

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Emma Smale	
Date of next review	Spring 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Miss E Smale
Senior leader(s)	Mr G Muttock
Head of centre	Mrs J Santinelli
Exams officer	Mrs C Adams
Assessor(s)	Mrs D Cudmore
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Mrs C Adams

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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'. (AARA¹, 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. (AARA¹, 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 St Benedict's Catholic 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

This policy is maintained and held by 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. (¹AARA 4.2)

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

¹This 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, 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 AARA (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 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.

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.

24-25 EQUALITIES Policy (Exams) – [link to policy be added](#)

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 7.3.

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

Deborah Cudmore – IQ Level 7 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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualifications is obtained and checked against the current requirement in AARA 7.3 (Appointment of assessors)

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

Relevant certifications are copied and appropriately filed. This documentation is held by Human Resources Department and can be made available on request by the JCQ centre inspector. (AARA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

Following the guidelines in AARA 7.4, the SENCo will hold on file the evidence that the assessor(s) are suitably qualified from the source's outlines.

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

The assessment process begins at Key Stage 3. Subject teachers monitor students from Year 7 and gather any evidence of possible need for access arrangements, passing this information to the SEND Department.

This evidence comprises of recommendations and examples of work from teachers and support staff, observations that have been carried out in class and from reasonable consultations/requests made by parents and carers.

During end of year 9 beginning of year 10, testing is completed by the qualified exam access assessor in line with the criteria needed for access arrangements, particularly Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of learning difficulties, which is completed based upon the results of the exam access testing, evidence supplied by the teaching staff and the ongoing needs of the individual student.

This is then reviewed and signed by the SENCo.

A privately commissioned assessment where the centre has not been involved cannot be used to complete a Form 8 and will not be processed to apply for access arrangements This is due to a private assessor not having a full picture of need or being able to demonstrate normal way of working within the centre. (AARA 7.3.6)

The arrangements are put in place and monitored for their use and effectiveness during formal and informal assessments during Key Stage 4, particularly in Year 10, prior to deadlines for GCSE applications.

The completed Form 8 should then be processed via a Centre Admin Portal (CAP) Access Arrangements Online by the SENCo or Examinations officer. (AARA 7.6)

The college seeks to ensure that there exists a full picture of need, over time, with clear evidence to support the application being made. (AARA 7.5.2)

Where approval is not gained the college assessor will review the evidence and consider further, appropriate testing and measures.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Prior to any student having access arrangement testing the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need.

The information gathered may include recommendations and examples of work from teachers and support staff, observations that have been carried out in class and from reasonable consultations/requests made by parents and carers.

All information will be shared on Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, profile of learning difficulties (AARA 7.6)

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 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 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)

Prior to any application being made completion of the *Candidate Personal data consent form* and *the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo*, will have been signed and saved in the individual candidate folder

These will be must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENCo or Examinations officer will apply for Exam access arrangements through a CAP accessing AAO. (AARA 8.2)

All information will be submitted using information outlined on Form 8.

Once application is processed outcome of the application is saved in the candidates individual file.

All applications will be applied for within the dates outline in the Deadlines section. (AARA 8.1)

In each candidate file the below will be included.

- a signed candidate personal data consent form;
- a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form;
- a copy of the candidate's approved application;
- appropriate evidence of need (where required);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The SENCo must make decisions on centre delegated access arrangements on whether a candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect AND the candidate's normal way of working in the centre (AARA 5.16)

If the SENCo does not agree with a request for a centre delegated access arrangement a written rationale for rejecting this will be held on file.

Centre delegated access arrangements include:

Alternative rooming
Amplification equipment
Briallars
Colouring naming

Coloured overlays
Fidget tools
Low vision aid/magnifier
Non-electrical ear defenders
Non-electric headphones
Timer on a candidate's desk
Square paper for visual spatial difficulties.

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.

Word Processor Policy (Exams) – [Link to be attached](#)

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 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 5.16)

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

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

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)

