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# **The Netherhall School & Oakes College**

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## **EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

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## **Rationale**

This Examination Access Arrangements Guidance Document details the actions taken to ensure inclusive access to examinations and assessment at The Netherhall School and Oakes College. This includes those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The guidance aims to support the Netherhall philosophy of Inspiring, Individual and Inclusive. This guidance document works alongside the Joint Council for Qualifications 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' document and the most recent is available at <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

## **Definitions**

### **Disability**

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a '*physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities*'. Long term is defined as '*lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months*'.

### **Special Educational Needs**

A candidate has "special educational needs" as defined in the SEND code of practice (2015). Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The Equality Act 2010 definition of 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. 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.

## **What are Access Arrangements?**

Access arrangements must be agreed before any assessment takes place. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. They must also demonstrate a candidate's 'normal way of working' within the centre.

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 at Netherhall**

Netherhall aims to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial SEND which fall into the following four categories as identified within the SEN Code of Practice (2014):

1. Communication and interaction.
2. Cognition and learning.
3. Social, emotional and mental health
4. Sensory and/ or physical needs.

We will do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ guidelines). We believe it is important to abide by the JCQ

regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling and into post-16 provision.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school. Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate. Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.'

## **Types of Access Arrangement**

There are several different types of Access Arrangement;

### **Online Applications through JCO Access Arrangements Online**

- Extra time – 25%
- Extra time over 25%+
- Computer reader / reader
- Scribe / speech recognition technology
- Bilingual dictionary with 10% extra time (solely for those qualifications listed within Chapter 5, paragraph 5.18.2)
- Practical Assistant

### **Centre delegated**

- Supervised rest breaks
- Read aloud
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Separate invigilation within the centre
- Bilingual dictionaries
- Separate room (higher level of evidence in 'exceptional' circumstances)
- Small room
- Amplification equipment
- Braille transcript
- Braille
- Closed circuit television (CCTV)
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlay
- Communication professional (for candidates using sign language)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- OCR Scanners

	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCRIBE</b> <i>Online application</i></p>	<p>A scribe is a responsible adult who, in non-examination assessments and/or in an examination but not in a Speaking Test, writes or types a candidate's dictated answers to the questions.</p>	<p>Student has a physical disability;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where her/his writing:- is illegible and may hinder their ability to be understood.</li> <li>• Speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allocated time.</li> </ul> <p>In MFL, the student must dictate every word in the target language and must do so letter by letter.</p>
	<p><i>Scribes must write exactly what is said to them in such cases, including spelling and punctuation. In any exams that include marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar, a student would score 0 for any such marks.</i></p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READER</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>A reader is a responsible adult who reads the instructions of the question paper and the questions to the candidate. This may involve reading the whole paper to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read.</p>	<p>The candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant reading difficulties. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cognition and learning needs;</li> <li>• communication and interaction needs;</li> <li>• a medical condition;</li> <li>• sensory and physical needs;</li> <li>• social, emotional and mental health needs.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>A reader can read instructions and questions to the student; read the whole paper if necessary or the student may prefer to just ask for some specific words to be read to them.</i></p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>READER PEN</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>A reader pen is a piece of technology which enables the reading of the text put out with an English human-like voice.</p>	<p>The use of an examination reading pen, provided by the centre, might benefit those candidates who wish to work independently. It may increase the independence of candidates who needed a reader for accuracy rather than comprehension.</p> <p>The use of an examination reading pen might also benefit those candidates who only require occasional words or phrases to be read to them.</p>

	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>SMALL ROOM</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>A student with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Students who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a smaller room.</p> <p>Medical evidence must be provided in advance to support this arrangement and then be approved by the SENCo.</p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>SEPARATE ROOM</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>Medical conditions such as acute hearing that necessitates the need for silence would justify a separate room. Medical or teacher evidence must be provided in advance to support this arrangement and then be approved by the SENCo.</p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>MODIFIED PAPER</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>Individually prepared papers for candidates. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper.</p>	<p>Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable</p>
	<p><i>Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series.</i></p> <p><i>Centres must not order papers for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series.</i></p> <p><b>Access arrangements online allows centres to place orders for GCSE and GCE modified papers.</b></p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>WORD PROCESSOR</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>Access to a laptop for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled, and a special exam account would be used with no internet access.</p>	<p>The provision to use a laptop is put in place to address an underlying difficulty such as: Speed of handwriting; medical condition; physical disability; sensory impairment; planning and organisational difficulties or poor legibility.</p>
	<p><i>The use of a laptop in exams reflects the student's normal way of working at the school and has been agreed as appropriate to the student's needs. The use of a laptop cannot be granted to a student simply because this is their preferred way of working. Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to their needs. For example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. (This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)</i></p>	

