

Kingsmeadow Community School

A GUIDE TO EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS





❖ What are exam access arrangements?

“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.”

(JCQ 2025)

Examples of Access Arrangements



Examples of access arrangements include:

- 25% extra time
 - Assistance with reading and/or writing (technology/human)
 - A prompt
 - Supervised rest breaks
 - Alternative locations within the school
 - Amended papers e.g. enlarged font, coloured paper
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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
JCQ (2025)



What is the process for securing access arrangements?

How will the process start?

- Parents and carers should let the SENDCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important. You can contact our SENDCo and the SEND team at contactsend@kingsmeadow.org.uk
- The SEND team will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements. This typically takes place throughout Key Stage 3 in preparation for the start of Year 10.
- Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. It depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs alone, including a diagnosis, do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

What happens once an additional need has been highlighted?

- If a student has learning difficulties, the school's appointed assessor will conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements such as supervised rest breaks. 25% extra time is only granted when all other access arrangements have been trialled and exhausted.
- Specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. **They are not responsible for decisions about access arrangements.**
- The school will decide which access arrangements a student may need for their exams through teachers providing evidence to show that it is the young person's 'normal way of working', a sample of internal papers across a range of subjects and comments and observations. We record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.
- There are specific requirements for each individual access arrangement, some of which require formal assessment by a qualified assessor. Once the young person's normal way of working has been established, the school will, at the appropriate time, either submit the evidence to the assessor for further assessment or make an application to the JCQ.
- Should further assessment not support the suggested access arrangement, it is not possible for the school to grant anything different to what other students will have in any given exam.

Access Arrangement Information

Below is a summary of the current JCQ directives regarding access arrangements.

Supervised Rest Breaks

- These must always be exhausted before applying for extra time.
- These will be allowed where it is the candidate's normal way of working.
- Medical conditions – rest breaks can be agreed if you have a serious medical condition, examples of this are type 1 diabetes or a sensory need. Medical evidence is required. AD(H)D - if you have a diagnosis we will look at the recommendations and consider whether rest breaks will be helpful in exams. Evidence of your diagnosis is required.
- Evidence from CAMHs of current treatment for a condition that requires rest breaks. However, we do not accept evidence from this service if you have been discharged from treatment.

Please Note: We are not able or allowed to provide rest breaks in advance for anxiety/worry/ stress caused by taking exams. It is normal to feel stressed and worried about exams. Please feel reassured that our exam invigilators are experienced and trained to deal with students who are upset and worried on the day.

25% Extra Time

- These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.
- Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
- Candidates with 25% extra time normally sit their examinations in the hall (unless an additional arrangement is in place).

Candidates with learning difficulties- (Core evidence required)

- Candidates must have at least two below-average standardised scores of 84 or less in either;
 - Speed of reading
 - Speed of reading comprehension
 - Speed of writing
 - Cognitive processing measures.

Where a candidate has complex needs

- Evidence confirming the candidate's disability
 - A sample of internal tests showing the application of 25% extra time
 - comments and observations from teachers as to why candidates need 25% extra time, and how they use the 25% extra time awarded.
 - Evidence that supervised rest breaks have been trialled and exhausted.
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“It is important that SENCOs consider and, where appropriate, implement access arrangements that will prepare candidates for the workplace. 25% extra time may not always be the most appropriate arrangement. SENCOs should instead consider alternative arrangements, such as assistive technology, listening to music/white noise, supervised rest breaks or a timer.”

(JCQ 2025)

Prompter

- These do not need to be registered on Access Arrangements Online.
 - A prompter may be permitted where a candidate has a substantial and long term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating.
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Allocation of reader/computer reader

- These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.
 - Applications will be considered based on either an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
 - A reader will only be allowed if; language and vocabulary difficulties have a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidates' ability to access written text or there is a substantial and long term visual impairment which means the candidate cannot access Braille or enlarged print independently.
 - Where substantial impairment is evidenced the SENCO must be able to demonstrate the candidate would be at a considerable disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the exam.
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Allocation of Scribe

- These must be applied for and registered on Access Arrangements Online.
 - Applications will be considered based on either an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
 - If a word processor is the candidates' normal way of working within school then it should be used within examinations.
 - The use of a scribe must reflect the candidates' normal way of working within school.
 - A scribe should only be used where a candidate cannot use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled.
 - A scribe will only be allowed where; impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidates' writing or a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed.
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Word Processor

- If a candidate believes they should be using a word processor for their examinations and/or controlled assessments they must first speak with the SENDCo. The use of a laptop will only be granted to a student if it is appropriate to their needs and approved by the SENDCo.
- If the SENCo agrees that a word processor is acceptable for a candidate to use in their examinations and/or controlled assessments (as set out in Section 5.8 of the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments), they will inform the examinations officer and subject leader staff by email.
- The JCQ requirement and recommendation for candidates regarding the use of word processors in examinations and/or controlled assessments is that this is their **normal way of working**.
- A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a laptop at home.



Joint Council for Qualifications

It is important to note that the school is governed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and guidance regarding access arrangements.

We are inspected by the JCQ each year.

Parents & Carers can find the regulations and guidance here:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>

Malpractice

Failure to comply with JCQ regulations has the potential to constitute malpractice, which may impact on the candidate's results).

Candidates and parents/carers should also note that centres are required to report anyone who attempts to unfairly influence/place undue pressure upon a centre staff member. As this is deemed as an attempt to undermine the integrity of the examination/assessment, it is defined as malpractice and may lead to one of the following sanctions:

- Disqualification from the unit
- Disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications taken in that series or academic year
- Disqualification from the whole qualification
- Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series or academic year
- Barred from entering for examinations for a set period of time



Other Information

Young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- Although access arrangements themselves aren't special educational provision that can be secured through an EHC plan (because it is the exam awarding bodies that have the power to make an access arrangements, not the Local Authority) the usual way someone needs to be supported to work may be things that need to be thought about when specifying special educational needs and provision in an EHC plan. For example, there may be reference made to the young person to use technology to assist them with reading (such as reading pen or computer reader) or to write (such as the use of a laptop).
- Should you have concerns about your child accessing their learning and access adjustments are not specific within the EHC Plan, you should discuss this with our SEND team who will, if necessary, be able to submit evidence to the Local Authority at the point of the Annual Review. As a reminder, it is the Local Authority who have the power to amend provision within an EHC Plan, not the school.
- The EHC Plan can be provided by the school as evidence during the application process for exam access arrangements.

Who do I contact?

- You can discuss access to learning with any of your child's subject teachers if you think there is a specific difficulty in a particular subject.
- If you have an overarching concern that your child requires exam access arrangements, please contact our SEND team: Contactsend@kingsmeadow.org.uk