



Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy 25/26

Last reviewed: Feb 2026

Next review due: Feb 2027

We do things differently.....

H.E.R.E

High Standards
Empathy
Resilience
Emotional Response

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Aim of the Policy

At Arbour Academy, all pupils are either receiving SEN Support or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). As an alternative provision setting, Arbour Academy works closely with referring mainstream schools and external agencies to support pupils whose needs require additional or specialist provision.

Arbour Academy is committed to ensuring that every pupil has the right to learn and to access a curriculum that enables them to make progress and achieve positive outcomes. The academy operates a **whole-school approach** to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to ensuring equality of access to examinations and assessments.

This policy is written in line with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015)**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Education Act 1996**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (current edition)**

Principles

In line with JCQ regulations, Arbour Academy ensures that access arrangements:

- Are based on clear, robust and appropriate evidence
- Reflect the pupil's normal way of working
- Do not compromise the integrity of the assessment
- Ensure pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled peers

Evidence Used to Determine Access Arrangements

All decisions regarding access arrangements are based on a range of evidence, including:

- Evidence of a graduated response and history of need from the pupil's mainstream school prior to admission, where available
- Baseline assessments completed on entry to Arbour Academy
- Ongoing monitoring and professional judgement of teaching and support staff
- Evidence that the requested access arrangement reflects the pupil's normal way of working
- Specialist assessment carried out by a suitably qualified assessor who meets JCQ requirements and undertakes regular update training

All supporting evidence is retained by the academy and is available for inspection.

The Academy Will

- Provide evidence of the nature and extent of a disability, difficulty or impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect
- Provide evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant, including:
 - History of need from mainstream schools
 - Assessment data
 - Intervention records
- Demonstrate how the difficulty impacts teaching and learning within the classroom
- Confirm that any access arrangement reflects the pupil's normal way of working, evidenced through:
 - Classroom practice
 - Intervention sessions
 - Literacy and numeracy support
 - Internal assessments and mock examinations

As subject demands vary, pupils may require support in one or more subjects. Decisions are made on an individual basis.

Where an access arrangement is not routinely used, it will not be approved for external examinations. The only exception to this is where arrangements are required as a result of a temporary illness or injury.

External Evidence

Supporting evidence may include documentation from:

- CAMHS
- HCPC-registered psychologists
- Medical consultants or psychiatrists
- Speech and Language Therapists (SALT)
- Local Authority specialist services
- Occupational Therapists
- A current EHCP confirming the pupil's need

Assessment and Identification Process

The following procedure is followed for all pupils:

- Baseline assessments are completed on entry, including:
 - Cognitive ability assessments
 - Reading and spelling assessments
 - Progress tests
 - Screening for dyslexia, dyscalculia and speech and language needs
- Standardised scores are used as part of a wider body of evidence and do not, in isolation, determine eligibility for access arrangements
- Pupils presenting with indicators of need are monitored by the SENCO in consultation with teaching staff
- Where appropriate, further specialist assessment is undertaken
- Applications for access arrangements are made via Access Arrangements Online (AAO) in Years 9, 10 or 11, as appropriate

The SENCO, Exams Officer and teaching staff work collaboratively to ensure arrangements are implemented consistently across internal assessments and external examinations.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

An access arrangement is a provision or type of support approved by an awarding body to ensure that a candidate with a disability or learning difficulty is not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes made to remove or reduce disadvantage for a disabled candidate. Adjustments may be unique to the individual and may not always be listed as standard access arrangements.

Definition of Disability

As defined by Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

A candidate has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them, as defined in the Education Act 1996.

Appendix 2: Access Arrangements Available

All access arrangements at Arbour Academy are awarded in line with JCQ regulations and must reflect the candidate's normal way of working. Arrangements are supported by appropriate evidence and approved through Access Arrangements Online (AAO) where required.

Scribe

What is it?

A trained adult writes exactly what the candidate dictates.

