

# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
L Tester	
Date of next review	September 2025

Head of School: Gemma Ransom

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Registered office: Sirius Academy, 296 Anlaby Park Road South, Hull HU4 7JB



### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>V Ritchie</b>
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>V Stephenson</b>
Head of Centre	<b>G Ransom</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>V Ritchie</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	

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## Rationale

The Examination Access Arrangements (EAA) Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout Sirius Academy West for all students with additional barriers to their learning, including those with formally identified Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment where there are no limits to an individual's achievements, and they receive the appropriate support to do this.

## What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

## Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. 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. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

## Responsibility

Access Arrangements are the responsibility of the SENDCO, directed by the Head Teacher. Assessments to identify appropriate Access Arrangements for exams need to be conducted by a member of staff who possess the relevant qualifications in accordance with JCQ guidance **or** indeed a qualified person may be bought in. The SENDCO can direct appropriate staff to be part of the assessment process, i.e. those with appropriate qualifications as cited in JCQ document *Adjustments for Candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments*.

These are:

- a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website
- An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council.

In addition to these two categories, other educational professionals may conduct Access Arrangements assessments if they meet the following criteria.

They must hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 which must include training in all of the following:

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- The theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals
- The appropriate use of nationally standardized tests for the age group being tested
- The objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered
- The appropriate selection and objective use of cognitive tests including tests of verbal and non-verbal ability and wider cognitive processing skills
- The ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional.

In rare and exceptional circumstances, the centre may need to refer a candidate to an alternative professional, such as a clinical psychologist or a neuropsychologist, where further investigation is warranted. The initial assessment may have indicated specific/global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns.

**For notification on the qualifications our specialist assessors that we use possess – please speak to the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer who both have confirmation of qualifications held on file.**

### **Access Arrangements for examinations**

JCQ requirements can change annually however the following are some of the standard practice of Access Arrangements:

- Extra time
- Rest breaks
- Readers/Computer Reader
- Reading aloud
- Scribes
- Prompts
- Use of word processors

### **Identifying the need for Access Arrangements within Sirius Academy North**

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to quality first teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

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Formal assessments take place during Y9. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidance. Formal Access Arrangements expire after 26 Months, after this period the student may be re-tested. The most recent testing is binding and determines any subsequent access arrangements.

Where formal Access Arrangements are determined and agreed these become part of 'normal practice'. This means that appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments. If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then Access Arrangements can be removed.

## PROCEDURE

### How would students be identified for possible Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)?

- They would have had EAA at KS2 for their SAT's
- From baseline testing completed on the Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT) and New Group Reading Test at transition
- Student or Parental concern
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from previous schools

### KS2 SATs EAA

Students who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, it doesn't necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had additional time for KS2 may not qualify for additional time at KS4 because their speed of working has improved to the extent it does not meet the JCQ criteria.

### Baseline Testing in Year 7

All students in Year 7 are tested using CATs as part of the school's transition process. These tests can help identify specific learning difficulties.

### Parent Referral

Parents can contact the school to raise concerns or to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENDCO will investigate their concerns by sending a "round robin" to the child's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

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## Teacher Referral

As with parent referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENDCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the students' current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENDCO initially if they feel that a child may require Exam Access Arrangements rather than contacting parents about their concerns. The SENDCO will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

## KS3 screening

Pupils who are flagged either during transition or during Y7 as having difficulties accessing their learning are screened. All teaching and support staff are involved in this early identification process. Throughout KS3 all staff are responsible for implementing recommended adjustments to QFT and assessment access arrangements. All staff are to be involved in the monitoring of these adjustments. Needs of students not identified in Y7 may become apparent at any point during KS3. Staff are responsible for reporting any concerns to the SENDCO who can then arrange for screening to be carried out.

## What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Previous EAA from other schools
- Subject teachers – evidence of normal way of working, examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests
- Completed Form 8 Report (this must be completed by the SENDCO and a qualified assessor)
- Medical evidence of a medical diagnosis which demonstrates the need for Exam Access Arrangements supported by a file note written by the SENDCO
- An Education, Health and Care Plan demonstrating the need for Exam Access Arrangements supported by a file note written by the SENDCO

## Private Educational Psychologists or Dyslexia Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed privately and submitting the reports to the SENDCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or other EAA. Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money. This therefore means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage.

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JCQ states that “A privately commissioned assessment cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. This would be where the assessor has not contacted the centre, has not established a working relationship with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received as a minimum a ‘skeleton’ Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENCo.”

**As such the academy will not accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist’s or dyslexia report, but will instead follow the recommendations of the qualified assessor.**

JCQ also states that “As a privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.”

## Formal Access Arrangement Testing

Formal assessments are conducted throughout year 9 and the autumn term of year 10. Students qualifying for these formal assessments are determined by specified indicators following screening. Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) would automatically qualify for need matched access arrangements screening and the formal assessment is a staged process:

### Stage 1: Early Screening

- Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Lucid Exact

If early screening suggests further assessment is required, then the SENDCo will complete part 1 of the form 8 to provide background information to the qualified assessor.

### Stage 2: Formal Testing

Throughout year 9 depending on outcomes of screening; formal assessments are conducted to confirm access arrangements for exams. Formal assessments can only be completed with the appropriate signed consent from parents or carers of students. Without signed consent assessments will not be able to be completed and it will not be possible to apply for exam access arrangements.

Assessments are carried out by qualified assessors. No one assessment can be submitted as evidence. Assessments may include:

- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP) Phonological Assessment Battery

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- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)
- Greys Oral Reading Test (GORT – 5)
- Test of Memory and Learning 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (TOMAL2)

The tests that the qualified assessor uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

### **Stage 3: Formal application for access arrangements for examinations**

The outcome of the assessments is recorded and summarised on the pupil profile sheet by the assessor. Completed forms are then passed to the SENDCo as evidence for online submission. The online submission is carried out by the SENDCo.

### **Stage 4: Ensuring the AA are normal practice**

It is the responsibility of the SEND team to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the Exams officer and wider staff body. The SENDCo, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that access arrangements are normal working practice. The SENDCo and exams officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order.

### **What are the procedures for processing an application?**

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the assessor for EAA, the SENDCo then applies to the exam boards. The feedback for most EAA is instant and at this point the EAA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed of the EAA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- An Education, health & Care Plans (EHCP)

Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s:

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the qualified assessor and SENDCo
- A data protection form signed by the student
- A record of all occasions when a student has been supported by EAA

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- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

### Centre Delegated Access Arrangements

Some arrangements for candidates with disabilities do not require an online application to be made. This can include:

- Alternative rooming arrangements
- Colour naming where students are colour blind
- Use of colored overlays
- Enlarged exam papers or papers printed on colored paper
- Magnifiers
- Non-electronic Ear defenders

However, JCQ regulations clearly state:

“The SENCo must make their decision 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”

It also goes on to clarify “Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.”

### Use of Word Processors – Statement

The use of Word Processor for EAA will be awarded to students who meet one of the following criteria and who demonstrate this as their normal way of working:

- Their handwriting speed is significantly slower than their typing speed
- Students with a specific learning difficulty who struggle to order their thoughts may also be awarded the use of a word processor to allow them to restructure work without difficulty
- Students with poor handwriting who fail to demonstrate their true potential due to the illegibility of their handwritten work.
- Students who due to a medical condition suffer fatigue in their hands/wrists/arms when writing for longer periods of time, meaning long written exams are unmanageable or painful.

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