



# **Exam Special Consideration, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Procedure**

**School Name:** Birch Wood School

**Policy owner:** Philip Leaney

**Date Ratified by Chair of Governors:** 2016

**Reviewed:** September 2025

**Rationale:**

The Reasonable Adjustments, Access Arrangements and Special Considerations Procedure explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion for students at Birch Wood School who all have a Statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

This forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student may fulfil their full potential.

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.

It is the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team, the SENCo/assessor(s) and where relevant the SEN Governor to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of this document. The SENCo fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within their centre. Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENCo in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.

The SENCo must work with teaching staff, support staff (such as Learning Support Assistants) and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

Where appropriate, the SENCo will also need to work with specialist advisory teachers and medical professionals.

The SENCo must work with the in-house designated assessor to assess candidates, process applications on-line and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE qualifications.

**Reasonable Adjustment:**

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in thin the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

**Special Consideration:**

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. This must be applied for at the time of the assessment.

**Access Arrangements:**

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'.

## 1. What are our exam access arrangements?

A provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in a national/ public exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. This can be in the form of (but not limited to):

- a. A scribe: a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write exactly what they say.
- b. A reader: a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves.
- c. ICT: access to a computer (word processor) 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. In some exceptional circumstances students may be entitled to use a spell check enabled computer.
- d. Extra time: all Birch Wood students are entitled to an allowance of up to 25% and depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated person responsible for Access Arrangements, in exceptional circumstances some students may be entitled to an allowance up to 50%.
- e. Rest breaks: where 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.
- f. Prompter: where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

The person appointed to facilitate an access arrangement (see list above) **must not** normally be the candidate's own subject teacher or Learning Support Assistant. Where this cannot be avoided a separate invigilator **must always** be present (4.2.10 Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustments section 4)

## **2. When might students need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?**

### **a. Scribe**

Where there is a disability; where their writing:-

- Is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood
- speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time

### **b. Reader**

Where there is a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by Specialist Teacher (100 is the average).

### **c. ICT**

Where there is a disability; their writing would be:-

- illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood
- speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time

### **d. Extra Time**

Where a student's ability to process information is slower than average

### **e. Rest Breaks**

Where a student has a disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time. This is now the recommended option from the exam boards before considering extra time.

### **f. Prompter**

For a student who loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time.

### **g. Alternative Rooming Arrangement**

For 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 separate room. Students with a social, emotional and mental health needs.

## **3. The Roles of the Exams Officer and the Designated Person Responsible for Access Arrangements**

- Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of each subject teacher.
- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the designated person responsible for Access Arrangements.
- Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.
- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Exams Officer.
- When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved for GCSE qualifications the evidence of need (where required) must be made available by the SENCo to a JCQ Centre

Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically he/ she must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection.

## **6. Internal subject specific tests**

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 a 'normal way of working.'

To allow all students with an additional learning needs equality of access to internal subject tests and exams the following reasonable adjustments are followed:

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that all students in their subject areas have full equality of access to all internal tests and mock exams.

Where and when appropriate, the Exams Officer can provide a separate room, access to ICT, a reader and a scribe with the required amount of notice. In the case of extra time, subject teachers, where ever possible, should ensure students who need extra time are able to do this in the normal learning environment. This will require other students to remain quiet, whilst the student completes the test in exam conditions.

When this is not possible, the teacher should make arrangements with the Exams Officer for the student to complete the test in another appropriate area.

Subject staff are asked to liaise with the Exams Officer at least two weeks prior to an internal tests/mock exam so that appropriate support can be provided for students who require it during class tests/assessments/exams.