

Access Arrangements Policy

Policy/Procedure creator: Mrs Stephanie Bendall

Policy/Procedure created/reviewed: 11/10/2023

Centre Name	Maiden Erlegh School
Centre Number	51603
Date policy first created	28/09/2022
Current policy reviewed by	Mr Paul Gibson
Current policy approved by	Mr Martin Judd
Date of next review	11/10/2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Exams officer	Ms Ali Came
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs Stephanie Bendall
Senior leader(s)	Mrs Stephanie Bendall
Head of centre	Mr Paul Gibson
Other staff (if applicable)	Mrs Alison Morgan

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Maiden Erlegh School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

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 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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Maiden Erlegh School 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The principles for Maiden Erlegh School to consider 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 him/her 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 (AA 4.2)
- The person who leads on additional learning support/special educational needs, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate (AA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- The Access arrangement will be processed as soon as reasonably possible. Since the course itself may highlight difficulties the student is facing or the course may provide evidence as to the students normal way of working.
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in this policy.

The referral procedures with regards to students being put forward for testing for Access Arrangements are as follows:

- All students who have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are reviewed by the SENCo and/or tested by the centre's assessor in Year 9 or 10 and again in Year 12. Whilst the JCQ guidelines do state that it is not necessary to retest in Year 12, substantial evidence is required for the continuation of the arrangement and to ensure that any new regulations brought in by the JCQ are met.
- Students with a K code are reviewed by the SENCo and selected students are tested.
- Students who have previously been in receipt of access arrangements when sitting their SATs examinations in the primary setting will also be reviewed by the SENCo and selected students will be tested.
- Students who have transferred from another school and have been in receipt of access arrangements at their previous school (this normally applies to students joining Maiden Erlegh School in Year 12) but could also include students completing an in-year admission). The Form 8 may be requested from a feeder school, along with any relevant evidence which can be used to 'support evidence of need' and the students 'normal way of working'.
- A teacher can refer a student by contacting the SENCo and providing evidence to support the reason for the referral.
- A written request from a parent/carer to the SENCo, outlining the reason for the request and attaching any relevant evidence to support the request.

2. The assessment process

At Maiden Erlegh School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ

requirements (AA 7.3) **Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)** Mrs Susan King -

Qualification are held on file.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Maiden Erlegh School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

Not Applicable

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by Mrs Rachel Skitt (Access Arrangements Administration).

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

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

Maiden Erlegh School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements (AA 7.3)
- Relevant staff working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

Additional information:

Process for the Assessment of a Candidates Learning Difficulties by an Assessor.

Access arrangements processes are administered with regards to the Equality Act 2010 regulations and the SEN Code of Practice.

Maiden Erlegh School makes every attempt to identify students needing alternative access arrangements as early as possible, in accordance with the processes previously described.

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) the SENCo describes a picture of need and demonstrates the candidates normal way of working on completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

The correct procedures are followed as per the JCQ publication for the current academic year.

The following assessment are carried out by the qualified Assessor in order to assess the students performance within a range of areas. The following tests are JCQ approved:

- Reading Skills - GORT 5
- Handwriting Speed - DASH and DASH 17+
- Cognitive Processing - CTOPP2 where the following are assessed: Phonological awareness, Phonological Memory and Rapid Symbolic naming.

The tests used are reviewed at the start of the Academic Year to reflect updated JCQ regulations and to ensure that they are still considered to be the most appropriate tests to assess need.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Maiden Erlegh School confirms

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5)

Additional information:

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Students with access arrangements will have these in class assessments and pre-public examinations (PPEs).

For students with hearing or visual impairments Maiden Erlegh School works closely with the Sensory Consortium for advice.

Teachers in each individual subject work with the SENCo and record what additional support is required by the student in the classroom and any specific difficulties they are having.

The access arrangements put in place for a student may also reflect the support given to the student:

- In Key Stage 2 SATs
- In the classroom
- By teaching assistants
- Assistive technology used
- When working in the Purple Pathway, Indigo ASD Resource Unit and in smaller intervention groups.

This is recorded as background information on Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working in the centre.

The candidate is assessed in light of this picture and the background information as detailed in Part 1 of Form 8.

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by Mrs Stephanie Bendall. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Mrs Stephanie Bendall and Mrs Susan King.

• The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy details the criteria Maiden Erlegh School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

• Alternative rooming arrangements

The Additional Information Section

details the criteria Maiden Erlegh School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation).

Additional information:

Alternative Rooming Arrangements

A decision where an examination candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

The SENCo must make their decision on:

- Whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- The candidates normal way of working in the centre.

Candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared to other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it

would be reasonable in all of the circumstances to provide the arrangement. The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements reflects the candidates normal way of working in internal school tests and PPEs as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, emotional or mental health need.

The needs for Alternative Rooming Arrangements must be substantiated by appropriate and current medical evidence in accordance with the JCA guidelines. A copy of this evidence will be held on file.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)

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Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)

- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)

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For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- Mrs Rachel Skitt to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate **Personal data consent form**) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- Mrs Stephanie Bendall to complete the **Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application
- Mrs Stephanie Bendall
Mrs Susan King
to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Mrs Rachel Skitt
Mrs Stephanie Bendall
Mrs Susan King
to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes 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) (AA 8.6)
- Mrs Stephanie Bendall
Mrs Susan King

to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO • Ms Ali Came to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Not Applicable

CHANGES 2023/2024

Due to section renumbering in the AA publication, references to AA sections in this policy have been changed to 2 places, e.g. AA 7.3.1 changed to AA 7.3, etc.

(Changed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor**: A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. (AA 7.3) (To) A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AA 7.3)

(Removed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor**: An independent assessor will be instructed to contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This will take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor will be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate (AA 7.5) (Removed) Under **Picture of need/normal way of working**:

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 the 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 person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5)

(Changed) Under **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments** all reference to Separate invigilation within the centre (To) Alternative rooming arrangements and re-worded the section accordingly.

(Changed) Under **Roles and responsibilities**: to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6) (To) to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes 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). (AA 8.6)

CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES

Centre specific changes include:

- Change of personnel from Mrs Sam Macro to Mrs Rachel Skitt
- Change of terms from Separate Invigilation to Alternative Rooming Arrangements
- Removal of reference to Violet College as this class does not exist anymore