St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School

ACCESS ARRANGMENTS POLICY

Revised September 2024

> This policy should be considered alongside the following school policies:
> - SEN Policy
> - Examinations Policy
> - Controlled Assessment Policy

The JCQ is a membership organisation comprising the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK. The JCQ provides a single voice on issues of examination administration and, when appropriate, qualification and wider education policy. The "Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments" regulations for schools can be accessed on the JCQ website. It is the responsibility of the Personalised Learning Co-ordinator to ensure they are familiar with these regulations published annually by JCQ.

WHAT ARE EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

An Exam Access Arrangement is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and a student's 'normal way of working' has been established. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments.'

Access Arrangements allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

This can be in the form of:

- Extra time: students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% (or more in exceptional circumstances) depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher.
- A reader/computer reader: a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of an assessment where reading is the A.O. being examined such as the 'Reading Section' of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would write the answers themselves but can ask for them to be read back to them. Specialised examination reading pens can also be used.
- A scribe: a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. A student can only have access to a scribe if they have illegible handwriting and a scribe is their 'normal way of working'. In certain circumstances, such as serious injury to an arm or hand, an application may be required for a student to have temporary access to a scribe.
- Word processor: Within the centre, some students do use a laptop as 'normal way of working' and will have access to a word processor for examinations so they can word process their answers (without the spell and grammar check facility).
- Rest breaks: where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- Prompter: where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.
- Modified paper: a student with a visual impairment may require an enlarged paper.

Some access arrangements, such as access to a separate centre or access to a laptop, can be centre delegated. Others such as, access to scribe or additional time, require approval from JCQ. Centres must

ensure valid evidence is in place to support a student's entitlement to any assigned examination access arrangements.

DISABILITY NEEDS

A disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:
Identifying a physical or mental impairment; • looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial; • considering if substantial adverse effects are long term; • judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months or is likely to do so.

Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:
- Persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person's native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- Persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- Difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions;
- Physical impairment – for example, difficulty operating a computer because of physical restrictions in using a keyboard.

Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:
- Minor problems with writing or spelling;
- Inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
- Inability to converse orally in a language which is not the speaker's native spoken language – for examination purposes, an EAL student can have access to an examination approved bi-lingual dictionary.

Disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer which have a significant impact upon the wellbeing of the student and adversely impact upon their learning. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.
Students identified as having additional educational needs will be identified on the school's AEN Register. (The most current copy is always accessible in the AEN e-folder in the Staff shared area)

DEFINITION OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
Children have additional educational needs if they do not have an identified learning difficulty or disability but do require reasonable adjustments to be made in order to access the curriculum. A student might require reasonable adjustments in certain subjects. An example of a student with additional educational needs might be a student who has a significantly slow handwriting speed which places them at a disadvantage when writing under timed pressure. Students may be identified as having additional educational needs, but not require a Personalised Learning Plan and are not recorded on the school's SEN Register.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS NEEDED TO APPLY FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that are needed to apply for Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration to Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ).

- Report from specialist teacher which notes:
  - Evidence of persistent and significant difficulties, which would usually have been identified in Primary school and during Key Stage 3
  - Evidence from teachers that this difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom
  - Evidence that the access arrangement is the student's normal way of working in school i.e. that they routinely take more time to complete work, or always need a scribe to complete written work

- Educational assessments and tests e.g. reading speed, reading comprehension, writing tests. These are conducted by the specialist teacher.
- A Statement of Additional Educational Needs which states that a student should have entitlement to access arrangement.
- A Health/Care Plan which confirms the student's disability
- If Medical issues are the difficulty (and this includes ADHD and ASD) then a letter from a Consultant stating the need for extra time is required. A letter from a G.P. is not an acceptable form of evidence.

Extra Time Applications (as of September 2024)

For a student to be approved for extra time, they must have:
two below average standardised scores of 84 or less;
or
• one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89).

In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to **two different areas of speed of working** as below:
• speed of reading and speed of writing; or
• speed of reading and cognitive processing; or
• speed of writing and cognitive processing; or
• two different areas of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.

An assessment of mathematical processing may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time in Mathematics examinations only. The mathematical processing score must be below average. An assessment of mathematical processing cannot contribute to the evidence for 25% extra time in examinations other than Mathematics

PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' REPORTS

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to Learning Support as evidence that their child should be awarded Access Arrangements.

Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive Access Arrangements which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Teacher) recommends. The school is not

obliged to accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist reports and will instead follow the recommendations of the Specialist Tester as required by JCQ regulations.

JCQ regulations state that '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 and application'. (Assessing the Need for Access Arrangements in Examinations, A Practical Guide 2019/20)

Private reports should only be requested in consultation with the school's Learning Support Co-ordinator. (LSC) They can be helpful in the case of concerns which cannot be identified by school testing, or if a diagnosis is required. If this is the case, before the psychology assessment, the Learning Support Co-ordinator will complete the report on the student's background, provide the evidence from teachers and confirm the student's normal way of working in school.

