

# Meadowhead School and Sixth Form



## Exam Access Arrangements Policy

This is a policy of Meadowhead School and Sixth Form.

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# Meadowhead School – Exam Access Arrangement Policy

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries (collectively “access needs”) have fair access to public examinations, in compliance with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and the Equality Act 2010. The policy sets out how access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are managed, applied for, implemented, and reviewed.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All external examinations and assessments (e.g., GCSE, A-level, vocational qualifications) administered by the school.
- All students who may need access arrangements or special consideration.
- All staff involved: SENCo / Access Arrangements Coordinator, SEN Administrator, Exams Officer, teaching staff, invigilators, and senior leadership.

## 3. Definitions and Legal Framework

- **Access Arrangements** – Pre-examination adjustments made for students, based on evidence of need, without altering the demands of the assessment.
- **Reasonable Adjustments** – Adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent substantial disadvantage.
- **Special Consideration** – Post-examination adjustments, such as awarding extra marks, to reflect temporary illness, injury, or other disruption. [J](#)
- The school’s duty under the **Equality Act 2010** to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students.
- The school also follows the JCQ “Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments” regulations. [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf)

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **SENCo / Access Arrangements Coordinator:** the SENDCo is also qualified as an Exams Access Assessor and is responsible for:
  - Identifying candidates who may require access arrangements.
  - Gathering and maintaining evidence of need (e.g., assessment data, medical diagnoses, teacher observations, mock exam papers, teacher referrals).
  - Liaising with teaching staff to gather information on a student's “normal way of working” in the classroom.
  - Completing and submitting applications via the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) when required.
  - Reviewing current arrangements annually, or sooner if a student’s needs change.

- Ensure that all students that require testing are tested in a timely manner
- Ensuring that students with Exams Access Arrangements are made aware of their arrangement and how to use them
- Ensuring parents are informed of the arrangements in place for their child once they are registered with the JCQ.
- **SEN Administrator Officer** is responsible for:
  - Managing the administrative process for access arrangements and special consideration applications.
  - Ensuring applications are submitted before JCQ deadlines.
  - Maintaining records of approved arrangements and communicating them to invigilators, teachers, and students.
- **Teaching Staff** are responsible for:
  - Observing and recording how students work in class (e.g., whether extra time is used in regular assessments).
  - Providing evidence of 'normal way of working' through assessments, mock exams, classwork, and other tasks.
- **Senior Leadership** must ensure:
  - Adequate resources and staffing for implementing access arrangements (e.g., readers, scribes, separate rooms).
  - Training for relevant staff, including new staff, on access arrangements, JCQ rules, and the awarding of special consideration.

## 5. Identification and Evidence of Need

### 1. Referral / Identification

- Students may be identified via SEN reviews, teacher referral, learning assessments or external assessments.

### 2. Evidence Collection

- The school will gather appropriate evidence, which may include: mock exam papers, in-class timed assessments, teacher observation notes, reports from external professionals, internal data (e.g., reading/spelling tests, processing speed).
- For arrangements like 25% extra time, evidence must show that the student's normal way of working justifies this and that it is effective in timed assessments
- The school will maintain this evidence in a secure file, accessible to the SENCo, Exams Officer, and (where necessary) JCQ or awarding body inspectors.

### 3. Trialling Arrangements

- Before formal application, arrangements should be trialled in internal assessments (e.g., mocks) to determine viability. The school will use different-colour pens, additional time, or other measures to show candidate behaviour under these conditions.
- Use supervised rest breaks first for students with diagnosed neurodiversity before considering extra time, per updated guidance.

### 4. Securing Arrangements

- Once evidence has been gathered; arrangements trialled and evidence gathered to verify effectiveness, student who need testing will be tested with test best suited to identify their individual needs.

- Students given extra time, will only be given it in the subject, or groups of subjects that have provided evidence (e.g. literacy based; numeracy based)
- Students that do not qualify for extra time when tested, will only be retested after 6 months and if there is new, substantial evidence of need from teachers

## **5. Parental Requests**

- If a parent, carer, or student requests access arrangements, the school will follow the JCQ flowchart for managing such requests, including cases where there is no prior evidence. [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/JCQ-Parent-guidance-information-sheet-2025\\_26.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/JCQ-Parent-guidance-information-sheet-2025_26.pdf)
- The SENCo will not meet with individual parents to individual access arrangements as arrangements will only be put in place with evidence from teachers of a persistent and substantial need
- Teachers will be made aware that they must not be pressured by parents to submit evidence for access arrangements. If the SENDCo believes that teachers have only submitted evidence under pressure from parents, adjustments will not be considered as this constitutes malpractice

## **6. Application Process**

### **1. Access Arrangements Online**

- The SENCo / Exams Officer will submit applications via the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) where required. [JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)
- For arrangements that are “delegated to centres” (i.e., no prior approval needed), the school will still record internally but does not need to submit via CAP.

### **2. Deadlines**

- Applications must be submitted according to awarding body / JCQ deadlines. For example, for 2024/25 the AARA (Access Arrangements) deadlines were published in the JCQ document.
- Late applications (e.g., due to recent diagnosis or injury) may still be submitted, but the school must ensure that all evidence is provided and is as robust as possible.

### **3. Changing Centre**

- If a student changes school, the SENCo may reuse a previously approved Form 8 or Form 9 (per JCQ guidance) where evidence is valid, as per “Guidance regarding access arrangements when a candidate changes centre.”

## **7. Implementation of Access Arrangements**

- Once approved, the Exams Officer will communicate the access arrangements to all relevant staff, including invigilators, teaching staff, and timetabling staff.
- Access arrangements will be implemented in all appropriate assessments (internal and external) in line with the candidate’s usual way of working.

- The school will ensure that the physical and logistical requirements are in place: e.g., alternative rooming, readers, scribes, assistive technology, etc.

## **8. Monitoring and Reviewing Arrangements**

- The SENCo and Exams Officer will conduct regular reviews of access arrangements:
  - After mock examinations.
  - At least annually, or when there is a change in the student's needs.
  - If a student believes their access arrangement is no longer appropriate, they may request a review.
- The school will document the outcome of reviews, adjustments made, and any new applications.

## **9. Special Consideration**

- Special consideration applications will be made in accordance with the JCQ "A Guide to the Special Consideration Process."
- The Exams Officer is responsible for submitting applications for special consideration within the timescales required by awarding bodies.
- Reasons for application may include: illness, injury, bereavement, disruption during exam, technical issues, and more.
- The school will keep evidence to support the application (e.g., medical certificates, incident logs, supervisor reports).

## **10. Training and Communication**

- The school will provide training for:
  - SENCo / Access Arrangements Coordinator on the latest JCQ guidance and evidence requirements.
  - Teachers on observing students' normal way of working and providing relevant evidence.
  - Invigilators on supporting students with access arrangements, without compromising exam integrity.
- The school will inform students and parents/carers about:
  - The process for applying for access arrangements.
  - What access arrangements are and how they are used.
  - Their responsibility to inform school if there are any new needs or diagnoses.

## **11. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

- All information about a student's access arrangements is treated as confidential and shared only with staff who need to know for legitimate purposes (e.g., exams team, SEN team, invigilators).
- Records of evidence (e.g., assessment reports, teacher observations) will be stored securely, in compliance with the school's data protection policy.

## **12. Quality Assurance and Compliance**

- The school will annually audit its access arrangements processes to ensure compliance with updated JCQ rules.
- The Exams Officer and SENCo will keep up to date with changes in JCQ guidance (e.g., via JCQ website, newsletters).
- The school recognises that failure to comply with JCQ regulations may lead to sanctions or loss of accreditation by awarding bodies.

### **13. Policy Review**

- This policy will be reviewed at least annually (or whenever there is a significant change in JCQ regulations).
- Reviews will be led by the SENCo and approved by the Board of Trustees.

## **Appendix 1: The use of Exams Access Arrangements**

### **Alternative Rooming:**

- Alternative rooming will be in a classroom or the library
- Only students with scribes or substantial medical conditions that could disrupt the exam for others will have 1:1 invigilation
- Alternative rooms are often not the quietest spaces and students may opt to be in the main hall instead

- Students in alternative rooms cannot choose which room they are in

### **Supervised Rest Breaks:**

- In most cases, supervised rest breaks will be taken at the desk and the paper removed for 5 minutes
- Movement breaks outside of the exam room will only be permitted where this substantial evidence of need
- All supervised rest breaks will be 5 minutes long other than in exceptional circumstances
- Supervised rest breaks cannot be taken during the first 15 minutes or within extra time
- They can also not be taken once the student has stopped writing

### **Word processors:**

- Students using WPs will be in a classroom or the library
- They will be given an exam log in to use so they will have no access to other files or the internet
- Spell and grammar check will be deactivated unless previously agreed
- At the end of the exam, students are responsible for ensuring their work is printed out and they have signed to verify it is their work

### **Readers:**

- Students who require substantial amounts of reading will be offered a computer reader which will be in a classroom or the library

### **Use of Overlay:**

- Students who use an overlay as their normal way of working will be permitted to use it in exams but should provide their own
- If students require coloured paper, due to exam logistics and fidelity of the paper, all exams will be printed on buff coloured paper in line with JCQ recommendations to support Exams Officers on the day of exams

### **Extra Time:**

- Students with referrals for extra time will trial them in appropriate subjects in mock exams
- Evidence will need to be provided from these exams that it was utilised and effective before they will be tested
- Students with a medical diagnosis do not need testing but will be expected to trial supervised rest breaks before extra time will be considered in line with JCQ guidance

## Appendix 2: The Process

- **Key Stage 3**
  - Exams Access Arrangements might not be possible in Key Stage 3 or year 10 assessment weeks. Teachers will however use these assessments to build a picture of what the student might require in more formal exams. Arrangements in place in SATs do not carry over to secondary school as the process for applying for them is very different.
  
- **Year 10**
  - Teachers will be asked to start submitting Form As (Internal Referral Form) from after the first assessment week in the autumn term.
  - From May of year 10, evidence will be compiled and trial arrangements will be decided on
  - In the summer trial exams of year 10, students will trial the exams arrangements
  - Following these trials, teachers will be asked to submit evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the arrangement
  
- **Year 11**
  - Students with enough evidence from their y10 trial exams will be tested in September and if appropriate and arrangements will be registered with the JCQ
  - Teachers will be asked from the start of year 11 to submit Form As for anyone who they feel needs access arrangements in light of their performance in the mocks.
  - In October, evidence will be compiled and trial arrangements will be decided on.
  - In the November mock exams, students will trial the exam arrangements
  - Following these trials, teachers will be asked to submit evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the arrangement
  - Students with enough evidence from their y10 trial exams will be tested in January, if appropriate and arrangements will be registered with the JCQ
  - Following this time, no new referrals will be accepted as the evidence should show a persistent and substantial need that should be evident in the 18 months previous
  - Parents will be contacted at this point to let them know what arrangements are in place for their child.
  - There may still be some arrangements changed depending on how the trialling or arrangements went in the November trials (for example, a student with ADHD may have exhausted supervised rest breaks and now need something different.).

