



Exam Access Arrangements Policy

North Kesteven Academy

2024-2025

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Statement of intent

At North Kesteven Academy, we are fully committed to ensuring that education is accessible to all. We recognise that some students may require support and additional arrangements to be able to access and undertake exams without being disadvantaged. This policy outlines the academy's procedures for identifying and applying for access arrangements before an exam and the reasonable adjustments that will be put in place as required.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment, for example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

A **reasonable adjustment** is where reasonable steps are taken to overcome a substantial disadvantage that a candidate who is disabled faces in comparison to a candidate who is not disabled.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE and Department of Health and Social Care (2015) 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- Equality Act 2010
- JCQ (2023) 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring exam arrangements are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and no student is discriminated against.
- Ensuring that access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment, and adhere to JCQ guidelines and those of the relevant exam board.
- Ensuring a person appointed to facilitate an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment, such as a Communication Professional or scribe.

The SENDCO will be responsible for:

- Leading on the process for identifying and securing access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.
- Working with teaching and support staff and exams office personnel to ensure approved arrangements are in place for all exams.
- Working with teaching staff to identify the most appropriate published format of modified papers to enable the candidate(s) to access exams.
- Working with specialist advisory teachers, educational psychologists and medical professionals where appropriate.
- Ensuring that the proposed access arrangement or reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- Assessing the need of candidates and processing applications accordingly.

Teaching staff will be responsible for:

- Supporting the SENDCO in identifying, determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

In addition, the headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and SENDCO will familiarise themselves with JCQ's 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' guidance each academic year.

Identifying students' needs

Students with SEND or a temporary impairment or injury may have several additional needs requiring a range of adjustments which will fall into the following four categories:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction need.
- Sensory and physical needs.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs.

Students' needs will be identified and accommodated for in line with the academy's SEND Policy. The headteacher will ensure effective screening and monitoring systems are in place to enable the SENDCO to gather an appropriately detailed idea of a student's needs and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. Teaching and support staff will be made aware of the referral procedure to the SENDCO where they have concerns about a student's development.

Internal tests and pre-public exams (PPE) will be used to help identify students who need to be assessed for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. Where a student experiences a problem during an exam, the SENDCO will consider if an assessment is necessary.

Arrangements in place for an exam will reflect the candidate's normal way of working and the support normally provided for them in school. This will not be the case where there is a late diagnosis of a disability, or late manifestation of an impairment or a temporary injury or impairment; however, the evidence of need will still be required to the same standard as early applications.

The need for separate invigilation must be substantiated by appropriate evidence of need and must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal tests. It should be noted that the JCQ guidance is very clear and 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 SENDCO to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Students' needs will be assessed by an assessor with the necessary qualifications appointed by the headteacher, in line with JCQ requirements.

The SENDCO will recognise that access arrangements and reasonable adjustments may differ for a student depending on each assessment's specification, and arrangements will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

Applying for access arrangements

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be applied for by the SENDCO in line with the JCQ guidelines for the relevant academic year.

Where there is a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after a course begins, access arrangements will be applied for as soon as is practicable.

The SENDCO will complete all necessary paperwork and ensure all applications have regard for the relevant exam board's deadline. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will only be put in place for exams where they have been approved.

Applications processed and approved online will be valid for 26 months from the date of processing the application. Where the SENDCO believes that access arrangements for a student are no longer the student's normal way of working within this period, they will consider whether it is appropriate to withdraw the access arrangement.

A student will have the right to not make use of the access arrangement or reasonable adjustment should they not wish to do so. The SENDCO will consider removing the access arrangements in cases where a student repeatedly chooses not to make use of them.

Candidates will never be charged any fee in relation to an adjustment or aid made to meet the academy's duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will not normally be possible where it compromises the assessment objectives of the relevant specification.

Extra time applications will only be made after the SENDCO has considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks.

The following arrangements will not need to be processed online:

- Amplification equipment
- Bilingual dictionary
- Braille transcript and braillers
- CCTV
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Communication Professional for candidates using Sign Language
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded exam components
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs

- OCR scanners
- Prompter
- Read aloud
- Separate invigilation within the centre
- Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties
- Supervised rest breaks
- Word processor

Where a case contains individual needs which are not covered by the online system for applications, the SENDCO will contact the relevant awarding body at the earliest opportunity to discuss the candidate's needs. A written record will be kept of any discussions.

