



# Holte School

## Access Arrangements Policy

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| <b>Lead member of staff:</b>                                  | Mr S Ahmed - SENCo    |
| <b>Legislation Status: (Statutory/Non-Statutory)</b>          | Statutory             |
| <b>Local Authority Model Policy or School Written Policy:</b> | School Written Policy |
| <b>Required on school website:</b>                            | No                    |
| <b>Revision Date:</b>   | May 2023              |
| <b>Date Ratified By Full Governing Body:</b>                  | June 2023             |
| <b>Signed By Chair Of Governors:</b><br>Ms C Hardy            | C Hardy               |

## **Linked Documents:**

This document should be read in conjunction with the SEND Policy and the Disability Equality Policy.

## **Introduction**

Holte School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, the Equalities Act 2010, and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations. Where students have a need which prevents them from accessing examinations, appropriate provision will be made.

## **What are Access Arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a student accessing an examination caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties, without creating any unfair advantage or compromising the integrity of an assessment. These arrangements are agreed before an assessment, and must reflect a student's normal way of working within the school.

## **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. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

## **Available Exam Access Arrangements include:**

Supervised rest breaks

Extra time

Reader/Computer reader

Scribe Word processor

Prompter

Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components

Alternative site for exams

Bilingual translation dictionaries

Modified papers (e.g. enlarged or modified papers)

Language modifier

### **Extra time/Rest breaks**

Supervised rest breaks are now considered before permission to allocate extra time is requested from JCQ. Rest breaks may be more appropriate than allowing extra time for pupils with certain conditions. Formal assessment by the Learning Support Department and relevant evidence as outlined by JCQ are required before rest breaks can be allowed.

In order for an application for extra time to be approved and so as not to give an unfair advantage to any student, the school must:

- confirm that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- include evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for 25% extra time;
- confirm that without the application of 25% extra time the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage; (The candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.)
- confirm that 25% extra time is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

**Extra time for a Learning Difficulty** must be supported by an approved assessment showing below average scores in speed of reading or handwriting or cognitive processing.

**Extra time related to other impairments** or disabilities (including social, emotional or mental health) must be supported supported by:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist (a GP letter is not sufficient evidence); or
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.

*If a candidate never makes use of the arrangement granted to them – then it is not his or her normal way of working and the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations or indeed it should be removed.*

## **Word Processors**

The use of a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs. It is important to highlight that spelling and grammar check must be disabled on a word processor used in public examinations.

Formal assessment by the Learning Support Department and relevant evidence as outlined by JCQ are required before a word processor can be allowed.

## **Scribe**

If a word processor (with the spelling and grammar check disabled) is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, then it should be used in examinations in order to encourage independent working and access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A scribe should only be used where a candidate cannot use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled or the candidate is not competent in using a word processor.

## **Reader**

In rare and exceptional circumstances a candidate may qualify to have a reader in examinations. The reader is not permitted to read text that students will be examined on (extracts, poems, texts in an English Language or Literature paper etc.), and is only permitted to read the examination questions. The reader is not permitted to explain a question to a candidate; they may repeat the question. It may be appropriate for a candidate to be awarded 25% Extra Time when they have a reader as this Access Arrangement can slow down processing and response time.

## **Timeline for Awarding Access Arrangements**

The school makes every attempt to identify students needing exam access as early as possible for new students.

Where applicable, Form 8's are collected from feeder schools and as evidence for history of need.

Teachers and the SENCo identify students needing exam access through:

- Screening tests (Lucid/Dyslexia)
- GCSE English Results/ KS3 Results
- Candidates self-reported difficulties
- Information from feeder schools

- Termly assessments and tracking information.
- Information collected in EHCP, EP reports or other documents.

“... that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...” [GR 5.4]

Also detail any process (where relevant) for private candidates, distance learners and home educated students - refer to the requirement in GR 5.4

On admission, students with an EHCP (Educational Healthcare Plan) are allocated appropriate in-class support by the SENCo.

At any point throughout the year, the Behaviour and Inclusion Team and SENCo will aim to identify new students (without an EHCP) who may require undergoing the Dyslexia test and/or seen by external agency (after screening) to confirm any additional needs (using input from prior data and teaching staff concerns over performance in class/test situations over an extended period/concerns raised by parents).

Additionally, evidence is also gathered for SME students via CAHMs, counselling, police reports, inclusion notes, EP and other reports Year 9 – Access Arrangements Testing Following assessments that are carried out in the Autumn term.

(When making an application, the school utilises all previous years' testing as evidence of the student's difficulties as well as being able to demonstrate the normal way of working within the classroom and during test situations, which is a JCQ requirement. Any application we make requesting Access Arrangements needs to include school-based evidence of need.)

Students with approved applications for access arrangements will have these arrangements in class tests, mock exams and assessments. Details of measures provided in mock exams and assessments are documented by the use access arrangement dispensation logs sheets maintained by the Access Arrangements Facilitator.

For students with hearing impairments individual arrangements are made with advice from the SENCo.

### **Private Educational Psychologist Reports**

If under the schools testing system, a student does not qualify for Access Arrangements parents can, if they wish, obtain a Private Educational Psychologist (EP) Assessment. If parents wish to submit an EP report as part of their request for the school to consider their child for Access Arrangements parents should be aware that the school will require to see:

- A full copy of the report and Original copies of all the tests completed.

This will enable the School (who under JCQ guidelines, can be the sole referrer for Access Arrangements) to have full confidence in the testing that has been undertaken and ensure that testing has been robust and valid and fits the testing interval criteria. Even in this instance the report will only

form part of the school's evidence when applying for Access Arrangements and may not guarantee that concessions will be awarded.

### **Private Assessments and medical letters**

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but any request for an access arrangement also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school. Likewise, private assessments or reports from private Educational Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement if supported by school evidence, which must be sent to the assessor in advance of the assessment. We may choose not to accept a private assessment report as evidence for an access arrangement if it conflicts with evidence gathered at school and by our Access Arrangements Assessor.

### **Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main rooms near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary.

For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

### **Evidence Held and Malpractice**

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season.

The school is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, letters from outside agencies, record of Access Arrangements used and any Statement of Special Needs or EHCP, together with a data protection notice signed by the student.

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations or disqualification of the school to act as an exam centre.

Examples of malpractice include: Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working, Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence