

	<p>Policy Name: Access Arrangements Policy</p> <p>Owner: Deputy Head Academic</p> <p>Review Date: October 2023      Next Review: October 2024</p> <p>Policy revised annually or as regulations or review demands.</p>
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### **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 Access Arrangements are delegated to schools to approve, whereas others require prior approval by JCQ, and all must be approved prior to the examination or assessment.

Access arrangements allow candidates with specific needs, such as SEN (special educational needs), disabilities or temporary injuries, to access assessments and show what they know and can do 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 do 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
- Alternative rooming arrangements
- Supervised rest breaks
- A computer reader or a reader
- Read aloud or an examination reading pen
- A word processor\*
- A scribe or speech recognition technology
- A prompter
- Modified papers

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.

\* Please see the separate Word Processor Policy for more information regarding this Access Arrangement.

### **The Assessment process**

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.

Effective screening, monitoring systems and liaison with the Deputy Head Academic, Heads of School and subject teachers, enables the Head of Learning Support to provide sufficiently robust evidence of need to identify those candidates who need to be assessed for access arrangements / reasonable adjustments.

Assessments are delivered in accordance to the JCQ guidelines and permission from parents / guardians will be sought before carrying out any assessment.

See Annex A for the annual schedule which is an approximate guideline of the access arrangement process from Year 9 onwards.

### **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 Head 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.

A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements.

### **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;
- ordering modified papers no later than the published deadline for the examination series
- ensuring that pupils are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangements and to ensure no resulting disruption for other pupils also sitting examinations.
- holding annual update meeting for the school’s invigilation team so that they are thoroughly trained of any changes and updates to JCQ regulations and have undergone rigorous training.

The Head of Learning Support is responsible for:

- keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate’s approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor’s qualification (where required).
- making sure that applications are processed on time, no later than the published deadline;
- 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 Deputy Head Academic 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). See Annex C: exam access arrangements. Guidelines for teachers.

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 Head is responsible for:

- the quality of the Access Arrangements process within the school
- the appointment of assessors, checking their qualifications and keeping a photocopy of their certificates
- ensuring that the SENCO (currently the Head of Learning Support) has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and familiarise themselves with the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- providing the Head of Learning Support (SENCO) 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 (SENCO);
- 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 (SENCO) 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 whole school summer term exams;
- discussing access arrangements possibilities with the Head of Learning Support before any discussion takes place with the candidate or their family.

## ANNEX A. Annual schedule

The annual schedules outline below give an approximate guideline of the access arrangement process for students in Year 9 onwards.

### Annual Schedule – Year 9:

Month	Task	Resources
<b>September / October</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start the process of identifying possible AA candidates</li> <li>- Check Learning Support register to identify candidates</li> <li>- Review in house screening test for Year 7 and 8</li> <li>- Identify candidates with EHCP who might need AA</li> <li>- Review professional reports with reference to any indication of the need for AA</li> <li>- Carry out screening tests for girls known to the Learning Support Department and girls who are new to the school</li> </ul>	
<b>November/December</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather feedback from teachers about girls' normal way of working</li> <li>- Collate background information</li> </ul>	"Normal way of working in the classroom" Form
<b>January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Candidates who may need AA to complete questionnaire</li> <li>- Meet candidates to discuss their replies and contact parents about AA</li> </ul>	"Student questionnaire" Form  Access arrangements for examinations – Parental guidance (Annex B)
<b>February / March / April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete skeleton of Form 8 Part 1 for candidates with learning difficulties who will need to be assessed</li> <li>- Complete Form 9 for candidates with substantial impairments</li> <li>- Candidates with a difficulty other than learning difficulties who might need 25% extra time, may benefit from supervised rest breaks instead. Revisit in Year 10</li> </ul>	JCQ Form 8 JCQ Form 9
<b>May / June / July</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrange for candidates who might require an arrangement needing an Access Arrangements Online (AAO) application to sign a Data Protection Notice (DPN)</li> <li>- If possible, carry out some assessments and complete Part 2 of Form 8</li> <li>- Where assessment confirms that a candidate qualifies, fully complete Part 1 and Part 3 of Form 8</li> <li>- Make applications though AAO, save approval notices electronically</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep samples of evidence where candidates with learning difficulties needing 25% extra time have no below average scores for speed of working.</li> <li>- Update ILPs and pass relevant information to Examinations Officer, candidates and parents.</li> </ul>	
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### Annual schedule – Year 10

Month	Task	Resources
<b>September / October / November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out screening tests with any new candidates</li> <li>- Candidates who might need AA to complete questionnaire</li> <li>-Where appropriate, meet candidates to discuss their replies</li> <li>- Continue assessment process with students who have not been assessed yet</li> </ul>	
<b>Before Year 10 summer exams (May)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with examinations officer to ensure that approved access arrangements are in place for internal school tests and summer exams</li> <li>- Revisit candidates with a difficulty other than learning difficulties who appear to need 25% extra time. Arrange to explore/trial supervised rest breaks in timed internal tests or mock exams</li> </ul>	
<b>January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete Form 9 for candidates who require a mobile phone for medical purposes and apply through AAO</li> <li>- Consider whether any candidate need centre delegated arrangements such as supervised rest breaks or alternative rooming arrangements</li> </ul>	
<b>February / March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue assessment process with students who have not been assessed yet</li> </ul>	
<b>After Year 10 summer exams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor the use of the arrangements in internal school tests and summer examinations.</li> </ul>	
<b>April / May / June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue assessment process with students who have not been assessed yet</li> <li>- Make applications through AAO as appropriate</li> </ul>	