Criteria

A scribe may be approved where a candidate has a physical disability or impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on writing, for example where writing is:

- Illegible and likely to impede communication of responses; and/or
- Too slow to allow completion of the examination within the allotted time.

Evidence may include assessment of handwriting speed, alongside a clear history of need and confirmation that use of a scribe reflects the candidate's normal way of working.

Reader / Computer Reader

What is it?

A trained adult or computer-based system reads examination questions and relevant text to the candidate.

Criteria

A reader may be approved where:

- The candidate has a disability that results in persistent and significant reading difficulties; and
- There is a clear and evidenced need for the arrangement.

Readers may be approved for candidates with:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction need
- Medical conditions
- Sensory or physical needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

Prompter

What is it?

A trained adult provides limited prompts to refocus the candidate, indicate time remaining or move the candidate on to the next question.

Criteria

A prompter may be approved where a candidate:

- Persistently loses focus or awareness of time; and/or
- Has a diagnosed condition such as OCD or autism spectrum disorder which significantly affects task completion.

Read Aloud

What is it?

The candidate reads the examination text aloud to themselves.

Criteria

This arrangement may be used where a candidate:

- Struggles to process text silently; and
- Does not meet the criteria for a reader.

The arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working. Candidates reading aloud must be accommodated separately.

Separate Room

What is it?

The candidate sits the examination in a separate room with appropriate supervision.

Criteria

This may be approved where:

- The candidate's difficulties are well established within the centre; and
- Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working due to a long-term medical condition or social, emotional and mental health needs.

Modified Papers

What is it?

Examination papers modified to meet a candidate's specific needs.

Criteria

Modified papers may be ordered where other access arrangements are unsuitable. Papers must be ordered in advance of the examination series via Access Arrangements Online and only where the centre intends to enter the candidate for that series.

Supervised Rest Breaks

What is it?

Short, supervised breaks during the examination. Time stopped is added to the finish time. Examination materials must not be accessed during breaks.

Criteria

Supervised rest breaks may be approved where:

- The candidate has a disability resulting in persistent and significant difficulties; and
- The arrangement reflects the candidate's normal way of working.

This may apply to candidates with:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- Medical conditions
- Sensory or physical needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

Extra Time

What is it?

Additional time (normally 25%) added to the examination duration.

Criteria

Extra time may be approved where assessment evidence and a clear history of need demonstrate that a candidate's speed of processing or working is substantially affected.

Standardised scores are considered as part of a wider body of evidence and do not, in isolation, determine eligibility. In exceptional cases, more than 25% extra time may be approved where a very substantial impairment is evidenced.

Decisions are made by the SENCO and/or suitably qualified assessor, in line with JCQ guidance.

Alternative Site

What is it?

The candidate sits the examination at a residential address or hospital (a non-registered centre).

Criteria

This may be approved where:

- A medical condition or serious social, emotional and mental health need prevents attendance at the centre; or
- A temporary illness or injury occurs at the time of the examination.

The Head of Centre must be satisfied that the candidate is fit to sit the examination, and written evidence must be available for inspection.

Other Arrangements

Examples include:

- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates with colour blindness
- Coloured overlays or reading rulers

These may be approved where the candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage and the adjustment is reasonable in all the circumstances.

Special Consideration

Special consideration is a **post-examination adjustment** applied where a candidate has been affected by temporary illness, injury or other circumstances beyond their control at the time of assessment.

Special consideration:

- Cannot remove the difficulty faced
- Results only in a small adjustment to marks
- Must not compromise qualification standards

Applications are made in line with **JCQ guidance**.

Principles of Granting Special Consideration

Special consideration may be granted where pupils:

- Have completed the required guided learning hours
- Were fully prepared for the assessment
- Experienced adverse circumstances beyond their control

All decisions ensure fairness, reliability and comparability of assessment outcomes.

Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute malpractice and could result in disqualification.

Special consideration should only be applied in cases of serious indisposition.