	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>REST BREAKS</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.</p>	<p>A student has a physical disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time.</p>
	<p><i>This is now the recommended option from the exam boards before considering extra time.</i></p> <p><b>Rest breaks are not included in any Extra Time allowance that the student may have.</b></p> <p><b>The amount of time awarded is granted at the discretion of the SENCo.</b></p>	
	What is it?	Criteria
<p><b>EXTRA TIME</b> <i>Online application</i></p>	<p>Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the Designated Specialist Teacher or Teaching Assistant.</p> <p><b>Extra time between 26 and 50% can be granted in extraordinary circumstances.</b></p>	<p>Students will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing. A standardised score of 84 or below (100 being average) can qualify for extra time.</p> <p><b>In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.</b></p>
	<p><i>There are cases where students get a score of more than 84. In these cases more evidence is needed to prove that a student should receive extra time. This could be in the form of an extensive history of need, formal diagnosis of a significant learning difficulty, or evidence of a substantial long term adverse effect on the performance of a child's speed of working.</i></p> <p><b>The amount of time that students should receive is decided by the Specialist Assessor and based upon their processing speeds.</b></p>	

	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BILINGUAL DICTIONARY</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>Only to be used by student's whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh. <b>The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/ revision is enclosed or written inside.</b></p>	<p>Should reflect the student's normal way of working.</p>
	<p>Such dictionaries must not be used in English Language, Irish Language or Welsh Language examinations or Modern Foreign Language examinations testing one of the languages of the dictionary or a similar language, for example, a Portuguese dictionary in a Spanish examination. The use of a bilingual translation dictionary.</p>	

	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALTERNATIVE SITE</b> <i>Centre delegated</i></p>	<p>The candidate will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking examinations in the centre; or</li> <li>• Social, Mental and Emotional Needs.</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; or</li> <li>• A temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination(s).</li> </ul>
	<p>The centre must be satisfied that the candidate is able to take examinations. The SENCo, or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities, must produce written evidence confirming the need for an alternative site arrangement to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request.</p>	



	What is it?	Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OTHER ARRANGEMENTS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplification equipment</li> <li>• Brailers</li> <li>• Closed circuit television (CCTV)</li> <li>• Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind</li> <li>• Coloured Overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers)</li> <li>• Low vision aid/magnifier</li> <li>• Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners</li> <li>• Separate invigilation within the centre</li> </ul>	<p>Centres must note that candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement.</p>
	<p>In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.</p>	

	What is it?	Criteria
<b>OTHER RARELY APPLIED FOR ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Live Speaker</li> <li>• Practical Assistant</li> <li>• Exemption</li> <li>• Communication Professional</li> <li>• Language Modifier</li> <li>• Speech Recognition Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other AA arrangements that could be applied for online or centre delegated but in very rare cases. Please see JCQ for guidelines for these at <a href="https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance">https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance</a></b></p>

## When might students need to be given Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (AA) 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 is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam.

## What evidence is needed to apply for AA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for AA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from Specialist Assessor or Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Previous AA from Primary Schools/ 11-16 schools and other Education Providers\*
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate, including samples of internal school tests and papers and class work
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests

\* Please note that only an original, hand-signed Form 8 can be accepted as evidence for Access Arrangements for GCE students transferring from GCSE from CAP schools.

### Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCo as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or AA. Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money. This therefore means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is '**either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place**'. Often private educational psychologists, recommend that children should receive AA which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Assessor) recommends and can also be in conflict with the current JCQ regulations.

As a centre we request that if parents wish to undertake a private assessment that they contact the SENCO in the first instance to establish whether such a report can be used for access arrangements purposes.

We will also look for evidence of a history of need. This will be from subject teachers and previous education institutions.

### Medical letters

Medical letters can help to provide evidence of need for a student, but a note from a medical professional does not mean an automatic entitlement to AA. As with private Educational Psychologist reports, medical notes often provide recommendations to schools that are in conflict with the JCQ regulations. However, we will also require further evidence of need.