### Annual schedule – Year 11

Month	Task	Resources
<b>September</b>	- Remind teachers to check ILPs for new students. These can be found in SIMS.	
<b>October</b>	- Are there any new candidates in Year 11? Ask previous school for any paperwork relating to AA or learning needs - Carry out screening assessments with new candidates, review and start the process of gathering evidence and applying for AA where appropriate - Meet candidates to discuss whether they have any additional needs relating to exams	
<b>After mock exams (Dec)</b>	- Ask teachers for feedback	
<b>February</b>	- Deadline for AAO applications is 21 <sup>st</sup> March – Are there any outstanding applications to be made?	
<b>April / May</b>	- Apply through AAO for temporary arrangements as soon as we become aware of them.	

### Annual schedule – Year 12

Month	Task	Resources
<b>September</b>	- Establish which candidates might be retaking GCSE in November - Check Form 8s for candidates with learning difficulties - Complete Form 9 for any other candidates needing scribe, reader or 25% extra time. - Reapply through AAO for retakes if the previous approval has run out.	
<b>October</b>	- Contact previous centres for any candidates and ask for AA evidence where appropriate	
<b>November</b>	- Get feedback from teachers about A level candidates' performance which may require AA - Complete Form 8RF for candidates with learning difficulties who have a fully completed Form 8 - Arrange for candidates who may require an arrangement needing an AA application to sign a DPN	
<b>December and onwards</b>	- Start assessment process if further assessments are required	

### Annual schedule – Year 13

Month	Task	Resources
<b>September</b>	- Remind teachers to check ILPs for new students. These can be found in SIMS.	
<b>October</b>	- Are there any new candidates in Year 13? Ask previous school for any paperwork relating to AA or learning needs - Carry out screening assessments with new candidates, review and start the process of gathering evidence and applying for AA where appropriate - Meet candidates to discuss whether they have any additional needs relating to exams	
<b>After mock exams (Feb)</b>	- Ask teachers for feedback	
<b>February</b>	- Deadline for AAO applications is 21 <sup>st</sup> March – Are there any outstanding applications to be made?	
<b>April / May</b>	- Apply through AAO for temporary arrangements as soon as we become aware of them.	



## **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 School’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.
- 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.

## Annex C: Exam Access Arrangements guidelines for teachers.

The intention behind and access arrangements is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment (Joint Council for Qualifications "Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments" 2022 Definitions)

You are likely to be aware of girls in your classes who have difficulties that may make them eligible for access arrangements in tests and public exams. Please watch out for such girls each year (especially if they are new to school) and keep the Head of Learning Support informed of their needs. A screening procedure is carried out in Year 7 and Year 9 to identify these girls but there are always some who will not be identified through tests. The Head of Learning Support, who also acts in her capacity as SENCO is dependent on you to keep her informed of potential candidates for access arrangements.

It is **essential** that girls are identified as early as possible for the following reasons:

- The access arrangements should be made at the start of the course so that girls know what is available and have the arrangements in place for their assessments. The arrangements should reflect any help that has to be given in the classroom and the normal way of working should reflect what is going to be available in the exams.
- Applications for permission to grant access arrangements must be made online early in the exam course, ideally at the start of Year 10 for GCSE or in Year 12 for A level courses. There are deadlines for applications, and it is unlikely to be possible to process a late request for an access arrangement, with all the required testing, within a few weeks of the exam.
- Centres are required to ensure that candidates have practised using their arrangement(s) in class tests and mock exams. As a subject teacher, you have some responsibility to make sure these opportunities are available.

The main types of access arrangements available are as follows (This list is not exhaustive):

- **Extra time**, for candidates who work very slowly.
- **Supervised Rest Breaks**, for concentration difficulties, extreme stress or medical needs.
- **Bilingual dictionary**, for candidates who have English as an Additional Language.
- **Readers or Computer Readers**, for candidates who have difficulty with reading by themselves.
- **Examination Reading Pen**, for candidates who need some words read aloud.
- **Speech Recognition Technology or Scribes**, for slow or illegible writers, of those with significant difficulty writing by themselves.
- **Word processors**, for girls with learning difficulties and/or medical reasons who have slow handwriting speed or illegible writing (as per Mayfield's Word Processor Policy on page 3 and 4 of the Access Arrangement Policy).
- **Prompters**, for candidates who lose concentration easily or need help to pace themselves.

The SENCO will be able to advise you about other access arrangements that might be required at times (e.g Live Speakers for MFL exams, etc.)

You might also be aware of girls who rarely complete tests and exams in the time allowed, but who might not have access arrangements at the moment. Please keep the SENCO informed of these girls.

Although the processes of screening, applying for and implementing access arrangements are the responsibility of the SENCO and Exams Officer, all teaching staff have a central role to play in the identification of girls who need adjustments during public exams and in training the students to use the agreed access arrangements effectively.