



Priory School Access Arrangements Policy

2020-2021

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Julian Ashworth / Jo Nulty	
Date of next review	December 2021

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Roxy Miremadi
Lead SENCo	Jo Nulty
Head of centre	Tony Smith
Assessor(s)	Alexandra Sanderson / Fiona Escott*
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Jo Nulty Fiona Harris

*awaiting confirmation of qualifications (22 October 2020)

Documents referred to in this Policy:

JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres 2020-2021 [GR]

Access Arrangements Regulations 2020-2021 [AA]

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

“Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with 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’.”*

[AA Definitions, page 3]

[AA Definitions,

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. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.”

[AA Definitions, page 3]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Priory 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...”

[JCQ 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 the ALS lead/ SENCo 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 accordingly to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically he/she must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate’s e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

General Principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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.

The Equalities Policy (Exams) is saved to the policy library.

The head of centre/ senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*. 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...

**or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect*

[GR 5.4]

The Access Arrangements 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 AA 7.3.

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

Alexandra Sanderson (details of qualifications on file)

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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

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

Priory School requires a copy of the certificate of the specialist assessor before they are permitted to work with students. A copy of the certificate is kept on record for inspection purposes.

The assessment process is carried out in conjunction with the SENCO or the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion.

The Head of Centre signs a form to confirm the name and qualifications of the person who has been appointment as the specialist assessor. This is stored in the Access Arrangements filing cabinet in the Exams Office.

The head of centre/ senior leadership team will have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of an assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/ employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

"Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo." [AA 7.3]

Make full reference to AA 7.3 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the ALS lead/SENCo

Make full reference to AA 7.4 Reporting the appointment of assessors and record your process that reflects the requirements

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

Priory School operates a Yr9 screening process which starts in term three when all students sit a battery of tests to establish current reading, spelling and speed of writing scores (wpm). These tests are administered within two English lessons by a trained member of the inclusion team (with a classroom teacher present) and marked within the inclusion team. The following tests are administered: Macmillan Group Reading – GRT2, SWST (Single Word Spelling Test), DASH (Speed of Writing Test). The data is compiled on a spreadsheet which also includes the student's SEN status, EAL background, CAT scores, DST scores and any involvement or support from the inclusion team and/or outside agencies such as CAMHS/CLASS. The inclusion team then looks at every student to highlight those students who should be considered for access arrangements. A Form 8 is completed for relevant students, which is reviewed by the external assessor before they meet individual students and administer further testing as appropriate.

"The SENCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor." [AA 7.5.1]

Privately commissioned assessments on their own cannot be used to award access arrangements. However,

"... SENCos and assessors 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 ways of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated." [AA 7.3]

Home educated students on roll will be assessed. The school arranges for the Year 9 students to come in for an assessment in LS1. The SENCo is guided by feedback from parents requesting access arrangements. The SENCo then gathers evidence such as medical, E.P reports etc.

"The Head of Centre / SLT will ensure that the SENCo undertakes the necessary and appropriate steps to gather a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate. This includes distance learners and home educated students. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process. The candidate must be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor. In some instances, depending on his/her needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre, for example at home. The centre must comply with the obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements" [GR 5.4d]

Recording evidence of need

When the inclusion team scrutinises the spreadsheet an internal access arrangement form will be filled in confirming previous tracking scores, yr9 screening scores, CAT scores, any previous reports from outside agencies and inclusion involvement.

“All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.” [AA 7.5.3]

Note

...SENCOs and assessors 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 candidates themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

Painting a ‘holistic picture of need’ confirming *normal way of working*

As the inclusion team completes the Form 8, detailed feedback questions are shared with all relevant teaching staff to get their feedback on the student’s needs, the impact on teaching and learning and normal way of working. This feedback is included in the pack which is made available to the specialist assessor prior to any further assessments and is also made available to the inspection service.

Before the candidate’s assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure joined up and consistent process.

*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.***

All candidates must be assessed in 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 with the SENCo. **The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.** (AA 7.5)*

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements 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.

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

Process for using AAO

Once section c of the Form 8 has been signed, the specialist assessor has completed the assessments, and the student has given their written consent for data protection purposes, the SENCO and Exams Officer together make the online access arrangements. This ordinarily takes place in Term 6, however where a need arises and a case develops, the same process is replicated.

Applications that are not successful will be sent individually to the exam boards with further evidence to request approval for access arrangements.

Files relating to each student with access arrangements are then kept securely in the filing cabinet in the Exams Office. Responsibility for these files lies with the SENCo.

Parents and students are advised regarding the outcome of an application and documentation is retained centrally in the Inclusion filing cabinet in the Exams Office.

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. [AA 8.6]

Centre-delegated access arrangements

The centre follows JCQ regulations with regard to centre delegated access arrangements. Evidence is held in the Inclusion filing cabinet in the Exams Office. Responsibility for these files lies with the SENCo.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

The Word Processor Policy (**Exams**) and statement is stored in the policy library.

"A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all

*candidates. The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor.
A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations."*

[AA 5.8.4]

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the ALS Lead/ SENCo.

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** (AA 5.16)

A candidate will only be permitted separate invigilation within the centre if the SENCO is satisfied that the JCQ requirements have been met. Written confirmation from a specialist medical practitioner will be required to inform the decision-making process.

A candidate will not be permitted separate invigilation due to exam anxiety or personal preference.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

[see AA 5.16 plus centre-determined criteria]