



Exams – Access Arrangements Policy 2022/23

Written By	Helen Whalley & Rhian Davies
Effective Date	October 2022
Due for Review	October 2023
Approved and Signed by:	
Chair of Committee	
Headteacher (Head of Centre)	

Access Arrangements Policy – Key Staff

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Joe Barker
SLT – Exams	Rhian Davies
SENCo	Nuala Burke
Specialist Assessor	Jonathan Hesketh
Medical Needs Officer	Kirstie Power
Exams Team	Helen Whalley
Deputy Exams Team	Jennita Residu

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Marple Hall School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is “leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements”.

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)], further referred to in this policy as [GR²](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate’s e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, further referred to in this policy as [AA¹](#)

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA¹](#) (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a candidate with special educational needs and disabilities preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a these candidate.

The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA¹ 7.3](#).

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA¹](#) by the SENCo on behalf of the Head of Centre. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The Head of Centre is responsible for checking the Specialist Assessors qualifications, to ensure that they meet the requirements as defined by JCQ. Copy certificates are obtained from the assessor, checked and held on file by the SENCo, ready for inspection.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The appointment of the assessor will be recorded on JCQ Access Arrangements Online portal. The portal will be regularly updated with relevant staffing changes by the SENCo, and any staff that have left the centre removed from AAO records in a timely manner.

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Marple Hall School confirms that:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed
- Candidates will be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor. Assessors will personally conduct the assessments, they will not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.
- The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.
- The SENCo will consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate ourselves, should be instigated

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Marple Hall School confirms that:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the centre and assessor will develop background information to evidence that a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8

- All candidates will be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8
- The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to [AA¹](#), (chapter 8) **Processing applications for access arrangements** and (chapter 6) **Modified papers**)

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used. Applications will be processed by the appointed assessor before the published deadlines for each examination season.

For non-JCQ member awarding bodies the relevant tools provided by each awarding body will be used to submit the access arrangement application. In Marple Hall School for the academic year 2022/23, the relevant non-JCQ awarding bodies are:

- NCFE (applied for using NCFE Portal)
- Pearson BTEC (applied for using PAAO)
- RSL Awards (applied for using RSL Cloud)

Applications for non-JCQ member awarding bodies will be processed by the appointed assessor before the published deadlines for each relevant body and examination season.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by the SENCo and/or the appointed assessor, who will hold on file, where required, appropriate evidence to support their decision.

Appeals against the centre's decision not to support a request for access arrangements

If the candidate (or their parent/carer) believes there are grounds to appeal against the centre's decision not to support a request for access arrangements, an internal appeal can be submitted to the centre by completing a **Centre Decision Appeal Form** within 3 working days of receiving the original decision.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Modified Papers Policy

A decision on awarding a candidate with modified papers will be taken by the SENCo or the appointed assessor. Evidence of need, where required, will be made available to JCQ Centre Inspector or an awarding body, on request.

Modified papers are ordered using AAO (or the appropriate alternative portal for non-JCQ member awarding bodies). The candidate will have had appropriate opportunities to practice using modified papers before their first examination.

Modified papers will be ordered in advance of the relevant examination series and in accordance with the published deadlines for the series concerned. Modified papers will be ordered by the Exams Team.

Where coloured papers are required, and these cannot be ordered in advance from the awarding body, the centre will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the awarding body's published starting time for the examination (ICE³ 5.4)

Separate Invigilation Policy

AA¹ 5.16 defines separate invigilation as "*sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates*"

The following types of separate invigilation venues are available at Marple Hall School:

- Computer room
- Small venue
- Individual room

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; **and**
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA¹ 5.16)

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Marple Hall School comply with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties

- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a candidate with disabilities and learning difficulties
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis
- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/coursework)
- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - in the classroom (where appropriate); or
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
 - literacy support lessons; or
 - literacy intervention strategies; and/or
 - in internal school tests and examinations
 - trial/mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

Temporary Word Processor Access Arrangement Due to Injury

If a candidate sustains an injury before an exam that affects their ability to write, the SENCO/Access Arrangement assessor will discuss the injury with the candidate. If appropriate they will be offered the use of a Word Processor to encourage their independence, or where this isn't a suitable solution, a Scribe.

If a Word Processing arrangement is agreed the Exams Team will be notified to facilitate the re-seating of the candidate to an IT Suite, and a request for a temporary User Account will be submitted to Network Support.

There is not a requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online where a candidate is using a Word Processor on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.

The Use of a Word Processor

Marple Hall School complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text deactivated (switched off)
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it 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)
- (The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)
- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification
- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen
- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because the candidate prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because the candidate uses a laptop at home

Student Referrals to SENCO

Marple Hall School teachers will refer candidates to the SENCO who they have identified as having difficulties with handwriting speed or legibility issues. Initially candidates can receive guidance on improving handwriting where appropriate and then if required they can be screened using the DASH (Detailed Assessment of Handwriting) test. The results of this would determine whether a word processor was an appropriate access arrangement for the individual, based on the speed and legibility of their handwriting.

