

	<b>Policy Name:</b> Access Arrangements Policy <b>Owner:</b> Director of Studies
	<b>Review Date:</b> September 2021 <b>Next Review:</b> September 2022 <b>Policy revised annually or as regulations or review demands.</b>

## Rationale

Our Access Arrangements policy explains the activity undertaken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all girls. The policy supports and facilitates Mayfield's aim to create a learning environment in which every girl can fulfil her full potential.

## Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Some are delegated to schools whereas others require prior approval by JCQ awarding body.

Access arrangements allow candidates with specific needs, such as SEN (special educational needs), disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments without changing the demands of the assessment. In this way, Awarding Bodies comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make "reasonable adjustments".

## Principles

As a Catholic School, it is important that every girl have the opportunity to fulfil her potential. The purpose of Access Arrangements is to meet the needs of individual girls without affecting the integrity of the assessment. The Head of Learning Support must ensure that the proposed access arrangements does not unduly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Candidates might not require the same arrangements in each specification. The Head of Learning Support should consider Access Arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis. As subjects and the methods of assessment vary, so the demands on the candidate will vary. e.g. extra time may not be appropriate in practical examinations or non examination assessments where the impairment has a minimal effect on the assessment. Extra time will not be permitted in examinations testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as expressive arts, a musical performance or a sport, where timing is an explicit part of the assessment objective.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the girl;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the girl and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be considered if it:

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

## **Access Arrangements that are available**

Some candidates are likely to have a number of needs and might require a range of access arrangements. The examples given are not exhaustive and are illustrative only:

- Extra time
- Separate invigilation within the centre
- Supervised rest breaks
- A computer reader or a reader
- Read aloud or an examination reading pen
- A word processor
- A scribe or speed recognition technology
- A prompter

Computer readers, reading pens, speech recognition technology and word processors will be preferred instead of human readers and scribes. This is in recognition that they allow candidates to work independently, but that they are also a better preparation for Higher Education and the world of employment.

We recognise that some girls who have found the COVID 19 situation stressful may need separate invigilation away from the main exam room even if they have not had this before.

## **The Assessment process**

### **Stage 1: Early screening and identification**

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during Key Stage 4 are preferably identified early in Key Stage 3 (Year 7 or 8). At this stage, needs are screened and identified with the Exact screening test. Adjustments to teaching within lessons are made according to need to enable students to access their learning and make progress. All teaching staff are involved in monitoring these adjustments.

Identification can also be prompted by concerns about attainment, classroom observations, and correspondence with parents or conversations with the pupils. Once alerted to an issue, the Head of Learning Support will start gathering evidence from tutors and subject teachers (~~See Annex A~~)

### **Stage 2: Formal testing**

Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. The Head of Learning Support liaises closely with the Director of Studies, Heads of School and subject teachers to identify candidates who might need Access Arrangements. Assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidelines and permission from parents will be sought before carrying out any assessment.

### **Stage 3: Formal Application for Access Arrangements**

The Head of Learning Support will consider all the information and evidence available for a pupil and will make a decision about what Access Arrangements to apply for, if any. The Head of Learning Support processes the application using AAO. Access Arrangements are normally processed during the first year of the course (Year 10 for those pupils taking GCSE, Year 12 for those pupils taking A level) having firmly established a picture of need and the normal way of working during previous

years (see Annex A). However, there will be circumstances, especially when needs become gradually apparent, when Access Arrangements might need to be processed later than this. They will be carried out as soon as it is practical for them to be done.

The arrangements put in place must reflect the support given to each candidate in the classroom, during internal tests and/or in mock examinations. This is referred to as the “normal way of working”. The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination. This is particularly so where a computer reader, modified enlarged papers, a scribe, speech recognition technology or a word processor will be used in examinations. Access arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment; they cannot suddenly be granted to a candidate at the time of her examinations. This is recorded in Part 1 of Form 8 by the Head of Learning Support.

When Access Arrangements are processed on-line and approved for GCSE and GCE qualifications, the evidence of need is electronically filed by the Head of Learning Support and is available to JCQ Centre Inspectors upon request. Signed Data Protection Notices confirming the candidate’s consent to the processing of the Access Arrangements are also filed. The decision evidence is also filed by the Head of Learning Support who then informs the candidate and their parents/guardians.