## **Procedures**

How students would be identified for Exam Access Arrangements:

- They would have had AA at KS2 for their SAT's
- They received AA for GCSE exams and have commenced in the Sixth Form
- From baseline testing completed in Key Stage 3
- Parental Referral
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from previous schools

### **KS2 SAT AA**

Students who have AA at KS2 will be screened for AA at KS3 for KS4. Although they may have received AA at KS2, it doesn't necessarily mean that they automatically receive it in secondary school because their needs may have changed.

### **Baseline Testing in Year 7**

All students in Year 7 are tested for Reading and Spelling in Years 7, 8 and 9. These tests can help identify learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The SENCo will contact parents where this is the case, do further testing, and if necessary, put appropriate interventions into place.

### **Parent Referral**

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by contacting the student's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

### **Teacher Referral**

As with Parent Referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENCo where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. Some 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 for AA. Where a teacher thinks that a student requires extra time, they are asked to get the student to change the colour of the pen that they are using once the allotted time is up and continue writing until they are finished. This is then used as proof to JCQ and the exam boards of a history of need. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCo initially if they feel that a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting parents about their concerns. The SENCo will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

## **How do staff and parents know whether a student has Access Arrangements?**

Teaching and support staff can access the list on the Data System and SIMS. It is updated whenever students become entitled to it. The information about results of assessments for AA are kept confidentially in line with school policy, are shared on a need to know basis.

Staff can visit the Data System and go to **Student Lists > Student Groups > Acc. Arr** to see a list of all students with Access Arrangements.

Access Arrangements are also listed on an individual's summary page and in the SEN/D tab of the individual.

Staff can also check on students with Access Arrangements in class lists on the register. Students with Access Arrangements will have the following symbol:



Parents will be informed of any tests results via a letter home which states what they are entitled to, why and when.

## **How are Access Arrangements applied for?**

Access Arrangements last for approximately 26 months. Therefore, students are tested during the first term of Year 10/Year 12 as the AA would then be in place for GCSE examinations. Similarly, testing of Sixth Form students would ensure that the AA would be in place for the duration of their courses. Should a late application be proposed the school/college will require compelling evidence.

There are two main methods for applying for Access Arrangements – through testing by a Specialist Assessor or through a Centre File record.

### **Specialist Assessment**

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 an 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.

The SENCo will work with a Specialist Assessor to complete the JCQ 'Form 8'. Section A is completed by the SENCo, in conjunction with school staff, prior to testing. Section C is where the Assessor would list test scores following Assessment and the identified Access Arrangements are listed in Section B of Form 8.

The Specialist Assessor will assess students using a variety of nationally recognised tests which could include:

- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIATT II)
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)
- British Picture Vocabulary Scales (BPVS)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP)
- Phonological Assessment Battery

The tests that the Specialist Assessor uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice. The test that the Specialist Assessor uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further AA, the Specialist Assessor will arrange this. Following a report produced by the Specialist Assessor an application is made to the Exam Boards for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s.

Students are tested formally in October/November of Year 10 so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 10 and 11.

### **Centre File Note**

A Centre file note is a method that does not require Specialist Assessment or a Form 8. Centre File notes need to evidence clearly the need of the student and evidence that it is a normal way of working for that student. A Centre File note must demonstrate 'a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability' and a 'persistent and significant difficulty'. Evidence must be obtained from teaching staff for this.

Centre File notes are occasionally used in determining Access Arrangements.

## **What support is given to students with AA?**

Students with EAA are encouraged to use their AA during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using it 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. Students with extra time are given sessions with a teaching assistant on how to use the additional time allowance effectively. They then need to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal exams and assessments.

The Inclusion faculty are happy to host students with AA for internal school tests so that the students can use their arrangements. We request at least two weeks' notice so that support can be provided for students who require it during the tests/exams.

## **What are the procedures for processing an application?**

Once any tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the Assessor for AA, the SENCo, in conjunction with the Exams officer then applies to the exam boards through the JCQ online application. The feedback is instant and at this point the AA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed of the AA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, health & Care Plans (EHCP)

Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

## **Deadlines for submitting applications**

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE, GCE and L2/L3 courses qualifications must be processed using access arrangements online as **early as possible**. Arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or controlled assessment/coursework as per the deadlines in the 'JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' document.

**The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist teacher access arrangements report. The final decision on whether to apply for Access Arrangements is determined by the SENCo, in conjunction with the Principal and Director of Sixth Form.**

R. Glennon-Lynch, SENCO  
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