

RAINHAM MARK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2021/22

Review Body:	QE&PO (Quality of Education and pupil outcomes)
Leadership Group Responsibility:	Examinations Officer/Headteacher
Type of Policy:	Non-Statutory
Reviewed:	February 2022

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Inclusions Manager/SENCo	Mrs C Else / Mr A Smith
Inclusions manager/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Mrs E Horstrup
Head of centre	Mrs L Barker
Assessor(s)	Mrs D Stewart
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Mrs C Else / Mrs D Stewart
Exams Officer	Mrs N Murray
Exams Assistant	Mrs J Roe

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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'. ([AA 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'. ([AA Definitions](#))

*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

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Rainham Mark Grammar 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...

(General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the Inclusions Manager/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 according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing 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 processes 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 principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (section 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 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 **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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 his/her 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.

The equalities policy is available on the RMET website

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled 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 ([GR](#) section 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 is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#), section 7.3.

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

Mrs D Stewart

BDA Accredited Level 7 Certificate in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia)

BDA SpLD Assessment Award Practising Certificate

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)

Inclusions manager/ SENCo responsible for checking qualifications

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in [GR](#) and [AA](#) including:

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 the 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](#))

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by Mrs C Else / Mr A Smith

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

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](#))

Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor ([AA 7.5.1](#))

Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. ([AA 7.5.5](#))

The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. ([AA 7.5.6](#))

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 7.3.6](#))

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 7.3.6](#))

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

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo **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 SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a 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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. ([AA 7.5](#))

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 AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

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 for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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 arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager)/ Mr A Smith (SENCo)

. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager)/ Mr A Smith (SENCo)

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.

The word Processor Policy details the criteria Rainham Mark Grammar School uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments. This is kept in the Red Policies folder in the exams Office and it on the school website.

A centre **must** have a policy on the use of word processors... 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)

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the Inclusions Manager/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)

The Exams Policy details the criteria Rainham Mark Grammar School uses to award separate invigilation within the centre. This is kept in the Red Policies folder in the exams Office and it on the school website.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

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, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)

Modified papers Policy

Modified papers are ordered through AAO.

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

Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements 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.

Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series

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

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement 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.

Where access arrangements 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.

It is the responsibility of:

Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager) / Mr A Smith (SENCo) to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO

Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager)/Mr A Smith (SENCo) to submit applications for approval through AAO

Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager) 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

Mrs C Else (Inclusions Manager) /Mr A Smith (SENCo) to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO

Mrs N Murray (Exams Officer) to order modified papers