



Derbyshire County Council

# Aldercar High School

## Aldercar High School Exam Access Arrangements

### **What are Exam Access Arrangements?**

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual disabled candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with specific needs such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. This may include readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

This document is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' – this document is updated every year and any changes will be reflected in this policy where appropriate.

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

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. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

### **Duty to make a reasonable adjustment**

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

### **Definition of disability**

Section 6 and Schedule 1 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'.

**Definition of special educational needs**

A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years 2015 if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

### **Access arrangements may include:**

1. Supervised rest breaks
2. Extra time of up to 25%
3. Extra time of up to 50%
4. Extra time of over 50%
5. Reader/Computer reader
6. Read aloud
7. Scribe/Voice Activated software
8. Word processor
9. Transcript
10. Prompter
11. Oral Language Modifier
12. Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components
13. Sign Language Interpreter
14. Practical Assistant
15. Alternative accommodation away from the centre
16. Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: amplification equipment; Braille; closed circuit TV; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind; Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.

In line with JCQ regulations, Aldercar High School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working at Aldercar High School – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement.

Appropriate evidence of need will be available at Aldercar High School for inspection.

### **Identifying the need for access arrangements within Aldercar High School**

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 and 5 are identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to quality first teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

#### **Wheelchair user**

The main exam rooms are on the ground floor, but should a candidate need access to upper floors we have a lift. There are also Evac chairs should we need to evacuate a wheelchair user from the upper floors.

#### **Use of crutches for broken leg or other lower limb complaint**

The main exam rooms are on the ground floor, but should a candidate need access to upper floors we have a lift. There are also Evac chairs should we need to evacuate a candidate from the upper floors.

**Generally feeling unwell**

The Centre may be able to arrange for the candidate to sit the exam in a room on their own (invigilation staff permitting) and candidates will be allowed rest breaks of up to 10 minutes at a time without penalty to the overall exam duration.

**Visual disability**

All exam rooms in the Centre are well lit. Candidates are permitted use of their coloured film overlays as required.

**Hearing disability**

Candidates may have the use of a live speaker for pre-recorded exam components, or a sign language interpreter. Candidates will be accommodated in a room on their own.

**Long term illness or disability**

Candidates with long term illness or a disability that makes travel to the Centre difficult **may** be allowed to sit their exams at home with permission from the individual Exam Boards.

**Learning disabilities**

Candidates within the Centre are assessed and permitted the use of a Scribe, Reader and/or Extra Time as recommended by the Centre's SENCo.

### **Assessment:**

- For those students potentially requiring access arrangements, formal assessment and application to JCQ is carried out in Year 9 and / or 10 and Year 12 as standard. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.
- Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent Access arrangements.
  - Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out at AHS by an appropriately qualified assessor. Specialist qualifications are checked by the school.
  - Parents may request an independent assessment. However, JCQ regulations state that “a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online”. Therefore, any external assessor must establish a relationship with the centre prior to undertaking any assessments.
  - At Aldercar High School examination officers, specialist assessors, SENCo and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.
  - If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement then access arrangements can be removed.
  - If the SENCo and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/careers.

### **Recording evidence of need**

During KS4 where there is evidence of the need for access arrangements for a pupil who will be taking Public Examinations in year 10 or 11, a pupil is assessed by one of the specialist assessors who will complete a JCQ Form. The Form 8 will be signed off by the SENCO.

### **Gathering evidence of normal way of working**

Evidence of the student's normal way of working is collected throughout their time at Aldercar High School. Teaching staff are encouraged to provide the SENCO with relevant copies of tests or classwork, and to email the SENCO with any further information.

A historical picture of the use of access arrangements for each pupil is collated. The SENCO will bear in mind the “normal way of working” as defined by JCQ:

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre\*, e.g.

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;

- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- internal tests and assessments
- mock examinations.

\*The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury.

## **Processing Applications for Access Arrangements**

### *Access Arrangements Online*

Access arrangements online is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

“For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Where the SENCO feels that a candidate is eligible to apply for access arrangements for Public Exams, she, or one of the specialist assessors, will liaise with the Exams Officer to make an online application via “Access Arrangements Online”.

Once an application is approved, a copy is kept on file by the SENCO.

Around 90% of online applications are approved, however it is inevitable that some individual needs will not be accommodated by a computer system, which cannot deal with every reasonable adjustment in specific case.

If an application is not approved, additional paperwork/evidence may be required to justify the request being made. In this situation the SENCO/specialist assessor will work together with the Exams Officer to ensure that the correct evidence is submitted to the relevant awarding body or bodies. The Exams Officer will be notified by the awarding body once an outcome has been decided. A printed copy of any such outcome is passed onto the SENCO/specialist assessor to be kept on file.

## **Centre Delegated Access Arrangements**

Some access arrangements can be “Centre-delegated” which means that an online application to JCQ is not required. Examples of such arrangements include supervised rest breaks, candidates who read aloud, use of a word processor, use of a prompter, use of a live speaker, coloured overlays and separate invigilation within the centre. The SENCO must be satisfied that there is a genuine need for the arrangement to be put in place. In addition the candidate's difficulties must be established within the school and thus known to staff, the SENCO and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

## **Word processors**

Approval of the use of a word processor will be granted following awarding body guidelines and 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.

For further details and explanation please see our separate Word Processor (Exams) statement.

## **Separate invigilation within the centre**

A decision as to whether an exam candidate may be given approval for separate invigilation within the centre will be based on whether the candidate

- ...has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Separate invigilation will reflect 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.

The only exception to this would be a temporary illness or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.

## **How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements?**

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded
- Students are informed verbally
- A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.