



Monkton Wood Academy

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

POLICY

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	Nov 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Jim Moncur
Senior leader(s)	Louise Husband, Jennifer Onslow
Head of centre	Hannah Jones
Exams Officer	Laura Moore
Assessor(s)	Sarah Melhuish
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Jim Moncur

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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'. (AARA¹, Definitions)

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.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA¹, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AARA](#) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Monkton Wood Academy 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.

(JCQ's **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 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 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. (¹AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

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 AARA (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 **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.

The head of centre recognises its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], particularly Section 20 (7). 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. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

[†]or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

All policies held centrally in 'MWA All Staff' – policies'.

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 AARA, section 7.3.

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

Sarah Melhuish PG Dip SpLD (College of St Mark and St John) PATOSS APC Number OF- 4984
Jim Moncur – SENDCo

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

THE SENCO will check the qualifications of the assessor and take copies which will be stored in a folder accessible by the Exams Officer and any other relevant staff including a JCQ inspector.

This qualification must reflect the level of competence required in the JCQ as outlined in chapter 7 of the JCQ document access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

The head of centre **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment. In accordance with AARA, section 7.3.

Reporting the appointment of assessors

Evidence of the assessors' qualifications will be obtained at the point of engagement. The evidence of the assessors' qualifications will be held on file in preparation for inspection by JCQ. The assessor will work in conjunction with the SENCO on all assessments. The assessor has an established relationship with the school in accordance with AARA section 7.4.

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

Procedures are followed in accordance with Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment (AARA). SENCOs, Deputy SENCOs (DSENCOs) and assessors working within the centre always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrates normal way of working within the centre.

In accordance with AARA, section 7.5, the SENCO or DSENCOs will request information from teaching staff to enable the centre to assess each potential learner and to identify those who require further assessment to identify any appropriate access arrangement requirement.

An appropriately qualified specialist assessor will then conduct appropriate assessments to identify students requiring access arrangements. (A copy of the assessors' qualifications will be kept in the exams information folder).

The SENCO/DESENCO and the specialist assessor will then work together to gather and process supporting evidence of need to support the result of assessments.

Once testing has taken place and any supplementary evidence required has been gathered, AARA section 7.6 is undertaken to ensure Form 8 of the process is completed.

The SENCO will work with the examinations officer to ensure modified papers are applied for by the relevant exam board deadlines.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCO and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with but not limited to:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist
- A letter from a hospital consultant

- A letter from the local authority educational psychologist
- A letter from the local authority sensory impairment service
- A letter from a speech and language therapist
- Teacher information sheets
- Data collection

Evidence is gathered to record normal way of working from but not limited to:

- Classroom working environment
- Group work
- Intervention sessions
- Mock examinations

Pre-public examinations (PPEs)

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) 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. (AARA 8 Summary)

Candidates are informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Records for inspection purposes, of essential information are available on request.

This may include:

- a completed EAA screener
- a copy of the candidate's approved application
- appropriate evidence of need (where required)
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA, section 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The evidence gathered from teaching / other school staff for candidates who have arrangements which may be granted by the centre is held 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.

All policies held centrally in 'MWA All Staff' – policies'.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AA, section 5.8)

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 (or equivalent role).

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 (AARA, section 5.16)

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre**. It is known to a Form Tutor, Pastoral lead, SEN leadership or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, anxiety, troubles with peers or being worried about examinations are not considered sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AARA, section 5.16)

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)