



**ST JAMES**  
Senior Girls' School

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# **Access Arrangements Policy**

## **St James Senior Girls' School**

September 2023

## Contents

1. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments? .....	3
Access arrangements .....	3
Reasonable adjustments.....	3
2. Purpose of the policy .....	3
3. Where can the list of pupils with access arrangements be found? .....	4
4. Assessing for Access Arrangements for pupils with learning differences .....	4
5. Identifying the need for access arrangements at St James Senior Girls' School.....	5
6. History of learning need/difficulty .....	6
7. Pupils whose learning needs have not been formally diagnosed.....	6
8. Evidence to show 'normal way of working' .....	7
9. Secure Access Arrangements information for JCQ Inspection .....	8
10. Access Arrangements requiring JCQ approval.....	8
11. Centre delegated Access Arrangements .....	8
12. Further details of Access Arrangements.....	8
13. Use of a Word processor (please also see the Examinations Policy).....	8
14. Extra time .....	8
15. Computer reader .....	9
16. Rest breaks.....	9
17. Alternative rooming arrangements .....	9
18. Procedure when the JCQ Inspector visits .....	9

## **1. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?**

### **1.1. Access arrangements**

- 1.1.1. 'Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with special education 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 principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA), p.7).

### **1.2. Reasonable adjustments**

- 1.2.1. '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 for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.
- 1.2.2. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors, which will include, but are not limited to:
  - 1.2.2.1. the needs of the disabled candidate;
  - 1.2.2.2. the effectiveness of the adjustment;
  - 1.2.2.3. the cost of the adjustment; and
  - 1.2.2.4. the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
- 1.2.3. An adjustment will not be approved if it:
  - 1.2.3.1. involves unreasonable cost to the awarding body;
  - 1.2.3.2. involves unreasonable timeframes; or
  - 1.2.3.3. affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

## **2. Purpose of the policy**

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that:
  - 2.1.1.1 the centre has a clear and well-publicised policy on access arrangements
  - 2.1.1.2 to ensure that parents understand the evidence requirements

2.1.1.3 that procedures are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publication: ‘Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning differences: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’ (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>) This publication is further referred to in this policy as the AARA.

2.2 The policy is renewed annually in line with the current edition of the AARA.

### **3. Where can the list of pupils with access arrangements be found?**

3.1 The list of current access arrangements for all year groups is found on the SENDCO SharePoint site.

### **4. Assessing for Access Arrangements for pupils with learning differences**

- 4.1 Assessments for access arrangements for pupils with cognitive and learning differences are carried out by assessors appointed by the head of centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.
- 4.2 The current SENDCO, Mx Rebecca Landon, is qualified to assess for access arrangements and duly sign Form 8.
- 4.3 Sometimes the SENDCO may recommend that a full diagnostic report from an Educational Psychologist (EP) is prepared, detailing the pupil’s cognitive strengths and weaknesses and containing useful information for school and parents. This is also helpful to assess whether needs have changed since transition to secondary school or for university applications.
- 4.4 An assessment that takes place without any prior consultation with the school’s SENDCO cannot be used as assessment evidence for access arrangements (except for prospective pupils sitting entrance examinations).
- 4.5 If parents are concerned about their daughter’s progress, or about an undiagnosed specific need, they should consult the school’s SENDCO.
- 4.6 If a candidate has already been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, this does not mean that they are automatically granted access arrangements, as quantitative recent data from a qualified assessor is needed and no sooner than the beginning of the pupil’s Year 9 course of study.
- 4.7 The vast majority of candidates awarded 25% extra time will have an assessment of speed of working showing at least two below average standardised scores of 84 or less OR one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89). Rare and exceptional cases may however exist.

## Evidence from an assessor for candidates with learning needs

Proportion of candidates typically awarded 25% extra time with an assessor's report showing standardised scores on tests of speed:

<p><b>At least one score of 84 or less</b></p> <p>The vast majority of candidates with a substantial and long term impairment awarded 25% extra time will fall into this category.</p>	<p><b>Two or more scores between 85-89</b></p> <p><b>A small proportion</b> of candidates will fall into this category.</p>	<p><b>Three or more scores between 90-94</b></p> <p><b>Very few</b> candidates awarded extra time are expected to be in this category.</p>
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### 5. Identifying the need for access arrangements at St James Senior Girls' School

- 5.1 The vast majority of candidates awarded 25% extra time will have an assessment of speed of working showing at least two below average standardised scores of 84 or less OR one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89). Rare and exceptional cases may however exist.
- 5.2 For pupils with medical, communication and interaction or social emotional mental health needs (and not learning differences), the following can be used as evidence for access arrangements:
  - 5.2.1 a letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
  - 5.2.2 a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
  - 5.2.3 a current EHCP or a Statement of special educational needs (Northern Ireland) or an Individual Development Plan (Wales), which confirms the candidate's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multi-sensory impairment. For example, an Occupational Therapist specialising in Children and Young People Services, learning disability, mental health.
  - 5.2.4 The specialist evidence is not required to recommend 25% extra time but to simply confirm the candidate's disability. The specialist evidence may relate to any age, provided it remains current.
  - 5.2.5 Pupils with cognitive learning needs who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 are usually identified early in KS3. All Year 7 pupils and new pupils to other year groups are screened, rather than formally assessed, unless a parent consults the school regarding further formal assessment. Adjustment to Quality First Teaching (QFT) within lessons is then made accordingly in order to enable a pupil to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring and implementing adjustments for inclusive teaching.

- 5.2.6 Formal assessment for GCSEs takes place during Year 9 at the earliest. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ AARA guidance by the SENDCO who is a qualified access arrangements assessor.
- 5.2.7 Any formal access arrangements must reflect the student's "normal way of working" in lessons and therefore adopted in everyday teaching and formally applied in all internal assessments.

## **6. History of learning need/difficulty**

- 6.1 For most pupils requiring access arrangements, a history of need is already known. They have been entered on the SEND List, and/or they take part in a timetabled Learning Development Literacy or Maths lessons so their learning needs are well documented from Year 7, or there is a history from their previous school. If there is a lack of documentation of their history of need, either a diagnostic report is written by one of our preferred EPs, in consultation with the SENDCO, or the SENDCO assesses for access arrangements and this information is shared with relevant staff.
- 6.2 In either case, the SENDCO completes Part 1 of Form 8 giving a history of need prior to any assessment. After the assessment, Part 2 & 3 of Form 8 is signed by the EP or the SENDCO as a qualified access arrangements assessor.
- 6.3 For access arrangements for GCSE, Form 8 is to be signed no earlier than the start of pupil's Year 9 so that the arrangement is in place for the start of the pupil's GCSE course. When a Form 8 is received by the School, the scores and the assessor's qualification are checked. An application to AA online is then processed using the individual's Form 8 by the SENDCO. Once approved, the confirmation is placed in the relevant Access Arrangement file.
- 6.4 A few pupils will arrive at our school in KS4, either from another UK school or from abroad. If transferring from a UK school and the pupil's learning needs are already known, evidence of access arrangements (such as a Form 8) will accompany them from their previous school. However, in some cases, the pupil may need to be assessed either by an EP or by the SENDCO for the same access arrangement as the pupil had previously (depending on individual circumstances). If learning needs are unknown or the pupil arrives from abroad with no evidence of access arrangements, then screening is arranged to ascertain any possible learning needs. This may or may not lead to further assessment by the SENDCO or by one of our preferred Educational Psychologists.

## **7. Pupils whose learning needs have not been formally diagnosed**

- 7.1 There may be a few pupils whose learning need has not been formally diagnosed and/or their learning need comes to light as they progress through the school. However, there is no need to have a formal diagnosis of a learning need in order to be granted access arrangements.
- 7.2 Therefore, if the pupil is not on our SEND List and/or is relatively new to the school, the following procedure should be followed:
- 7.2.1 a Referral Form (in the SENDCO shared area) is completed by the staff member (or their Head of Year), and the SENDCO is advised;
- 7.2.2 the SENDCO researches the pupil's educational history from the pupil's file, documents

from previous settings (if these are not forthcoming, the SENDCO will contact the previous setting to ascertain the pupil's history);

- 7.2.3 information is gathered by the SENDCO with regard to possible learning needs from screening on entry to our school, MidYIS or Yellis assessments, reading tests, Lucid Exact, speed of working, unfinished tests, assessments and exams, and the pupil's reports.
- 7.2.4 The SENDCO then assesses for access arrangements and duly signs Form 8 or in some cases, a full diagnostic report by an EP is recommended by the SENDCO.

## **8. Evidence to show 'normal way of working'**

- 8.1 A combination of supplementary evidence can be used to justify a student's "normal way of working" and the reasons for requiring access arrangements:
  - 8.1.1 unfinished tests/assessments/exam scripts in the allotted time;
  - 8.1.2 scripts showing the use of 25% extra time with a change in colour of ink when extra time starts;
  - 8.1.3 word processing scripts, typed in bold when extra time started;
  - 8.1.4 Online Extra time form
  - 8.1.5 Online Rest break form
  - 8.1.6 Concerns from teachers, recorded on CPOMS or referral form;
  - 8.1.7 An Inclusion Summary summarising a previous EP report with the appropriate access arrangements listed or a current IEP detailing the need for the arrangement
  - 8.1.8 There is no longer a requirement to collect all students' exam scripts as evidence. However, the supplementary evidence is collected by the SENDCO depending on students' standardised scores from the EP or SENDCO assessment:
    - 8.1.8.1 scores of 84 or less: 1 piece of supplementary evidence
    - 8.1.8.2 1 score of 84 or less and 1 low average score 85-89: 1 piece of supplementary evidence
    - 8.1.8.3 2 or more scores between 85-89: 1 piece of supplementary evidence
    - 8.1.8.4 3 or more scores between 90-94: 4 pieces of supplementary evidence
  - 8.1.9 The school must also be satisfied that the student's scores reflect a genuine attempt in the assessment process and that it is an authentic demonstration of their ability.

## **9. Secure Access Arrangements information for JCQ Inspection**

- 9.1 A file is kept securely for access arrangements for each of the cohorts in Years 10, 11, 12 & 13 in the locked filing cabinet in the SENDCO office.

9.1.1 For each pupil, the following information is held:

9.1.1.1 the approved application by the JCQ

9.1.1.2 the Data Protection Notice signed by the pupil before the application is processed

9.1.1.3 the pupil's Form 8

9.1.1.4 the Diagnostic Report and assessor's qualifications (if applicable)

9.1.1.5 evidence of 'normal way of working' and relevant supplementary evidence (scripts, referral forms, termly effort and attainment grades and annual reports etc.)

## **10. Access Arrangements requiring JCQ approval:**

10.1 reader and computer reader

10.2 extra time 25% (or up to 50%)

10.3 use of a scribe or speech to text facilities

10.4 modified papers

## **11. Centre delegated Access Arrangements:**

11.1 separate invigilation within the centre

11.2 rest breaks

11.3 use of a word-processor

11.4 the candidate reading aloud (in separate room)

11.5 Prompter

11.6 coloured paper and coloured reading overlays

11.7 fidget toys, ear defenders (non electronic headphones)

## **12. Further details of Access Arrangements:**

### **13. Use of a Word processor (please also see the Examinations Policy)**

13.1 The use of a word processor is permitted in formal exams if it is the pupil's normal way of working at school. The word processor must have been used in the mock exams to be able to be used in a formal exam. Pupils can use a word processor if they have a genuine need to use it and not because it is their preferred method. Their genuine need is identified by the SENDCO via screening tests such as Lucid Exact.

### **14. Extra time**

14.1 25% extra time is the usual allocation but in rare and exceptional cases pupils have been



permitted up to 50% extra time due to their significant needs. In informal assessments/tests/exams, usually during a routine lesson time, pupils should be awarded their extra time, or if this is not possible, at a time shortly after the assessment.

## **15. Computer reader**

15.1 Computer readers enable the pupil to be fully independent in their exams and this in turn is good for their morale. Some pupils do not like asking someone to read for them. Pupils can have all exam papers read to them by a computer reader using software such as Microsoft's 'immersive reader'. The exam paper is in pdf format and is non-interactive. If a pupil is also word-processing their work, they are also able to hear their written work read back to them using an immersive reader.

## **16. Rest breaks**

16.1 This is a centre designated access arrangement. Pupils are allowed rest breaks if it is their normal way of working. Rest breaks are a reasonable adjustment for those suffering with generalised anxiety disorder or other mental health conditions or physical needs such as hyper-mobility of hand joints where hand fatigue occurs when writing a large amount.

16.2 During the rest break, the exam papers and scripts are removed from the pupil and returned when the rest break finishes. In public exams rest breaks are usually up to 5 minutes duration at a time with no more than three rest breaks in one exam permitted, except where a pupil has 50% extra time when up to five rest breaks are permitted.

## **17. Alternative rooming arrangements (e.g. a smaller group of candidates with similar needs)**

17.1 In rare cases, the school can decide that a pupil takes the exam in a separate room, usually in a smaller group of candidates with similar arrangements. In rare and exceptional cases the student may require to sit an exam in a separate room alone. The following are examples of reasons why this can happen: the pupil has severe anxiety and will need several rest breaks; the pupil needs to read the questions aloud so that they more readily understand text; the pupil has ADHD and needs constant prompting to remain on task.

## **18. Procedure when the JCQ Inspector visits**

18.1.1 A JCQ Inspector can visit at any time during the academic year and certainly after the cut-off date for applications, which is usually mid-February.

18.1.2 'Documentation must be presented to the Inspector by the SENDCO'. However, 'if the SENDCO is not available then the relevant member of the senior leadership team must meet with the Inspector and address any queries, any questions that he/she may raise' (AARA 4.2.14).

<b>Signed by:</b>	<b>Annabel Lubikowski</b> <b>Chair of Governors Signature</b>
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