Access Arrangement Policy

St Laurence School Academy Trust

Date approved:	September 2026	**Review period:**	Annually
Date of next review:	September 2027	**Owner:**	Exams

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	**Joanne Newland**
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	**Tim Farrer**
Head of centre	**Tim Farrer**
Assessor(s)	**Details of the current assessor(s) and qualifications are retained in the SEND department and are available for inspection.**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Ros George, Rachel Offiler**

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'.

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.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Laurence School 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...

(General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo (or equivalent role) 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.

> Where the SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document 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 head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

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

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

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

Evidence of assessor qualifications is held by the SEN Department and is available for inspection.

Appointment of assessors

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.

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

St Laurence School operates a Year 9 screening process where candidates will sit a series of approved tests (LUCID Exact) to establish current reading, spelling, comprehension, and handwriting scores. These tests are completed during curriculum time and reviewed by the SENCo/appropriately qualified assessor to identify candidates who might be considered for access arrangements. Before the assessment the SENCo must work with the assessor to give an overview of the candidates needs prior to the testing. Part 1 of Form 8 will be fully completed, including teacher feedback, examples from internal tests and mock examinations, teacher comments explaining why extra time is needed and how it is used to provide a holistic picture of need and evidence of normal way of working before any specialist assessment takes place. The data is collated into an Excel spreadsheet and reviewed on a regular basis. It is important that there is sufficient evidence to support an application including evidence that the arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working. Before the application is submitted and a Form 8 is completed for relevant candidates, it may be appropriate to administer further testing such as a CTOPP, DASH or a YARC which would be used as further evidence for candidate's application and create a clearer understanding of the profile of learning difficulties. Supporting feedback from teaching staff would also be included as part of the profile evidence. Once all evidence has been established a Form 8 highlighting the adjustments for the candidate will be created and presented by the SENCo for inspection. [AA 7.5.1] [AA 7.6]

"All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8." [AA 7.5.3]

In some cases, parents are keen to access testing from an external source. In this case the SENCo will liaise with the independent assessor to complete a Form 8. Evidence from the school setting would also be used to inform the assessor before they make recommendations. This evidence would prove the candidate's normal way of working and provide background information of the candidate's needs. An independent assessor must discuss reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. [AA 7.5.3]

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

As the SENCo completes the Form 8, detailed feedback questions are shared with all relevant teaching staff to get their feedback on the student's needs, the impact on teaching and learning and normal way of working. This feedback is included in the pack which is made available to the specialist assessor prior to any further assessments and is also made available to the inspection service. 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 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 and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place.

Once Part 3 of the Form 8 has been signed and the specialist assessor has completed the assessments the Exams Team submit the online access arrangements application. This ordinarily takes place in Term 6 of year 9 where a picture of need and normal way of working have been established. However, where a need arises after this date and a case develops, the process is repeated. Applications that were not successful first time, will be sent with any further evidence to be reconsidered by the exam board. Files relating to each student with access arrangements are then kept securely in electronic files in the AEN Access Arrangements file. Responsibility for these files lies with the SENCo. Parents and students are advised, via a letter, regarding the outcome of an application

Note

*The SENCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. Candidates are informed that their access arrangements application will be processed through Access Arrangements Online in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.. Records should also be kept of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA 8.6)*

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Our process for EAA applications is as follows:

- Year 9 whole year testing
- Referrals from class teacher/parents/external agencies/identified by SENCo team
- Gather evidence to support application - further testing, evidence from teaching staff of normal way of working
- Assessed by an appropriately qualified assessor
- Form 8/SENCo note completed
- Application sent to the exam board

All supporting evidence and forms are stored electronically.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on

a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

See separate word processor policy (exams)

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the SENCo

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect **and**
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.16)

> In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's difficulties are **established within the centre** and known to a Tutor, a Head of House, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.
>
> A candidate will not be permitted alternative rooming arrangements due to exam anxiety or personal preference. The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation will normally only be considered where the candidate has a serious medical condition, Tourette's syndrome, frequent seizures or significant behavioural difficulties likely to disturb other candidates.
>
> Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school assessments and mock examinations as a consequence of a **long-term** medical condition or **long-term** social, emotional and mental health needs. [AA 5.16]