

# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

## 2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
M Goulborn - Principal	
Date of next review	January 2027

## Key staff involved in the policy

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
<b>SENCo (or equivalent role)</b>	<b>S Hitchens</b>
<b>Head of Centre</b>	<b>M Goulborn</b>
<b>Exams Officer</b>	<b>C Mudie</b>
<b>Assessor(s)</b>	<b>D Dawson</b>
<b>Access Arrangement Facilitator(s)</b>	<b>S Hitchens/C Mudie</b>

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## 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'. (AARA<sup>1</sup>, 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.(AARA<sup>1</sup>, Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AARA](#) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Christ's College, Guildford 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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo (or equivalent role) 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.

Where the SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA<sup>1</sup>, section 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

<sup>1</sup>This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

## General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the **start** of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 their first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Exams Equalities Policy can be found on our website in the policies section of the Exams website page <https://www.christscollege.surrey.sch.uk/exams>

**The head of centre/senior leadership team will** recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>, particularly Section 20 (7). This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

<sup>†</sup>for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## 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 AARA, section 7.3.

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

Donna Dawson Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy SPLD assessment award.

### Appointment of assessors

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

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

Original copies of the assessors' qualifications have been obtained and are kept on record within the centre. This is the accompanying information from Donna Dawson:

I needed to update APC (Assessment Practicing Certificate) every few years to carry out diagnostic assessments. I made the decision a few years ago to cease carrying out assessment for diagnosing dyslexia. However my level 7 postgraduate diploma and AMBDA (Associate Member of British Dyslexia Association) allow me to carry on assessing for access arrangements.

This is a stand alone qualification that does not need to be updated. It is well in excess of the requirements for the AAA (Assessing for Access Arrangements) qualification.

This is an extract from JCQ Regs 2024-25

7.3.3

*A head of centre will appoint:*

*An access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment†. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8; and/or †The reference to at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment would include lecture, seminar and tutorial time, study time, assessment time and time spent completing assignments. Courses which are accredited at AMBDA or APC Level would meet this requirement, as would post-graduate courses at or equivalent to Level 7 which provide a qualification in access arrangements assessment.*

I've attached copies of my level 7 diploma and AMBDA membership.

### Reporting the appointment of assessors

Original copies of the assessors' qualifications have been obtained and are kept on record within the centre

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

Original copies of the assessors' qualifications have been obtained and kept on record within the centre. Assessors compile a picture of need from when students start at Christ's College until their final exams. Class teachers, Tutors, Progress Leaders and SENCo work together with the assessors to determine the best way to support students. Once this has been identified, provisions will be put in place for the student to access these arrangements during all assessments.

Close monitoring of the students' use of these arrangements, assessment data and assessors  
Review data is then used to monitor any arrangements in place.

All evidence of this is kept on file in the Learning Support department.

Where relevant, include any additional information relating to private candidates.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo.

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

Assessors compile a picture of need from when students start at Christ's College until their final exams. Class teachers, Tutors, Progress Leaders and SENCo work together with the assessors to determine the best way to support students. Once this has been identified, provisions will be put in place for the student to access these arrangements during all assessments.

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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/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AARA, section 7.5)

### **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 AARA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

Facilitators work closely with class teachers, progress leaders and parents/carers to review the progress of students over time. Access arrangements can be trialled at any point to build a picture of need for an individual student.

A combination of CAT4 tests in year 7 and GL Exact testing in year 9, plus teacher assessment are used to identify need for reasonable adjustments.

Students who are judged by the SENCo to be in need of reasonable adjustments will then be assessed by the external assessor. If two scores are obtained below 80 in this assessment a recommendation of reasonable adjustments will be made by the assessor on Form 8. Formal applications will then be submitted to the examining bodies to obtain access arrangements for these students.

Once approval is given all evidence is stored on file in learning support.

Should an arrangement not be approved by the examining body, alternative arrangements or evidence will be gathered before resubmission.

Candidates must be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The SENCo **must** keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required), evidence of the assessors' qualification.

Make full reference to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

## Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

There are a small number of arrangements which can be agreed by the SENCo based on need without the approval of the examining bodies.

These arrangements are only awarded where a holistic picture of need is built and the SENCo, in discussion with the facilitators, believes it is appropriate support for that student. Each case is assessed on the individual student and no arrangement is to be awarded without evidence of need.

A record of need and centre-delegated arrangements can be found in the Learning Support department.

## Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

### 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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Students may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where the SENCo has deemed it beneficial for the student to use a word processor as their normal way of working in school.

Students cannot use a word processor unless previously agreed with the SENCo. In extenuating circumstances, e.g. due to a medical condition meaning they are unable to write and supported by evidence from a medical professional, the use of a word processor may be awarded where this has previously not been the normal way of working.

The Exams Word Processor Policy 2025-26 can be found on our website in the policies section of the Exams website page <https://www.christscollege.surrey.sch.uk/exams>

### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).

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 (AARA, section 5.16)

Students may be placed in a smaller/ separate invigilation room where this has been their normal way of working. The SENCo (or equivalent role) must have agreed this arrangement and there must be supporting evidence of an impairment or medical condition.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations.

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

The use of an alternative room **with one-to-one invigilation must only** apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.