Access Arrangements Policy

Approved…….

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Key Staff Involved in Examinations

SENCo – Mrs P Richards
Vice Principal Senco – Mrs N Rossage
Head of Centre – Mr S Gilbert-Barnham
Exams Officer – Mrs L Abbotts-Freeman
Access Arrangement Facilitator – Mrs J Perry
Assessor – Mr J Tillet

Contents

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?
Access Arrangements/Reasonable Adjustments
Purpose of the policy
General Principles
Equalities Policy
The Assessment Process
The qualification of the current assessor
Appointment of assessors of candidates learning difficulties by an assessor
Reporting on the appointment of the assessor
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor
Picture of need/normal way of working
Processing access arrangements and adjustments
Arrangements/adjustments requiring body approval
Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments
Centre specific criteria for access arrangements
Word Processor Policy (Exams)
Separate Invigilation Policy

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

This policy on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2026-2027* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2026-2027*.

Access Arrangements

AARA (Definitions, page 3) state… **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.

Reasonable Adjustments

AARA (Definitions, page 3) state… 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'.

The Centre MUST ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates

*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 Ormiston Venture Academy 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's 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 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 she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

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

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General Principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine and implement appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 a disabled candidate.
- The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a school, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- 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
- A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
- Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
- 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 adjustments before their 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 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 5.4)

The Equalities 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 AARA section 7.3.

The qualifications of assessors

Mr Jeff Tillett is an external assessor and has worked for Ormiston Venture Academy for many years he is on the SASC Website – SPLD Assessment Practising Certificate Patoss – Expiry July 2026

Appointment of assessors

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

The head of centre/senior leadership team has 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, section 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. (AARA, section 7.3) Make full reference to AARA, section 7.3 Appointment of assessors and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Report the appointment of the assessor(s)

The assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the SENCo.
Make full reference to AARA, section 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

Make full reference to AARA, section 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements

Ormiston Venture Academy Confirms that the correct procedures are followed as per chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR, section 5.4)

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 candidate themselves should be instigated (AARA, section 7.3) this includes a candidate that requires to sit exams at home due to medical evidence

Pictures of need/normal way of working

Ormiston Venture Academy gathers all evidence to demonstrate 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 per 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 SENCO. (AARA, section 7.5)

Make full reference to AARA, sections 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

(As applicable, also refer to Supplementary Guidance March 2026 which provides additional exemplification to support understanding of the evidence that may be used to support an online application for 25% extra time)

Processing Access Arrangements – Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

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

AAO is a shared digital service that enables centres to request and manage pre agreed adjustments, such as extra time, readers, scribes or modified papers, for students with specific needs, disabilities or temporary injuries in a consistent and efficient way across JCQ member qualifications.

It sits within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and is used by centres to submit a single application per student, rather than applying separately to each member, helping to streamline administration while supporting regulatory compliance and data protection requirements. (www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/shared-services/#aao)

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary) Note the requirements around completion of Candidate Personal Data Consent Form and the requirement for completion of the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Application is made by Senco, information gathered will be used and placed in file for candidate location of files are in the secure room in the exams office. Senco must keep all detailed records electronically/hard copy format. 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. (AARA, section 8.6).a signed candidate personal data consent form.

- a copy of the candidate's approved application.
- appropriate evidence of need (where required
- evidence of the assessors qualification where required

Make full reference to AARA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Ormiston Venture Academy's processes for dealing with centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded). The SENCO makes arrangements and gathers information, and we hold on file to show why those arrangements are in place.

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 this is the candidate 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 in the centre

Ormiston Venture Academy Word Processing Policy is on the Website and in the exams office for JCQ Inspection which details the criteria Ormiston Venture Academy uses to award and allocate word processors for exams.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements will be made by the 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 (AARA, section 5.16)

Ormiston Venture Academy, on alternative rooming arrangements within the centre (which may include sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or one-to-one invigilation) or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA, section 5.16)

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AARA, section 5.16)