



## ST ALBANS GIRLS' SCHOOL

### Exam Access Arrangements Procedure

**GB sub-committee: Curriculum, Assessment & Standards Committee**

**Co-ordinator: Mrs M Maddison**

**Last Reviewed: Autumn 2023**

**Next Review: Autumn 2024**

**Signed by:**  
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**Claire Barnard**  
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### 1. RATIONALE

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the access arrangements process at St Albans Girls' School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations. References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

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| <b>1.1</b> | This procedure explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion for all students who are eligible for examination access arrangements. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with 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 particular 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'. |
| <b>1.2</b> | The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on institutions not to discriminate against students with learning difficulties/disabilities in terms of either admission to courses or provision of education and support services. Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of access arrangements are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification.  |
| <b>1.3</b> | The purpose of this policy is to confirm that STAGS has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangement process and is complying with its obligations to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements. (JCQ GR 5.4) as well as a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)   |

<b>2. AIMS</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<p>St Albans Girls' School will ensure that students identified as having a need are provided with and prepared for access arrangements that allow them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access the assessment at the same level as their peers</li> <li>● Demonstrate their knowledge/ skills without changing the demands of the assessment</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b>	<p>Access arrangements meet the particular needs of an individual disabled 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. Details of the types of Exam Access Arrangements and adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties are detailed in JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023 - 2024.</p>
<b>2.3</b>	<p>Access arrangements are agreed and planned for before an assessment and the arrangements put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in school. Candidates are given appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement/reasonable adjustment before his/her examination.</p>
<b>2.4</b>	<p>Access arrangements can also be provided in an emergency or as the need arises. Evidence of need for late diagnosis, late manifestation of an impairment or a temporary injury/impairment is identified, collated and processed and processed with applications made after the published deadline.</p>
<b>3. PROCEDURES</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Student Identification</b></p> <p>In order to qualify for an Access Arrangement a student must have a disability. According to the Equality Act 2010 a disability is 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'. The impairment must have lasted, or be likely to last, for 12 months or more. Access arrangements for examinations and controlled assessments will be planned and implemented where there is sufficient evidence that individual learners have a disability.</p> <p>Students are identified as having a possible need using;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Baseline testing completed at the start of Year 7</li> <li>● CATS Testing in Year 7</li> <li>● Information from Primary schools</li> <li>● Subject Teacher Referral</li> <li>● Parental referral</li> <li>● History of need</li> <li>● Specialist diagnostic testing that indicates a significant learning need,</li> <li>● Medical diagnosis requiring modifications to ensure equal access</li> <li>● Their normal way of day to day working</li> </ul> <p>Once students have been identified the Specialist Assessor is booked to conduct the assessment tests. The outcome of these results will determine the type of access arrangement awarded to the student. The student is added to the EAA Register. Teachers and support staff are notified and the Exam Team updates their Special Arrangement records in the Exams Management System. Access applications to the Exam Boards are</p>

	made by the SENCo and the Exam Officer prior to the start of the Public Exams and before the deadline for applications all files are checked by the SENCo and Exam Officer.
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b>Role of SENCO</b></p> <p>The SENCO will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure specialist diagnostic testing is implemented to identify and support need and provide appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement</li> <li>• Ensure that all candidates are assessed in the light of the picture of need, normal way of working and relevant background information</li> <li>• Ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate</li> <li>• Ensure the Specialist Assessor has up to date certification and that this is available for inspection</li> <li>• Enter the names of any specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate and not directly employed by STAGS into the Access Arrangement online portal</li> <li>• Complete a Form 8. Spreadsheets, email messages, centre devised Form 8's, educational psychologist reports and other reports are not acceptable for inspection purposes</li> <li>• Keep a record of evidence. A digital file for each candidate with access arrangements contains the downloaded approval for the respective arrangement(s), supporting specialist evidence of need (where required), a signed data protection notice, Form 8 or Form 8RF or Form 9 or Form BD25% and a data protection confirmation.</li> <li>• Inform students and parents of student need and access arrangements in place</li> <li>• Inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams</li> <li>• Train invigilators and support personnel with the Exams Officer</li> <li>• Ensure candidates have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b>	<p><b>Role of Examination Officer</b></p> <p>The Examinations Officer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee all examination procedures</li> <li>• Submit with the SENCO completed access arrangement applications via Access Arrangements Online (AAO) which is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP)</li> <li>• Ensure deadlines are met for submitting applications for approval for each examination series</li> <li>• Organise rooming for access arrangement candidates</li> <li>• Ensure Modified Papers are ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline (AA 6.1)</li> <li>• Organise and train invigilators and support personnel with the SENCo</li> <li>• Oversee support for access arrangement candidates as defined in the JCQ Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment regulations</li> </ul>
<b>3.4</b>	<p><b>Role of Teaching and Support Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that students entitled to Exam access arrangements are in place for students for all assessments.</li> <li>• Evidence must be kept of the use and benefit of the arrangements.</li> <li>• If necessary, subject teachers have the responsibility to alert the SEN and Exam departments in advance if they are needed to provide support for exams/assessments.</li> </ul>