Where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement (i.e. a prompter, reader or scribe), he/she is responsible to the Headmistress and must be acceptable to the Headmistress. This person must not be the candidate’s subject teacher or a relative, friend or peer of the candidate. The Headmistress must ensure that this person is appropriately trained (including safeguarding training) and fully understands the rules of particular Access Arrangements. These responsibilities are delegated to the Examination Officer (in conjunction with the DSL).

### **Rolling forward of approved applications – GCSE and A-level examinations**

New online applications must be made if a student is progressing from GCSE to GCE, even if the candidate remains in the same centre. Further assessments are not required as long as the Form 8 meets the current published criteria for the access arrangement (2021-2022 criteria).

### **Access arrangements assessments of candidates**

Candidates must be assessed by an assessor who is specially trained in line with regulations. JCQ recommends that assessors should be employed within the centre, but alternatively an external assessor who has been approved by the Headmistress can also be used. Guidance on this choice is given to parents/guardians (see Annex B Access Arrangements for Examinations – Parental Guidance). At the point an assessor is engaged by the centre (after following the usual safe guarding procedures), evidence of the assessor’s qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in JCQ AA (Chapter 7). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate. A photocopy of the qualification certificate(s) or a printout or screenshot of the SASC or HCPC registration will be held on file for inspection purposes by the Head of Learning Support and must be available to be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector during their visit.

External assessors must work with the Head of Learning Support to ensure a joined up approach and be provided with at least a skeleton of Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the assessment. They must discuss

arrangements with the Head of Learning Support but the responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable arrangements lies with the Head of Learning Support.

Assessors might need to consider carrying out assessment with social distancing measures in place or, as a last resort, remotely via an online video call. Where assessments can be delayed (rather than be conducted remotely) assessors should wait until it is possible to meet with the candidate.

Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.

Privately commissioned assessments carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements or to process applications. The Head of Learning Support reserves the right to reject privately commissioned assessments as evidence. When this happens, a written rationale will be provided to parents.

### **Policy for the use of word processors**

This policy details how Mayfield School complies with Chapter 5.8 JCQ AA (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, September 2021 to August 2022) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor with spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled.

Mayfield values good handwriting and imposes high standards on presentation of work. Although in recent years due to COVID restrictions, teachers have predominantly delivered the curriculum electronically, the expectation is that most girls will continue to handwrite for their examinations.

Word processors will not be granted to a candidate simply because they want to type, they work faster using a keyboard or they use a laptop at home, during remote lessons or during face to face lessons to ensure social distancing from teachers.

Word processors will only be granted to those students who would be placed at a significant disadvantage as a consequence of their persistent and significant difficulties if they had to handwrite and who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The candidate has a specific learning difficulty/disability (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD etc.) which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working;
- The candidate's speed of handwriting is below average and the use of word processor is appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working;
- The candidate has a physical difficulty/ medical condition (such as hypermobility / juvenile arthritis etc.) and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working;
- The candidate has a sensory impairment (such as a vision or hearing impairment) and the use of a word processor is both appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working;
- The candidate has very poor handwriting and would lose marks due to the examiner finding their answers illegible and the use of word processor reflects their normal way of working;

- The candidate has a specific learning difficulty/disability and significant planning and organisational problems when writing by hand, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor and the use of a word processor reflects their normal way of working;
- The candidate has a history of learning difficulties which necessitate learning support lessons and who has discussed the use of a word processor with the Head of Learning support prior to the Year 10 or Year 12 mock exams, and where the use of a word processor is appropriate to their needs and reflects their normal way of working;
- Subject teachers have reported to the Head of Learning Support that the candidate is not able to reflect their knowledge when handwriting and sufficient evidence is presented to the Head of Learning Support to demonstrate the discrepancy between handwritten and typed work either prior to or immediately after the Year 10 or Year 12 mock exams.

The use of a word processor must be considered and agreed by the Head of Learning Support on a subject to subject basis.

The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor may be considered for a candidate would be on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment.

### **Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor**

To comply with regulations, the Centre will ensure the word processor (and any portable storage medium) is in good working order and cleared of any previously stored data. The word processor will have had the spelling and grammar check facility disabled. It will be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.

Candidates using word processors will be reminded to ensure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer and that each page of typed script must be numbered out of the total number of pages (e.g. page 1 out of 3 etc.). They will also be instructed to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking. Candidates are also reminded to save work at regular intervals.

Once the examination has been completed, the candidate must ensure the script is saved to the laptop desktop and onto a school memory stick or printed directly to a connected printer. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. If the paper needs is not printed directed from the server, and instead needs to be placed on a memory stick, this will be taken by the invigilator to the Examinations Officer who will print out a copy of the script which will be then placed in the secure exam packet with the rest of the examination scripts. A copy of the script will also be saved as a secure file on our school system in case it needs to be verified at a later point by the candidate or the exam board. Once this is completed the laptop will be cleared of data. The responsibility for any IT or Systems failure lies with the Director of Systems (cross reference the Examination Policy, Annex C (Examination Contingency Plan)).

### **Accountabilities**

The Examinations Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that the agreed EAA (Examination Access Arrangement) provisions are in place for examinations and are communicated to the invigilators;
- ensuring that pupils are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangements and to ensure no resulting disruption for other pupils also sitting examinations.

The Head of Learning Support is responsible for:

- making sure that applications are processed on time, no later than the published deadline;
- ensuring that full supporting evidence is in place before an on-line application is processed;
- reviewing the evidence before an on-line application is processed, ensuring that the candidate meets the criteria for the respective arrangements;
- holding all supporting evidence and presenting this to JCQ Centre Inspectors upon request
- liaising with departments, the Director of Studies and the Heads of Lower and Middle School or the Head of Sixth Form to ensure that the agreed Access Arrangements have been put in place before the candidates' first examination (e.g. internal school examinations).

Assessors must:

- record the results of tests completed indicating that the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidate's performance;
- use current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the individual;
- report the results of their assessment in Part 2 of Form 8;
- provide the School with evidence of their qualifications before assessing any candidate.

The Headmistress is responsible for:

- the quality of the Access Arrangements process within the school
- the appointment of external assessors, checking their qualifications and keeping a photocopy of their certificates

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- providing the Head of Learning Support with relevant information and evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties;
- showing how the candidate's difficulties have impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and providing evidence of this for the Head of Learning Support;
- detailing the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangements. Teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom;
- making the Head of Learning Support aware of any candidate who is underperforming during subjects test and who might benefit from access arrangements before or immediately after the Year 10 or Year 12 mock exams;
- discussing access arrangements possibilities with the Head of Learning Support before any discussion takes place with the candidate or their family.

## ANNEX A. EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS – SUBSTANTIAL IMPAIRMENT

### DETAILED FILE NOTE: SUBJECT TEACHER EVIDENCE

### Exam Access Arrangements – Substantial Impairment

#### Detailed File Note: Subject Teacher Evidence

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher name \_\_\_\_\_

- *Subject teachers have indicated that this student is struggling in the classroom*
- *Teachers now need to provide evidence that the student meets the following conditions to support an application for Access Arrangements*

#### Conditions for Candidates with a Substantial Impairment: JCQ regulations

In order to provide access arrangements (25% extra time/computer reader/reader and/or scribe) for a candidate, the centre must:

- 1) confirm that:
  - 25% extra time
  - access to a computer reader/reader
  - access to a scribe

is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

- 2) Provide evidence from teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning.

#### Please answer the following questions:

Does this candidate run out of time when completing timed tasks, or work more slowly than their peers?	Yes	No
Does this candidate receive support with reading in your classroom and/or in tests and assessments?	Yes	No
Does this candidate receive support with writing in your classroom and/or in tests and assessments?	Yes	No

Please comment:

<p>Where you have responded 'YES' to the questions above, please confirm that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessing and processing information (25% extra time) and /or</li> <li>• accessing written text (computer reader/reader) and/or</li> <li>• writing (scribe)</li> </ul> <p>and that these substantially impact on teaching and learning.</p>		
Please comment:		
Does the candidate need to use a word processor?	Yes	No
Is the candidate competent and confident in using a word processor (with spelling or predictive text and grammar check switched off) in your subject?	Yes	No
Please comment:		

Form completed by:

Signed:

Role:

Date:

## Exam Access Arrangements – Substantial Impairment

### Detailed File Note Evidence: SENCo version

Student name:

Date of Birth:

Year Group:

Date:

#### Conditions for Candidates with a Substantial Impairment: JCQ regulations

##### A) Confirmation of the candidate's disability.

Please attach document(s) from an appropriately qualified professional, confirming that the Candidate has persistent/significant difficulties and is disabled within the definition of the Equality Act 2010, e.g. a letter from:

- CAMHS
- a HCPC registered psychologist
- a medical consultant
- a psychiatrist
- a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)
- Local Authority Specialist Service (e.g. Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health
- a **current** Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, **which confirms the candidate's disability**

Please confirm the exact nature of the candidate's disability:

##### B) Evidence of the normal way of working in the centre:

Questions below are based on pages 26 and 45 of the JCQ booklet 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments', providing evidence for 25% extra time, and scribes. For more information about 26 to 50% extra time (p28/29) and more than 50% extra time (p30).

- 1) Is 25% extra time/support with writing the candidate's normal way of working within the centre?

Please comment:

- 2) Do teaching staff confirm that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties when:
  - accessing and processing information (25% extra time)
  - writing (scribe)and that these substantially impact on teaching and learning?

Please comment:
<p>3) In the case of a scribe:  Can you confirm that the candidate is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility disabled (switched off) in every subject (i.e. they will need a scribe in one or more subjects).</p>
Please comment:
<b>C) Access Arrangements requested:</b>
Please list:
<b>This statement is based on evidence from the following teachers:</b>
Please list name and subject taught:

Form completed by:

Signed:

Role:

Date:

## **ANNEX B: ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATIONS – PARENTAL GUIDANCE**

Access Arrangements are arrangements approved before the examinations take place to enable candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments.

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.

When applying for Access Arrangements, we are obliged to work within the framework laid down by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). These regulations are very complex and changes are made each academic year. The current guidance can be viewed on the JCQ website.

Some parents provide the school with either a private report from an educational psychologist and/or a letter from a consultant. It should be noted that neither of these on their own is a guarantee that a student will receive the Access Arrangements requested.

JCQ recommends that assessors should be employed within the school. The Head of the school must satisfy that assessors have the required level of competence and training. Candidates must:

- Have successfully completed a Level 7 Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements, which includes at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessments.
- Have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication “*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*”.
- Be familiar with the Equality Act 2010.
- Hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged learners who have learning difficulties.

Mayfield’s access arrangements assessor has been Emma Martin, Head of Learning Support, since September 2019.

### **Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor (for access arrangements purposes)**

- The Head of Learning Support identifies students who needs to be assessed and contacts parents/guardians to make them aware. These students are identified following our screening processes and once teachers provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate’s persistent and significant difficulties.
- Before the candidate’s assessment, the Head of Learning Support must have evidence of the history of need of the candidate and must record this in Part 1 of Form 8.
- Assessments are tailored to the particular access arrangement(s) being sought. Areas which might be assessed include reading skills, writing skills and cognitive processing skills.
- In most cases, there is not a requirement to carry out tests of general cognitive abilities. However, in rare and exceptional circumstances a referral to another professional might be required.
- Assessments are carried out following consent from the parents/guardians and, if carried out by the school’s assessor, at no additional cost.
- Following the assessment, Part 2 of Form 8 is used to record the results of the assessment. The assessor will not, as a matter of course, complete a detailed summary report. This can be supplied, on request by the parents, before the assessment takes place. The cost of this additional service would be £150.

- Once Part 2 of Form 8 has been completed, the Head of Learning support will determine what is the most suitable access arrangement(s) for a candidate, record them in Part 3 of Form 8 and process the application online. Candidates will be required to sign a Data Protection Form, without which applications cannot be processed.

Although assessors should ideally be employed by the centre, external assessors who have an established relationship with the centre or, establish a working relationship before the assessment can also be used. Independent assessors must be approved by the Head of the School. The cost of the assessment will be agreed between parents/guardians and the assessors. As per JCQ regulations, the responsibility to determine and request access arrangements lies within the Head of Learning Support.

Any privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the Head of Learning support cannot be used to process access arrangements applications.

**Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor (for reasons other than access arrangements)**

The Head of Learning Support can carry out assessments for girls who do not have a history of need but whose parents might be interested in having information about their reading skills, writing skills and processing skills. This can be completed by the school on request from the parents. It is charged at a cost of £300 and a detailed summary report is written after the assessment. Results from this assessment cannot be used for access arrangements purposes.