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. This is not an exhaustive list, however candidates with the following may benefit from the use of a word processor:

- a learning difficulty 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 organisation problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting

Word Processors and Their Programmes

Marple Hall School complies with ICE³ 14.25 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring that a word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- 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), 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 speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops and tablets

Marple Hall School further complies with ICE³ 14.25 instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination

- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

Marple Hall School Word Processing Examination Procedures

Marple Hall School adopts the following procedures when providing word processing facilities to candidates:

- Candidates are provided with a User Account that is used for examinations only
- The User Accounts are activated at the start of an exam season and deactivated at the end
- Passwords are stored confidentially and are never shared with the candidate
- Passwords are changed/reset by Network Support at the start of each external exam season
- The Exams Team or Invigilator logs the candidate on to the desktop using their User ID and password
- Candidates are provided with instructions reminding them that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- Candidates are present at the end of the exam when their work is printed, and the candidate and invigilator sign the work to confirm that it is their work and it is a complete record
- Work is saved on the local area network under the candidate's exam User Account, and is then moved to a secure Archive area as soon as the exam has finished, to restrict any further access to the exam paper by the candidate at a later date

Accommodating Word Processors in Examinations

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Where possible candidates use desktops rather than laptops, in IT Suites
- If laptops are used they are always connected to a mains power supply

- Candidates work is always saved on the local area network rather than portable drives
- Desktops are linked to printers to enable candidates to print and confirm their own work
- If laptops are used the Exams Manager will print the candidates work, and provide it to them for them to sign and provide their confirmation

The criteria Marple Hall School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

Awarding word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where the candidate has a firmly established need, it reflects their normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty 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

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by Network Support in liaison with the SENCo and the Exams Team. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with sections 6 and 7 of [ICE³](#).

Electronic Health Monitoring Equipment

The centre manages and administers the use of electronic health monitoring equipment in examinations and assessments, where required by candidates, as follows:

- Candidates are permitted to use necessary electronic health monitoring equipment in order to remove barriers for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties which prevent

them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties

- The use of electronic monitoring equipment is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a candidate with disabilities and learning difficulties
- The use of electronic health monitoring equipment is normally considered and agreed, where appropriate, at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate

The only exceptions to the above would be a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

At the time of writing, the only approved health monitoring equipment systems are G6 Dexcom and Libra, and their accompanying Smart device for diabetic candidates.

Assessing and Implementing the Use of a Smart Device for Medical Alerts

The process for identifying and implementing electronic health monitoring equipment is:

- The Medical Needs Officer will confirm the name(s) of candidates using the relevant equipment to the Exams Team as soon as this information becomes available
- The candidate will be referred to the Specialist Assessor for completion of an Individual Policy for Use of Diabetic Monitoring Equipment
- The Specialist Assessor will confirm completion of the Individual Policy to the Exams Team and the relevant candidate Special Arrangement field in SIMS Exams Organiser will be updated accordingly
- The candidate, and their specific needs, will be clearly identified to Invigilators on Seating Plans and Special Arrangements reports
- During examinations and assessments, candidates with an approved device will have a clearly labelled mobile phone placed on a separate desk monitored by the Invigilator
- All cellular connectivity will be disabled, along with Wifi, the only active connections will be Bluetooth to the candidate's device
- Notifications for all other apps will be turned off, except for the identified monitoring app
- The only time a candidate will need to look at their mobile phone will be if an alert sounds to warn the candidate to a high or low reading of their diabetes
- Candidates will be seated close to the desk containing their device so that they can hear the alert as well as the Invigilator
- If an alert occurs, or if a candidate with an approved device feels unwell during the examination, an Invigilator will escort them from the exam room and allow the candidate, under direct supervision, to check their monitoring device to see if they require treatment for hypo or hyper glycaemia

- Should treatment be necessary, the candidate will be escorted to the Medical Needs Officer by the Invigilator

1 https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AA_regs_22-23_FINAL.pdf

2 https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Gen_regs_approved_centres_22-23_FINAL-1.pdf

3 https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ICE_22-23_Oct22_FINAL.pdf

Appendix One



Individual Policy for use of Diabetic Monitoring Device



This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and guidance of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

Approved/reviewed by:

Date of next review:



Smart Device for Medical Alerts



Students with Diabetes and a G6 Dexcom device will have clearly labelled mobile phones placed on the Invigilators Desk. All Cellular Connectivity will be disabled along with Wifi, the only active connections will be Bluetooth to students G6 Dexcom device.



Notifications for other apps will be turned off apart from Dexcom, the only time a student will need to look at their phone will be if it vibrates to alert them to a high or a low.



Students will be seated close to the Invigilators Desk so they can hear the Alert as well as the invigilator. If an alert occurs students are to move outside the exam setting with an invigilator to allow them under direct supervision to see if they needed to treat hypo or hyper glycaemia.



If a student with G6 Dexcom feels unwell during an Exam they will inform the invigilator who will then move outside the exam setting with them to see if they need to treat hyper or hypo glycaemia.

Healthy School



Student Agreement to Policy



Name

Signed

Date



SENDCo Agreement to Policy

Name: Nuala Burke



Signed

Date

Our Community — Our Future

A place of excellence where learners are proud of their school and confident of success

Headteacher
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Appendix Two

Centre Decision Appeals Form

FOR CENTRE USE ONLY	
Date received	
Reference No.	

Please tick the box to indicate the nature of your appeal and complete all boxes on the form below

- Special Consideration
- Exam Access Arrangements

Candidate name		Date of birth	
Awarding body		Unit code	
Qualification		Unit Title	

Please state the grounds for your appeal below:

(If necessary continue on an additional page if this form is being completed electronically or overleaf if hard copy being completed by hand)

Appellant Signature:

Date of Signature:

This form must be signed, dated and returned to the Exams Team, Data, Exams & Assessment office, Isherwood Building. Or submitted electronically to exams@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk