

**Access arrangements policy**

2024 - 2025

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| Approved/reviewed by | |
| Jamie Rockman | |
| Date of next review | September 2025 |

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

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| **Role** | **Name(s)** |
| SENDCo | **Carol Goodridge** |
| Deputy SENDCo | **Siân Rann** |
| Assessor(s) | **Nick Haymonds** |
| Head of centre | **Jamie Rockman** |

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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 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’.

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 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.

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.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Haybrook College 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, 5.4] (This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations))

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo alongside the individual files 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.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current document of the JCQ publication.

Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

(This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA)

**General principles**

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

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA (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 a disabled candidate.

The SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **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 SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

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. Please see Haybrook College’s Equalities Policy (Exams) within the Policies folder.

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 assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA 7.3.

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

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| * **Nicholas Haymonds**   Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA) |

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 [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

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| **Process:**   * Haybrook College are confident that both assessors they currently use have the required level of competence and training. * All qualifications are obtained at the point of employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessments of the candidates. * Both assessors have presented evidence of successful completion of appropriate qualifications (see above) * Evidence of the assessor’s qualifications are held on file for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCo * Our process reflects the requirements of AARA, Section 7.3 |

**Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)**

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| * All assessors used by Haybrook College are entered into Access Arrangements Online to confirm their status * Evidence of the assessor’s qualifications are held on file by the SENDCo as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA 7.4. |

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

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| Most pupils at Haybrook College will not have an EHCP, but have SEND. Upon admission to Haybrook, pupils will have initial Reading and Spelling age tests baseline testing by a member of the SEND team. If results indicate a concern about a pupils’ ability to read or spell sufficiently well, the SENDCo will complete Section A of the Form 8, and gather further evidence to share with the assessor so one can then be appointed.  Additional evidence may include:   * Medical or professional’s reports (evidence highlighted) * Additional testing results * School Questionnaire (information from class teachers) * Evidence of ‘normal way of working’ * Evidence of handwriting / speed of working / legibility of work   The Specialist Assessor will discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo, and then the AA will be applied for by the SENDCo.  Across Haybrook College, some pupils have an EHCP. If candidates have difficulties outlined within their EHCP, and class teachers together with the SENDCo believe that the candidate would require AA, in order that they are not at a disadvantage compared to their peers without SEN, the SENDCo will gather the evidence required and paint a picture of need.  Evidence may include:   * EHCP (needs highlighted) * Medical or professionals reports (evidence highlighted) * Reading and Spelling Ages test results * Additional testing results * School Questionnaire (information from class teachers) * Evidence of ‘normal way of working.’ * Evidence of handwriting / speed of working / legibility of work   The AA will be applied for by the SENDCo.   * Our process reflects the requirements of AARA, Section 7.5 |

Picture of need / normal way of working

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| The SENDCo and Assistant SENDCo ensure that they gather evidence to paint a picture of need and that demonstrates the ‘normal way of working’ for candidates: this is usually but not exclusively, the School Questionnaire that all teaching staff contribute to.  The arrangement(s) put in place will reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:   * in the classroom (where appropriate); * working in small groups for reading and/or writing; * literacy support lessons; * literacy intervention strategies; * in internal school tests/examinations; * mock examinations.   For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8 by the SENDCo. Candidates with an EHCP may have their information recorded within the EHCP, the School Questionnaire, and a range of evidence from medical reports / professionals’ report and samples of work, for example.  All candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information provided within the Form 8 and for those with EHCPs, in discussion with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements / reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo.   * Our process reflects the requirements of 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. 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)

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| The Haybrook College SENDCo applies for the AA on *Access Arrangements Online*.  Where possible, all applications have been made and approved before the Mock Exams in December / January prior to the formal examinations in the May/June series. Due to the nature of Haybrook College, pupils will join regularly throughout the year and so applications may sometimes be made once candidates have been admitted, which can sometimes be after the official deadline.  All information is stored on Arbor (our MIS) by the SENDCo and Deputy SENDCo.  Signed Personal Data consent forms are securely stored in the SENDCo Office. All information is added to Arbor so all staff members can access information regarding the awarding of AA. Our process reflects the requirements of AARA, Section 7.6. The SENDCo keeps detailed records for inspection purposes which are retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved. |

Centre-delegated arrangements / adjustments

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| Where access arrangements are centre-delegated and not required to be applied using Access Arrangements Online, the SENDCo will decide based on the candidate’s normal way of working and if the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect.  These arrangements are recorded on Arbor. |

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements / adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

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| The Word Processor Policy (Exams) is held in the AA folders in the SENDCo Office and online.  A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.  The use of a word processor reflects the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre and will be appropriate to the candidate’s needs.  This includes a statement, written by the College SENDCo, for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.  If we provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, the spelling and grammar check/predictive text will always be disabled. |

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

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| A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENDCo.  Due to the Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs of Haybrook Colleges’ candidates, candidates will often sit examinations separately, as this is regularly our candidates’ way of normal working with the centre and during internal tests and mock examinations.  In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate’s disability is established within the centre. It is known to all centre staff, including the Centre Manager, and the SENDCo.  We recognise that nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre: pupils at Haybrook who may have alternative rooming arrangements will have significant difficulties that have a substantial and adverse effect.  1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would 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. (AARA 5.16) |