



Building a future for young people

Access Arrangements policy

Publication Date: September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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Key staff involved in the policy

Role Name(s)

SENDCO Paula Forth

SLT: Linda Robinson, Peter Clough (Educational Psychologist) Krista Howell (Education Therapist)

Head of centre Paula Forth

Exams Officer Linda Robinson

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. (Access Arrangement definitions, page 3).

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'. (Access Arrangement definitions, page 3).

Definition of disability

Section 6 of the Equality act defines disability as 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on some one's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Meadows 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...' [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)].

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR. Meadows School also has a written process in place to not only check the qualifications(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed from the JCQ

publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4). This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) policy, this sets out the procedures for identifying SEND and making and evaluation provision for pupils with SEND.

1. General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for Meadows school to consider are detailed in Access Arrangements (section 4.2). These include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement 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 SENDCO, or an equivalent member of staff, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessment may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.
- Exam access 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) before his/her first examination.
- All pupils with exam access arrangements are considered to be students with SEND.

The main elements of the access arrangements process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of examinations are covered in the AAT Single Equality Policy.

2. The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in Access Arrangements 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Peter Clough, Educational Psychologist who possesses the relevant qualifications in Psychological testing and assessment including Psychometric and Educational Testing.

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 Access arrangements.

This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

Upon the first meeting with Meadows school's Exam's Officer and SENDCO, the assessor has their qualifications verified and a photocopy is made of the assessor's qualifications. The evidence that the assessors are suitable qualified is held on file for inspection purposes.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence that the assessor(s) are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes.

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Exams Officer.

How the assessment process is administered

- The assessment process is led by the specialist external assessor, based on a referral by the centre's SENDCO.
- The SENDCO makes referrals based on observations and recommendations from teachers and support staff, observations that have been carried out in classes, and from consultations / request made by parents and carers.

- The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the candidate.

The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement applications.

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties will be completed.

(Access arrangements 7.5, 7.6)

- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor (Access arrangements 7.5.1)
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. (AA 7.5.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (Access Arrangements 7.5.6)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. (Access Arrangements 7.3.6)
- Any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated. (Access Arrangements 7.3.6)

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

Meadows school confirms

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCO will provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (Access arrangements 7.5.2)

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.

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

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the person

appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements

specifically lies with the centre. (Access arrangements 7.5.3).

Teaching staff are asked to provide examples of candidates' work to demonstrate the need that has led to the application of an access arrangement being made. This work is stored in the student file in the access folder and made available for inspection.

Since the application requires evidence of need, the School will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Educational psychology reports.
- Speech Therapist reports.
- Occupational Therapist reports.
- Letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service).
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers.
- Copies of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangements.
- A signed copy of Form 8 report by the School's designated assessor / tester.

Joint Council for qualifications (JCQ) deadlines are fully adhered to.

3. Processing access arrangements

Parents must declare at the time of enrolment and when completing the school application form if their child has any medical or psychological conditions, SEND needs, previous exam access arrangements at another educational institution or any other issues that may require exam access arrangements. Failure to disclose this negates Meadows school from their responsibilities.

Arrangements 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 Access arrangements (chapter 8) Processing applications for access arrangements 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 Exams Officer applies for AAO and abides by the deadlines set for each examination series.

Access arrangements may for example include: supervised rest breaks, extra time, reader, scribe, word processor, transcript, oral language modifier and prompter.

Evidence needed to apply for exam access arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam access arrangements to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports from specialist teachers carrying out exam access assessments / tests.
- Previous exam access arrangements from another school.
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams.
- Results from baseline assessments such as reading ages or writing tests.
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability.
- An Educational Psychology report which explicitly diagnoses the need for exam access arrangements.
- A Speech therapy report which diagnoses severe language impairment.

When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements?

If a need for access arrangements have been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents are informed in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded.
- Students are informed verbally.

- A list of all students who receive access arrangements is made available to all staff. This information is also placed on the School's relevant shared drives.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

- Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by the SENDCO and Exams Officer. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENDCO and Exams Officer.
- Candidates may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to:

bereavement, recent physical injuries or sickness, having an identified SEND need that would be better served in a quiet venue, behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the candidate, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

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 and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Meadows school uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments.

Separate Invigilation Policy

The Separate Invigilation Policy details the criteria Meadows school uses to award separate invigilation with the centre.

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 Access arrangement 5.16)

The Separate Invigilation Policy details the criteria Meadows school uses to award separate invigilation within the centre.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, mental or emotional needs. (Access arrangements 5.16)

Modified papers

- Modified papers are ordered through AAO.
- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (Access arrangements 6.1).
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources.

Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (Access arrangement 6.1)

- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series (Access arrangements 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (Access arrangements 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (Access arrangements 4.2.13)

Where access arrangements documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required

documents for inspection. (Access arrangements 4.2.13)

It is the responsibility of:

- Exams Officer to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data consent form) to record their personal data on line through AAO
- Exams Officer to submit applications for approval through AAO
- SENDCO to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (Access arrangements 8.6)
- Exams Officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer to order modified paper