HOW WOULD STUDENTS BE IDENTIFIED FOR EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENT?

- **Information from Primary schools**

Reports and PLPs from Primary school are very useful to give evidence of the persistent nature of the difficulty however it should be noted that even if a student received Access Arrangements for the Transfer test, this does not guarantee that they will receive it at GCSE or A level because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had Extra Time in the Transfer test may not qualify for Extra Time at GCSE because their speed of working has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria.

- **Baseline testing**

All students in Year 8 are tested at the start of the year and again in Year 9 and 10. We use computerised Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT4) to baseline general ability, and Progress Test in English/ Progress Test in Maths to look at attainment in these core curricular areas. These tests are primarily to look at progress though school but can also help identify learning difficulties. The Learning Support Tutors for Literacy and Numeracy will use this information to put appropriate interventions into place.

- **Evidence of need gathered during internal examinations and assessments.**

JCQ states that "if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time." We pay close attention to the use of Extra Time during internal examinations and to comply with JCQ regulations, will not process applications where there is no evidence of need in past exams.

- **Parental Referral**

Parents can contact the Learning Support Co-ordinator to ask for advice if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the Learning Support Co-ordinator will investigate their concerns which may involve: consulting with teachers, reviewing pupil data and pupil work, meeting with the student to discuss their difficulties. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

- **Teacher Referral**

Teachers can refer a student to Learning Support where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student's current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this, a decision will be made as to whether to test a student.

- **Individual educational tests conducted at staff or parental request**

Once the decision to test has been made, the student will meet with the Specialist Teacher. If the nature of the difficulty is proven 'significant' and meets the strict criteria, and if the Specialist Teacher can confirm the persistent nature of the problem, the student's normal way of working and the evidence from teachers, then an application to JCQ can be made. The student must sign a Data Protection Notice to give consent for some of their personal data to be shared with JCQ and the Exam awarding bodies.

HOW DO STAFF AND PARENTS KNOW WHETHER A STUDENT HAS EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

- Teaching and support staff can consult the 'Access Arrangements' document stored within the 'AEN' e-folder on the school network. It is updated whenever students become entitled to it. The information about results of assessments for Access Arrangements are kept confidentially in line with school policy, are shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- Parents of pupils with identified SEN will be informed of any approved Access Arrangement through the PLP which is sent home as soon as it is created and when it is reviewed.
- Parents of pupils with identified AEN, but not on the SEN Register e.g., a pupil with dyslexia who has extra time as his established normal way of working, will receive a letter to confirm any approved Access Arrangements.

WHAT SUPPORT IS GIVEN TO STUDENTS WITH ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

Students with Access Arrangements are encouraged to use their Access Arrangements during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using them effectively.
Effective time management is an important part of examination preparation. Students who are entitled to extra time, should be advised by subject teachers on how to manage their time effectively.

Students who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader/scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.

All teachers are given access to the list of students with Access Arrangements, and they are asked to liaise with the Learning Support Co-ordinator to ensure that the required support can be provided for identified students during the tests/assessments. Students who have a reader can be supported by the teacher supervising the test or may have individual support if necessary. Where appropriate, the Learning Support Co-ordinator can provide a separate room, reader, access to ICT and a scribe with the required amount of notice.

Students with Access Arrangements are monitored regularly through the use of data from Progress Reports, ARP/SIMS tracking and exam results, as well as the twice yearly PLP review.

ACCESS TO A WORD PROCESSOR/LAPTOP
A word processor cannot simply be granted to a student because they request to type rather than write in examinations or believe they 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. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.
Our ICT Acceptable Use Policy does allow for certain students to 'bring their own device' and within Senior School, many pupils opt to use a laptop. Where this is the case, assessments should be conducted under conditions which reflect a student's examination experience.
During periods of remote/blended learning, Google Classroom is the preferred platform for learning. This will also mean students will be completing and submitting work electronically.

When it comes to the use of a word processor or laptop for exam use, this will only be awarded where there is evidence to support that a student has:
• a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
• a medical condition
• a physical disability
• a sensory impairment
• planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
• poor handwriting.

This list is not exhaustive.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SENCO/SPECIALIST TEACHER/ LEARNING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR
(Mr P Linden and Mr P McDonnell)

The Learning Support Co-ordinator /Specialist Teacher will:
- Ensure all decisions pertaining to access arrangements comply with the most relevant JCQ guidance.
- Manage all information relating to access arrangements.
- Disseminate information to staff and parents regarding entitlement to access arrangements.
- Liaise with the Senior Teacher in charge of Exams **(Mrs Lewis)** and the Examinations Officer **(Miss A McKeown)** to ensure the entitlement of individual students is known and arrangements are in place. Copies of JCQ approval documentation will be provided to the Examinations Officer.
- Conduct specialist diagnostic assessments.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING STAFF

All teaching staff will:

- Report all concerns to the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) which relate to a student experiencing substantial difficulties that might warrant access arrangements being put in place. A completed 'Teacher Capture Form' (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the Learning Support Co-ordinator.
- Assist the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) by providing evidence upon request to determine a student's need for access arrangements and/or to confirm a student's normal way of working.
- Ensure students are entitled to specified access arrangements as their normal way of working and during internal assessments e.g. use of e-reader or 25% extra time
- Consult the relevant documentation stored in the AEN e-folder and in the students' files in the main office and on SIMS to establish a profile of need and identify reasonable adjustments required (Access Arrangement List; Personalised Learning Profile (PLP); Educational Psychology Reports; Statement of Additional Educational Need; Transfer Information from Primary School)
- Adhere to the procedures for determining Examination Access arrangements as outlined in **Appendix 2**.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SENIOR TEACHER IN CHARGE OF EXAMS

The Senior Teacher will:
- Liaise with the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) and the Examinations Officer to plan for the examinations period
- Ensure that any person appointed to facilitate an access arrangement is a responsible adult, is appropriately trained and fully understands the rules of the particular access arrangement(s), as detailed in the JCQ document.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXAMINATIONS OFFICER

The Examinations Officer will:
- Oversee the planning and timetabling of exams, taking account of access arrangements
- Ensure the Chief Invigilator receives information pertaining to access arrangements
- Ensure students receive written confirmation of examination arrangements, including access arrangements e.g. personalised timetable detailing separate venue; exam duration to include extra time
- To ensure students entitled to extra time are identifiable to examination invigilators e.g. Candidate record card has a large 'T' to visually indicate entitlement to extra time.
- Conduct briefings with examination invigilators, including scribes and prompters to ensure individuals understand their designated roles and what is/is not permissible.

Appendix 1: Teacher Capture Form

Check list regarding student's **Normal** way of working
Additional evidence to support Access Arrangements

Name of Student: **Name of Tutor:**   **Subject:**

TIME	YES	NO
Always finishes tasks after others		
Needs extra time for assignments		
Needs time to formulate an answer to a verbal question (slow responding)		
Needs careful explanations in straightforward language of tasks/assignment titles		

READING	YES	NO
Needs reader in class		
Avoids reading out loud		
Has problem following written instructions		
Finds it difficult to quickly get the idea of what s/he has read		
Finds it hard to remember what s/he has read		

WRITTEN WORK	YES	NO
Handwriting difficult to read		
Has difficulty copying from the board		
Finds taking notes hard		
Works on laptop/computer rather than writing		
Needs support with planning written work		
Can explain verbally without problems but struggles to write anything down		
Needs support with spelling		
Grammar and punctuation insecure		

MEMORY & CONCENTRATION	YES	NO
Has difficulty following oral instructions		
Has difficulty concentrating for long periods		
Has difficulty remembering messages, appointments		
Needs to have instructions repeated		
Needs to have instructions written down		

PRACTICAL TASKS	YES	NO
Good with practical tasks		
Prefers practical tasks to written ones		
Understanding better if able to consolidate learning through practical experience		

ORGANISATION	YES	NO
Organisational skills are weak – loses things, forgets items s/he needs to bring		
Finds it hard to meet deadlines		
Has difficulty working efficiently		

VISION	YES	NO
Needs large print version		
Uses coloured overlay when reading (Colour ……………)		
Benefits from handouts on coloured paper		

EXAMS	YES	NO
Finds revising for exams hard		
Unable to finish an exam in the time allowed		
Panics when faced with tests		
Needs to take frequent rest breaks		
Needs timely reminders to stay focused on task		

Any other relevant information:

Date normal way of working discussed and agreed:

Tutor Signature:

Student signature:

Appendix 2: Procedures for Determining Examination Access Arrangements

(A) Subject teacher is aware a student has an identified disability or confirmed SEN.

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Subject teacher should put in place all reasonable adjustments recommended in the student's PLP and/or Statement. Teacher should seek the support of the LSC as required.

(B) Subject teacher suspects a pupil has additional educational needs which are placing him at a disadvantage.

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Subject teacher should complete a 'Teacher capture Form' and forward to the LSC. Subject teacher should begin gathering evidence to support the concerns raised.

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LSC will review the 'Teacher Capture Form' and request supporting evidence. Additional information might be requested from other subjects at this stage to paint a picture of need across the curriculum. Upon receipt and review of evidence LSC will discuss the concerns with the student and his parent/guardian and begin to compile Form 8.

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LSC will advise subject teacher(s) on reasonable adjustments to be trialled with the student to establish 'normal way of working'.

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Subject teacher will update LSC with evidence to show impact of reasonable adjustments trialled with the student.

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LSC will seek consent from parent/guardian and conduct relevant diagnostic assessment.

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LSC will update the 'Access Arrangements document in Staff e-folder to confirm outcome of assessment and where relevant, normal way of working. LSC will confirm the outcomes in writing with parents/guardians. Application made to JCQ where applicable and copies of approval shared with Exams Officer.

APPROVALS	
Principal:	
Chair of the Board of Governors:	
Date of Approval by Governors:	
Date of next annual review:	