



The  
**Holy Spirit**  
Catholic Multi Academy

*'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.'*

# Access Arrangements Policy

This policy applies to St Thomas More Catholic Academy  
& Sixth Form College part of The Holy Spirit Catholic  
MAC

This Access Arrangements Policy has been approved and adopted by The Holy Spirit MAC on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Policy Ratified on: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Signed by the Chair of the  
Education Standards  
Committee

Signed by the Principal

Next Review: July 2022



This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by R.Carruthers/I Gaffney	
22.4.2021	
Date of next review	2.2.2022

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	<b>Imelda Gaffney</b>
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Dean Sherratt</b>
Head of centre	<b>Leearna Thomas</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Imelda Gaffney</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Imelda Gaffney</b>

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## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### 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'.

The Equality Act 2010\* requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ the needs of the disabled candidate;
- ✓ the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- ✓ the cost of the adjustment; and
- ✓ the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- ✓ involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- ✓ involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- ✓ affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

### Reasonable adjustments

#### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Thomas More 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.

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/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.

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.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

#### General principles

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, 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 his/her first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

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

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates...

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 AA 7.3.

### The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

The current assessor is Imelda Gaffney and her qualifications are:

Advanced Certificate in Special Education: SpLD (Dyslexia)

University of Birmingham 10/11/97

Approved Teacher Status: British Dyslexia Association

### 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 AA. 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/senior leadership team will have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* (GR 5.4)

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 any 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. (AA 7.3)

Make full reference to AA 7.3 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The appointment of the assessor will be reported as per JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*

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

The process followed in our centre for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties is as follows:

The need for a candidate to be considered for possible access arrangements is identified in a number of ways:

- ✓ Pupils who have an EHCP or considered to be receiving School Support
- ✓ Pupils with whom the SENCO and learning support team have worked closely since admission to the school and are aware of additional needs over a period of time
- ✓ Concerns raised by staff or other professionals
- ✓ Concerns raised by pupils or parents

The SENCO, who is also the assessor arranges for an assessment to be carried out and ensures that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*

(GR 5.4)

### Note

... SENCOs and assessors working within the centre should always carefully 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 themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

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

The SENCO will usually have been in a position to build a knowledge of the pupil's needs and their 'normal way of working' over a period of time, but if this is not the case, such as a pupil new to the school, the SENCO will liaise closely with teaching staff to compile a holistic picture.

The school would only accept a private candidate if the SENCO was confident that a clear picture of need was already established for the candidate e.g. a past pupil of the school

The school would follow the guidance below in such a situation:

**Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form**

**8. The SENCO and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.**

**An independent assessor 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.**

**All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.**

**An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCO. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCO. (AA 7.5)**

## **Processing access arrangements**

### **Arrangements requiring awarding body approval**

The SENCo keeps detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

The SENCo liaises with the examinations secretary and provides relevant documentation for inspection purposes.

### **Centre-delegated access arrangements**

The SENCO and examination secretary, together with relevant pastoral staff, decide on centre-delegated access arrangements such as enlarging of papers; printing onto coloured paper; invigilation in a separate area.

The SENCo ensures that the correct procedures are followed as per JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*

### **Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements**

#### **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.

The centre delegates to the SENCo the responsibility for making decisions relating to the use of a word processor in examinations. The SENCo will have regard to the existing knowledge about the candidate's normal way of working and have a holistic picture of the candidate's needs. The SENCo will ensure that correct procedures are followed for the use of a word processor as per JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (Leearna Thomas, Head of Centre)

#### **Separate Invigilation Policy**

A decision on whether an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo and relevant pastoral staff to whom the candidate is known well. It will be based on a knowledge of the candidate's particular issues and their normal way of working within the centre.

The SENCo ensures that the correct procedures are followed as per JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*