recommends the use their own room
- a significant history of need and known to the SENCo/Safeguarding
- evidence from teaching staff that the candidate's normal way of working for examinations is in their own room.

**All evidence must be on file before the examinations take place.**

The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.

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

## SEND Information Report

To support this policy document, a copy of the Ridgewood High School SEND Information Report is available to view/download via the school website at:

<https://www.ridgewood.dudley.sch.uk/s/RHS-SEND-SIR-Sept-2023.pdf>

For a printed copy of the SEND Information Report please contact the Examinations Officer or the SENCo.