Equalities Policy (Exams)

2026/27

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and reflects centre practice

Approved/reviewed by	
SC, KL, CD	
Date of next review	Nov 2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	**Dr K Laxton**
Senior leader(s)	**Mrs G Hare**
Head of centre	**Ms K Stevenson**
Assessor(s)	**Dr K Laxton**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Dr K Laxton and Miss S Caldwell**

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Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide equalities and or disability/accessibility policy/plan which details how the centre will:

- recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid; †or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect

(JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements')
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided in the current JCQ publication (Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024 (Definitions Section)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the current updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

Senior leader(s)

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the current updated JCQ publication AA

Teaching staff

- (Where appropriate) Inform the SENCo (or Equivalent role) of any observation about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate

Support staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo (or Equivalent role) to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working for a candidate

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ document AA
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within the centre

- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for **all** candidates are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before they assess candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of AARA
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements
- Produces and annually reviews and updates a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams manager/officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Use of word processors

The Swakeleys School For Girls' Word Processor Policy is located electronically in G:Policies/handbook and as a hard copy in the Exams Office in the Policies file. This policy is in accordance with the JCQ regulations.

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

SENCo 0r equivalent role

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- To comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensures relevant candidates **are** informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*

Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role

- A meeting is held with the SENCo in Nov and January of each academic year to update the access arrangements needs

Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

Roles and responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to current awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

Head of centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

SENCo

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)

Exams officer

- Understands and follows instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in the current ICE 2026-2027

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

However, NEA is not limited to internal assessment as externally marked and or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are also classified as NEA.

ALS lead/SENCo

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Internal exams/assessments

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

SENCo or equivalent role

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Facilitating access - examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements

- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by th e centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks	*SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home and for SRB* *Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need* *Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required* *Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place* *EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP* *An on-line submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations in the following qualifications…* *EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates* *Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood* *Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam* *EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials* *Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log* *Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam* *Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition* *EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)* *EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)* *Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested*
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader 25% Extra time	*Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010* *Papers checked for those testing reading*

	Alternative rooming arrangements	*Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded* *AAO application for approval processed* *Supporting evidence, AAO approval and signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file*
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Alternative rooming arrangements	*Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment* *AAO application for approval processed* *Supporting evidence. AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file* *Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted* *Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for alternative room)*
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	*Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed* *Supporting evidence. AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file* *Provides height adjustable desk in exam room* *Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities* *Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access* *Seats candidate near exam room door* *Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room* *Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment*

- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required