Privately commissioned reports

Where a parent produces a privately commissioned report on their child's needs without prior consultation with the academy, this will not be able to be used to process an application. Where the academy is consulted beforehand, the SENDCO will provide the parent's chosen assessor with Part 1 of [Form 8](#) from the JCQ. Once a report is submitted to the academy as evidence that the student requires access arrangements.

The SENDCO will, however, in all cases, consider whether any privately commissioned report contains information to merit instigating the process of the academy assessing the student's needs internally. If a parent contacts the academy asking for their child's needs to be assessed, the SENDCO will decide whether it is appropriate to undertake this.

Evidencing applications

The online application process will provide prompts as to the evidence required. Evidence and history of need and provision will be provided by the SENDCO as required for each access arrangement applied for. Evidence will be stored for inspection purposes in line with JCQ guidance.

Core evidence required will typically include, but is not limited to the following:

- EHC plans
- Learner Profiles
- Fully completed Form 8 with an assessment carried out by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty
- Where applicable, a qualifying score from a recognised test carried out by a suitably qualified assessor
- Teaching staff evidence about a student's difficulties
- Specialist evidence,
- History of support and provision in place for the student in line with the requested access arrangement or reasonable adjustment

Preparing for an assessment

Once an access arrangement has been approved, the academy will:

- Inform the student's parents in writing.
- Inform the student.
- Inform the exams manager and make an access arrangement list available to them.
- Ensure all staff are aware of which students have had approved access arrangements.

Where a candidate requires access arrangements or reasonable adjustments before their first assessment, appropriate opportunities to practice using them will be provided. The academy will be particularly mindful of the need to practice prior to an exam where the following are used:

- Computer reader/Reader
- Modified enlarged papers
- A scribe
- Speech recognition technology
- Word processor

For internal assessments, teaching staff will inform the SENDCO at least two weeks in advance of the assessment date to allow sufficient time for access arrangements to be prepared, if practical.

Students will be informed to raise any concerns or questions with the SENDCO about their access arrangements before an exam, and what to do if they encounter any issues during an exam.

The use of word processors

Students who normally work with a word processor will use it in exams where appropriate. A word processor may also be used where necessary due to a temporary injury or impairment. Word processors will have the spelling and grammar check disabled or enabled in line with the exam's specifications.

A word processor will be considered for students where they have:

- SEND 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

The above list is not exhaustive; the SENDCO will consider if a word processor would benefit a student where an additional need is identified. Word processors will only be used where it meets an additional need and will not be permitted simply because a student prefers it or can work faster using one.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs. A word processor should be provided within non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

The integrity of the assessment must be maintained and not compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

The SENDCO will prepare and produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the academy's criteria for awarding and allocating word processors for exams.

A word processor cover sheet will be completed where required by the relevant awarding body for an exam.

To comply with JCQ regulations the centre:

- Uses secure exam accounts, unique to each candidate, to be unlocked just prior to the exam start time and locked down on completion. Accounts will be backed up and cleared down after each examination.
- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar facility/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise.
- Should the candidate be working on a laptop it will be plugged into the mains to ensure the battery is charged for the duration of the examination.
- Ensure the candidate is reminded to header their work and to present it in line with JCQ regulations using a minimum of size 12pt font and double line spacing.
- Ensures work is saved at regular intervals or that 'autosave' is set up with the IT technicians.

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- Is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions.
- Is not used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- Is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Is in good working order at the time of the examination.
- Is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.
- Is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Is cleared of any previously stored data.
- Does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets etc.
- Does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these.
- Does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.

- Does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader.
- Is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use as a scribe.

Portal storage medium

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium is provided by the centre and is cleared of any previous data.

Printing the script after the exam has ended

The centre will ensure:

- The word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium.
- The candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or her own and that each page is signed by the candidate.
- The word processed script is attached to any answer booklet, which may contain some of their answers.
- If a candidate omits to insert a header to their work they are instructed to handwrite the details, the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he or she is solely performing this task and not re-reading or amending their work.

Maintaining records

The SENDCO will keep detailed records of all essential information on file for an application. This will include a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need as required and a signed candidate personal data consent form.

The SENDCo keeps a record of all centre delegated access arrangements and evidence of need on file.

A record of all arrangements is maintained and held electronically by the SENDCO.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is held on file by the SENDCO and HR for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector when required.

All personal data will be treated confidentially and handled in line with the Data Protection Policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher, SENDCO, governing board and exams manager on an annual basis.