<b>3.5</b>	<b>Evidence Necessary to Award Access Arrangements</b>
<b>3.5.1</b>	<p>In order for a centre to apply to an exam board for access arrangements the centre needs to provide:</p> <p><b>Exam Provision History</b> Evidence of students' normal day to day way of working and internal testing. The arrangements put in place must reflect the support given to candidate in the centre for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the classroom</li> <li>• Working in small groups for reading/and/or writing</li> <li>• Literacy support lessons</li> <li>• Literacy intervention strategies</li> <li>• In internal school tests/examinations</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, as required by the JCQ regulations and depending on need, STAGS may also need to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate Personal Data Consent Form, including confirmation of data protection completed by the SENCo prior to the processing of online application, which is retained for 26 months from the date of online approval.</li> <li>• Testing by a specialist external assessor (see 3.6.3)</li> <li>• Form 8 OR Medical Diagnosis</li> <li>• Notification from SENCO agreeing provision</li> <li>• Online Application to exam board</li> <li>• Signature of head of centre</li> </ul> <p>This may differ depending on the arrangements requested. An exam board may choose not to grant access arrangements, despite an application.</p>
<b>3.5.2</b>	<p>If a letter from a medical specialist is received requesting access arrangements for a student, JCQ regulations state that in order for such an access arrangement to be awarded the school has to have evidence that the student has historically received the extra support. The access arrangement should not 'suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations'. If the said student has shown no signs of requiring said support, and has successfully sat their exams independently it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement. The SENCo must ensure the candidate meets the current requirements outlined by JCQ.</p>
<b>3.5.3</b>	<p>JCQ regulations state that 'If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her then it is not his/her normal way of working. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.' Therefore, if a student does not use an AA in any of their examinations we will withdraw the access arrangement. If we continued with the AA we would be in breach of regulations which is considered malpractice.</p>
<b>3.5.4</b>	<p><b>Centre-Specific Criteria for Particular Access Arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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. The statement which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams is included in the Word Processing Procedure</li> <li>• Separate room/own room. Separate Invigilation reflects the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal tests and mock examinations. Nervousness,</li> </ul>

	<p>low level anxiety or being worried about exams are not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation at STAGS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who have medical support may need to be roomed in their own room. This must be a letter from a GP, psychologist or counsellor</li> <li>• Rest Breaks – The SENCo, on consultation with a student, awards the student an allocated amount of time per hour in an exam. Rest breaks can be awarded for movement breaks, static rest breaks or for anxiety. The student is informed of the amount of time they are allowed per hour</li> <li>• Prompter – some students require a prompt to remain focussed. Invigilators and candidates are clear about the procedures before the exams start</li> </ul>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Private Reports/Assessments Recommending Exam Access Arrangements</b>
<b>3.6.1</b>	JCQ specifies that normal way of working is priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student. Therefore, whilst we will accept private reports, we will not automatically award an AA based on it. It will trigger an internal investigation into the normal way of working for that student.
<b>3.6.2</b>	<p>As an exam centre we must ensure that no student is 'either given an unfair advantage or is disadvantaged' by any arrangements in place. We have our own internal specialist assessor. Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive exam access arrangements which can be in conflict with what the centre's Specialist Assessor recommends. As such we will not necessarily accept the recommendations of a Private Report/Assessment JCQ states 'Where a centre elects either to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the Head of Centre or a member of the Senior Leadership Team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes'. Therefore, Parents may request an independent assessment, however the Head of Centre may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report. Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.</p>
<b>3.6.3</b>	<p>Independent assessors must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo will complete a skeleton Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.</p> <p>Access arrangement assessments and any full diagnostic assessments conducted by the independent assessor, specialist advisor or appropriately qualified psychologist are recorded within Part 2 of Form 8.</p> <p>Also, the assessor must be a specialist teacher with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, or an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health &amp; Care Professions Council.</p> <p>OR hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7.</p> <p>The Head of Centre will check and obtain evidence of the assessor's qualifications at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate. A photocopy of the assessor's certificate of HCPC or SASC registration, is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4) for inspection purposes and presented to the JCQ Centre</p>

	<p>Inspector by the SENCo when requested.</p> <p>All Specialist Assessors must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;</li> <li>• be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a “reasonable adjustment”, but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate);</li> <li>• hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>3.7</b>	<p><b>External Private Candidates</b></p> <p>Any external candidates taking exams at the Centre must undertake the necessary steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate. This includes distance learners and home educated students. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process. The candidate must be assessed by the centre’s appointed assessor. In some instances, depending on his/her needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre.</p> <p>The centre will make the application to the Exam Boards and the candidate must sign the Data Protection Sheet</p>
<b>3.7.1</b>	<p>As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist</li> <li>• a letter from a hospital or consultant</li> <li>• a letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service</li> <li>• a letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service</li> <li>• a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist</li> </ul>
<b>4. MONITORING</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p>St Albans Girls’ School monitors and reviews its policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure that there is compliance.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p>All procedures will be monitored by the SENCO, Examinations Officer and Head of Centre. This Policy will be reviewed every year to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication <b>Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.</b></p>