Access Arrangements Policy

V1.1

Approved (Date):	19 September 2024 (minor amendment March 25)
Next review (Date):	September 2025
Owner (Name, Title):	Deputy Head Academic
Classification:	Statutory
Comment:	Word processor policy added as an addendum (previous standalone policy)

Forest School

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	**Melanie Wright**
SLT/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	**Ricky Sokhal**
Warden	**Marcus Cliff Hodges**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Melanie Wright**

1   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'. (AA 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.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. (AA Definitions)

2   Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Forest School has a written record that clearly shows the school 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 DHA/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 **mus**t 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 publication Adjustments for candidates with

disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

3 General Principles

The principles for the school 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 candidates.

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.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

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 school.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

4 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 Senior Leadership Team will recognise its duties towards disabled 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 school provides to disabled candidates. Where the school is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the school **must no**t charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

For any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

5 The Assessment Process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Senior Leadership Team. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.

The qualifications of the current assessors

Melanie Wright – Level 7 PAAPA

Amy Clifton – Level 7 PAAPA

Estelle Shilton – Level 7 PAAPA

Daniela de Silva – Specialist Assessor with APC

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the school, 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.

Checking the qualifications of the assessors

The DHA/SENCo will not only check the qualifications of their assessors but also that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

The Senior Leadership Team ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA 7.3)

6 Reporting the Appointment of the Assessor(s)

Evidence of qualification of the assessor are held within the AA filing cabinet.

Evidence of qualification of the SENCo are held within the main files at HR.

7 Process for the Assessment of a Candidate's Learning Difficulties by an Assessor

Following identification of learner difficulties and from the history of need produced in collaboration with teaching staff a Form 8 is completed by the SENCo. Access testing can then commence and subsequent applications made.

The Senior Leadership Team confirms that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*

(GR 5.4)

Note

SENCos and assessors working within the school 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 school and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

8   Painting a 'Holistic Picture of Need' - Confirming 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 per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process informed by robust evidence of the holistic picture of need and normal ways of working on behalf of the pupil.

Subject teaching staff are consulted prior to assessments being carried out to confirm the normal way of working and to ensure the history of need is correct.

If an independent assessor is used, they 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)

9   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 schools 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 logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

 The SENCo keeps detailed records, in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required), a record of assessments carried out and

a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA 8.6)

Applications are submitted to AAO when an assessment has been completed for a candidate and details of approvals are sent home to parents/carers.

For administration purposes, all Access Arrangements for external exam groups in an academic year, will be finalised by the October half-term of Michaelmas.

School-delegated arrangements/adjustments

School-delegated arrangements are detailed within the school Access Arrangements file along with the evidence of a history of need and is the candidate's normal way of working.

10 School-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 school.

The school holds a policy on the use of word processor detailing the criteria the school uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. (AA 5.8)

11 Alternative Rooming

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming within the school will be made by the ALS lead/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 school (AA 5.16)

For alternative rooming, the candidate's difficulties are **established within the school** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Tutor, a Head of House, Head of Section, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Alternative rooming reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations because of a **long-term** medical condition or **long-term** social, emotional and mental health needs. (AA 5.16)

12 Appendix 1.0 Exams Word Processor Policy Addendum

Pupil Details:

Name: **Form:**   **House:**

Subjects requiring the use of a word processor:

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams:

Role	Name (s)
SENCo	Melanie Wright
Exams Officer	Patrycja Folta
Senior leader(s)	Ricky Sokhal
IT Manager	Kyle Dearing

Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations. References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2021/2022* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2021/2022.*

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

(AA 4.2.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. ALS leads/SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)

The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Purpose

This policy details how Forest School complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (sections 14.20-25) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The use of a word processor

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate where appropriate to their needs

For example, a candidate with:

  o a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
  o a medical condition
  o a physical disability
  o a sensory impairment
  o planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
  o poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. (AA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

Centre specific processes

Regardless of the above points in AA4.2.5, the use of a Word processor will only be allocated if:

- a Consultant or Assessor Report clearly defines that the use of a Word Processor is part of the support offer for the candidate; evidence of NWOW
- the SENCo can confirm that this resource is appropriate for the specific subject for exams and assessments

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a designated Computer room or in a separate room if this is an additional AA

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- (where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point) checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22)

If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

- ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/table to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost) (ICE 14.24)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed

- is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Portable storage medium

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam is over

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or their own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)

Appendix 2- The criteria Forest School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

Forest School

I agree to follow the requirements stated above and understand that failure to do so will result in permission to use a word processor being revoked.

Pupil Signature:
Date: