



Exam Access Arrangements Procedure

1. RATIONALE

1.1 This procedure explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion for all students who are eligible for examination access arrangements. Access arrangements are a form of additional learning support that ensures that a learner is not significantly disadvantaged during assessments due to a special educational need or disability, thereby, ensuring equal opportunities.

1.2 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on institutions not to discriminate against students with learning difficulties/disabilities in terms of either admission to courses or provision of education and support services. Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of access arrangements are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification.

2. AIMS

2.1 Bishop Milner Catholic College will ensure that students identified as having a need are provided with and prepared for access arrangements that allow them to;

- Access the assessment at the same level as their peers
- Demonstrate their knowledge/ skills without changing the demands of the assessment

2.2 Access arrangements meet the particular needs of an individual disabled 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. Details of the type of Exam Access Arrangements can be found in Appendix 1.

2.3 Access arrangements are agreed and planned for before an assessment.

2.4. Access arrangements can also be provided in an emergency.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 Student Identification

3.1.1 In order to qualify for an Access Arrangement a student must have a disability. According to the Equality Act 2010 a disability is:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”

The impairment must have lasted, or be likely to last, for 12months or more. Access arrangements for examinations and controlled assessments will be planned and implemented where there is sufficient evidence that individual learners have a disability.

3.1.2 Students are identified as having a possible need using;

- Baseline testing completed at the start of Year 7
- progress tests in year 7 and 8
- Information from Primary schools
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Parental referral
- History of need
- Specialist diagnostic testing that indicates a significant learning need, e.g. LSS, EP
- Medical diagnosis requiring modifications to ensure equal access, e.g. PIMIS, VI, HIS, medical consultant letter
- Their normal way of day to day working, e.g. use of a laptop/word processor in lessons

3.2 Role of the SENCo

The SENCo will:

- Ensure specialist diagnostic testing is implemented to identify and support need and provide appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement
- Keep a record of evidence and complete recognised forms
- Inform students and parents of student need and access arrangements in place
- Inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams

3.3 Role of the Examination Officer

The Examinations Officer will:

- Oversee all examination procedures
- **Submit, with the SENCo, completed access arrangement applications**
- Organise rooming for access arrangement candidates
- Organise and train invigilators and support personnel
- Oversee support for access arrangement candidates as defined in the JCQ access arrangement regulations

3.4 Role of Teaching and Support Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that students entitled to Exam access arrangements are in place for students for all assessments.

- Evidence must be kept of the use and benefit of the arrangements.
- If necessary, subject teachers have responsibility to alert the SEN and Exam departments in advance if they are needed to provide support for exams/ assessments.

3.5 Evidence necessary to award Access Arrangements

3.5.1 In order for a centre to apply to an exam board for access arrangements the centre needs to provide:

- Exam provision History
 - Evidence of student's normal day to day way of working and internal testing
 - Data Protection Sheet
 - Testing by a specialist external assessor (see 3.6.3)
 - Form 8 OR Medical Diagnosis 3
 - Notification from SENCO agreeing provision
 - Online Application to exam board
 - Signature of head of centre This may differ depending on the arrangements requested.
- An exam board may choose not to grant access arrangements, despite an application.

3.5.2 If a letter from a medical specialist is received requesting access arrangements for a student, JCQ regulations state that in order for such an access arrangement to be awarded the school has to have evidence that the student has historically received the extra support. The access arrangement should not 'suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations'. If the said student has shown no signs of requiring said support, and has successfully sat their exams independently it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement.

3.5.3 JCQ regulations state:

"If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her..... then it is not his/her normal way of working. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations."

Therefore, if a student does not use an ACCESS ARRANGEMENT in any of their examinations we will withdraw the access arrangement.

If we continued with the Access Arrangement, we would be in breach of regulations which is considered malpractice.

3.6 Private Reports/Assessments recommending Exam Access Arrangements

3.6.1 JCQ specify that normal way of working is priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student. Therefore, whilst we will accept private reports, we will not automatically award an Access Arrangement based on it. It will, however, trigger an internal investigation into the normal way of working for that student.

3.6.2 As an exam centre we must ensure that no student is 'either given an unfair advantage or is disadvantaged' by any arrangements in place. We have our own internal specialist assessor. Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive exam access arrangements which can be in conflict with what the centre's specialist assessor recommends. As such we will not necessarily accept the recommendations of a Private Report/Assessment; JCQ states:

'Where a centre elects either to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the Head of Centre or a member of the Senior Leadership Team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes'

Therefore, parents may request an independent assessment, however the Head of Centre may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report.

3.6.3 An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8. Also, the assessor must be a specialist teacher with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, or an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council, or hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7

3.7 All Specialist Assessors must:

- have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;
- be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a "reasonable adjustment", but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate);
- hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties.

3.8 External Private Candidates

3.8.1 Any external candidates taking exams at the Centre must provide the following:

- A Form 8 report from a Specialist Assessor
- Copies of previous Exam Access Arrangements from schools or colleges

3.8.2 The centre will make the application to the Exam Boards and the candidate must sign the Data Protection Sheet.

3.8.3 As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with:

- a letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist
- a letter from a hospital or consultant
- a letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service
- a letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist
- A letter from the student's GP who knows them and their medical history

4. MONITORING

All procedures will be monitored by the SENCo, Examinations Officer and Head of Centre. This Policy will be reviewed every two years.