



# **BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

## **Access Arrangements Policy**

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Drawn Up/Revised By	Natalie Zarzycki (SENCo & Specialist Assessor)
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# **Access Arrangements Policy**

## **1. Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Borden Grammar School complies with its "...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements..." (JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4 <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/>). This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR. This policy is reviewed annually and updated to ensure the arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements (AA) and Reasonable Adjustments (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>). This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

## **2. Definition of Access Arrangements**

Access arrangements are agreed before an external assessment (examination). They allow candidates 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 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 adjustments'.

## **3. Definition of 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. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of 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.

Reasonable adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the learner an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

#### 4. Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a learning difficulty, physical, mental or sensory impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial (more than minor or trivial, in comparison to a person without an impairment);
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term (the impairment has existed for more than 12 months, or is likely to do so);
- judging the impact of long-term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

#### 5. Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
<b>SENCo</b>	Natalie Zarzycki
<b>SENCo Line Manager (Leadership Group)</b>	Michelle Brooker
<b>Head of Centre (Head Teacher)</b>	Ashley Tomlin
<b>Specialist Assessor</b>	Natalie Zarzycki
<b>Access Arrangement Facilitators</b>	Delia Mauldon (Examination Officer) Garry Mulligan (Deputy Head Teacher) Steven Dale (IT Technician)

#### 6. Disability policy (examinations)

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in the school's Disability policy (examinations) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. This access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

#### 7. 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 7.3. The specialist assessor at Borden Grammar School is the SENCo who holds qualified teacher status and post-graduate Level 7 certification in Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements (CPT3A) number 11189, accredited by BPS RQTU and Middlesex University. Evidence of qualification is held by the Head of Centre, SENCo and Examination Secretary.

## **8. How the assessment process is administered**

An assessment (no earlier than the start of Year 9) is usually initiated through teacher, head of year/key stage, student or parental/carers discussion with the SENCo. Evidence is gathered to form a picture of need and normal way of working; further information is sought through student files and discussions with staff, the young person, parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate. Specialist in-school Psychometric tests such as the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP-2), York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC), Gray Oral Reading Tests (GORT5), Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH/DASH16) and the Graded Word Spelling Test will be used to provide a profile of current abilities and indicate areas of underlying difficulty to support the requirement for access arrangements. Referral to external agencies may be required such as to Health Services or to an Educational Psychologist.

## **9. Recording evidence of need and normal way of working**

Background information and evidence is documented on either Form 8: Application for Access Arrangements - Profile of Learning Difficulties or Form 9: Profile of need (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms/>). Other information collected to support the identified need, such as arrangements for KS2 tests, screening test results, internal and external assessment reports, comments and observations from teaching and support staff, baseline data, school reports, intervention support plans, information about differentiation in the classroom, evidence of normal way of working and arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations are also held in a secure, locked file by both the SENCo and Examinations Secretary.

## **10. Processing access arrangements**

### **10 a) Arrangements requiring awarding body approval**

The SENCo must lead on the access arrangements process within her centre. *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 listed on page 28 of AAO. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 76 of AAO.

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. Before logging on, the candidate must consent to the recording of their personal data on-line (by completing a GDPR compliant 'personal data consent, privacy notice and data protection confirmation' form <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms/>). A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used. AAO will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Access arrangements that must be applied for on-line include:

- 25% extra time

- Extra time over 25%\*
- Bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time (solely for those qualifications listed within Chapter 5, paragraph 5.18.2)
- Computer reader/reader
- Scribe/speech recognition technology
- Practical assistant\*
- Access to mobile phone for medical purposes
- Remote invigilation
- Timetable variation requiring overnight supervision for a candidate with a disability

\*The arrangement will be automatically rejected. Applications should be referred on-line to the relevant awarding body.

Applications must be processed and approved before an examination and no later than published deadlines (page 5 of AA). Arrangements for a late diagnosis of a disability or late manifestation of an impairment may be processed as the needs arise. However, evidence of need will still be required to the same standard as if it was an application being processed by the published deadline. The appropriate evidence must be identified and processed with the application. For candidates with a temporary injury or temporary impairment (such as a broken arm), documentation must be held on file to support the temporary access arrangement made.

Whilst the awarding bodies will try to accommodate any arrangements for a late diagnosis or late manifestation, there may be occasions where otherwise reasonable adjustments cannot be made due to the limited time available.

The SENCo and Examinations Secretary both hold a candidate file containing core evidence, Form 8 and Form 9 (when required), personal data consent, privacy notice and data protection confirmation', AAO approval documentation and centre notes (when required). The candidate file is kept secure in a locked cabinet within a locked room.

### **10b) Cases which do not gain approval**

AAO approves around 90% of all applications made by centres in the UK. If an application is not approved, the SENCo must consider whether this is because the candidate does not meet the published criteria for one of the arrangements requested and does not have a substantial and long term impairment for the required arrangement.

Additionally, some individual and very substantial needs may not be accommodated by the on-line computer system, either because the reasonable adjustment is not listed or because the arrangement requires further exploration in relation to the competence being tested in the specification(s). In these cases, the application will need to be discussed with the relevant awarding body and a written record kept by the SENCo.

## **11. Centre-delegated access arrangements**

Centres are permitted to grant access arrangements without the need to process an on-line application, if it is evidenced that a candidate is disabled and has a persistent and significant disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act, 2010) and that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability. The SENCo would need to evidence that without the access arrangement, the candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement (the only exception being a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced). In these circumstances, evidence of need and normal way of working, alongside a centre note, will be held in a candidate file which will be kept securely within a locked room, in a locked cabinet by both the SENCo and Examination Secretary.

Centre delegated arrangements include:

- Alternative rooming arrangements e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates
- Amplification equipment
- Bilingual dictionary (without extra time)
- Braille transcript
- Braille
- Closed circuit television (CCTV)
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Communication professional (for candidates using sign language)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners
- Prompter
- Read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen)
- Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties
- Supervised rest breaks
- Word Processor

## **12. Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements**

### **12 a) The use of word processors in examinations**

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor for a candidate to use within examinations (with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she wants to

type, can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a laptop at home. Borden Grammar School sets out the types of candidate who are considered for the use of a word processor, within the school policy, 'The Use of Word Processors in Examinations'.

## **12 b) Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre**

A decision where a candidate may be approved to sit examinations in an alternative room or separate invigilation within the centre, will be made by the SENCo and Leadership Group.

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 must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate. AA 4.2.1

Where a candidate is subject to an alternative room or separate invigilation within the centre, the regulations and guidance within Instructions for Conducting Examinations (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>) must always be adhered to. This is particularly so in relation to accommodation and invigilation arrangements (sections 11 and 12).