

# Examination Access Arrangement Policy



**ST HILDA'S**  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

WISDOM

HOPE

COMMUNITY

DIGNITY

EQUALITY

DIVERSITY

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(unless required sooner due to legislation change)

VALUE			THE POLICY	
Wisdom	Hope	Community	Dignity	Equality
<p>This policy is designed to develop excellent standards in the education, care and protection of vulnerable people in all that we do.</p> <p>To create an ethos and educational environment that is person centred and has the views and needs of the child/young person at its heart along with their families/carers.</p> <p>To encourage a strong focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND which will enable them to succeed in their education and make a successful transition into adulthood.</p> <p>The guiding principal of the policy is to treat each other fairly and reasonably, with respect and courtesy at all times, no matter what the circumstances, consistent with our school values.</p>				

## Rationale

This policy explains the strategies implemented by St Hilda's CE High School in order to ensure inclusion throughout our school for all students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND).

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## Definitions

The term Additional Learning Need is used as an umbrella term to incorporate ALL students known to be receiving intervention Learning Support provision including those students identified as having SEND.

### **(i) Disability**

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

### **(ii) Special Educational Needs**

A candidate has "special educational needs" as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

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## What are Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are agreed in advance of any assessment schedule. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the needs of a 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.'

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## Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on several factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

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## Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness, or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

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## St Hilda's CE High School Exam Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

It is our aim to ensure all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial SEND/or ALN which fall into the following four categories:

1. Communication and interaction.
2. Cognition and learning.
3. Social, emotional, and mental health.
4. Sensory and/ or physical needs.

We aim to do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ guidelines 04/05/2023). We believe it is important to abide by the JCQ regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school. Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND/ALN and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate. Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, formal internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.'

## When might students be awarded Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam.

Access Arrangement	Description	Eligibility Criteria
Scribe	A trained adult writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write <u>exactly</u> what they say.	A student has a <b>physical disability</b> ; where her/his writing: - - is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood. - speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time.  In some subjects eg MFL, the student must dictate <b>every word in the target language</b> and must do so letter by letter.
Reader	A trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (except for Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves. Mathematical symbols, values, diagrams and graphs must be read by the student.	A student has a standardised score of <b>84 or below</b> in the induction test delivered by Specialist Teacher.
A reader pen	An electronic device used with headphones that reads the question and any relevant text for the student.	A student has a standardised score of <b>84 or below</b> in the induction test delivered by Specialist Teacher.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.	A student who persistently loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time and this can also be put in place for students who are affected by OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder).
Separate room		A student with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Students who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room.

		Medical evidence must be provided in advance to support this arrangement and then be approved by the SENCo.
Modified paper	<p>Individually prepared papers for candidates.</p> <p>The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper.</p>	
Laptop	<p>Access to a laptop for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student would word process their answers.</p> <p>Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled, and a special exam account would be used with no internet access.</p>	The provision to use a laptop is put in place to address an underlying difficulty such as: speed of handwriting; medical condition; physical disability; sensory impairment; planning and organisational difficulties or poor legibility.
	<p>The use of a laptop in exams reflects the student's normal way of working at the school and has been agreed as appropriate to the student's needs. The use of a laptop cannot be granted to a student simply because this is their preferred way of working.</p> <p>Centres are allowed to provide 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 and is appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>For example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. (This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)</p>	
Rest Breaks	<p>Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.</p> <p><b>This is the recommended option from the exam boards before considering extra time.</b></p>	A student has a physical disability which prevents them from concentrating for <u>long periods of time</u> .
Extra time	<b>The amount of time awarded is granted at the discretion of the SENCO.</b>	Students will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing.

	<p>Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the Designated Specialist Teacher or Teaching Assistant.</p> <p>Extra time between 26 and 50% can be granted in extraordinary circumstances.</p>	<p>A standardised score of 84 or below (100 being average) can qualify for extra time.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may require more than 50% extra time to manage a very substantial impairment.</p>
Live Speaker	<p>A live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g. MFL listening examinations, to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre. The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD in a listening examination.</p>	<p>Students who have persistent and significant difficulties in following speech at normal speed.</p>
Oral Language Modifier	<p>A responsible adult who may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a candidate.</p> <p>The Oral Language Modifier must not explain technical terms or subject specific terms. The ability to understand these terms is part of the assessment.</p> <p>If such terms are explained to the candidate, then the demands of the question will have been compromised and may constitute malpractice.</p> <p>An Oral Language Modifier must be seen as a rare and exceptional arrangement.</p> <p>An Oral Language Modifier is an adjustment of last resort so an application must only be made once all other relevant access arrangements have been considered and found to be unsuitable or unworkable. There must be a very strong justification as to why an Oral Language Modifier is required. An Oral Language Modifier may also act as a reader.</p> <p>An Oral Language Modifier will not be allowed to read questions or text in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading.</p>	<p>Students whose disability has a very substantial and long term adverse effect resulting in very persistent and significant difficulties in accessing and processing information.</p>

	<p>A candidate who would normally be eligible for an Oral Language Modifier but is not permitted this arrangement in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time.</p> <p>An approved application for an Oral Language Modifier will allow the centre to grant the candidate up to a maximum of 50% extra time in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading.</p>	
<p>Bilingual translation dictionaries (with maximum 25% extra time)</p>	<p>Only to be used by student's whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.</p> <p>The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.</p>	<p>Should reflect the student's normal way of working.</p>
	<p>Such dictionaries must not be used in English Language, Irish Language or Welsh Language examinations or Modern Foreign Language examinations testing one of the languages of the dictionary or a similar language, for example, a Portuguese dictionary in a Spanish examination. The use of a bilingual translation dictionary. Exceptions to these rules are:</p> <p>The Writing Test in GCSE Arabic, GCSE Bengali, GCSE Dutch, GCSE Greek, GCSE Gujarati, GCSE Japanese, GCSE Modern Hebrew, GCSE Panjabi, GCSE Persian, GCSE Polish, GCSE Portuguese, GCSE Russian and GCSE Turkish where the specification states that all candidates must have access to a bilingual dictionary.</p> <p>Candidates who are permitted to use bilingual translation dictionaries may also be allowed up to a maximum of 25% extra time, depending on need, if they have been resident in the UK for less than two years at the time of the examination, the candidate still has a very limited knowledge of the English language, extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working.</p> <p>For aural tests, clear amplification may be necessary to improve the candidate's ability to hear, or a transcript of a listening test may be read to enable the candidate to also lip/speech-read. The centre must consult a specialist teacher, i.e. a qualified Teacher of the Deaf, to identify the most appropriate arrangement for a candidate with hearing loss. The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a Listening examination.</p> <p>Extra time of 25% should always be considered on account of the additional repetition which may be required. Additionally, 25% extra time may also be required considering the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties in following speech at normal speed. In very rare and exceptional circumstances the candidate may require up to 50% extra time.</p>	



Sign language interpreter	<p>A trained adult who presents the questions in a different language without:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changing the meaning.</li> <li>• providing any additional information; or</li> <li>• providing an explanation as to what the question requires of the candidate.</li> </ul>	Students whose 'normal way of working' requires sign language interpretation.
	<p>A Sign Language Interpreter is not a reader. However, the same person may act as a reader and a Sign Language Interpreter. Permission must have been given for the use of a reader and a Sign Language Interpreter.</p> <p>The Sign Language Interpreter can sign the instructions and questions to candidates taking written papers except in Modern Foreign Languages or English, Irish or Welsh Language examinations.</p> <p>The Sign Language Interpreter may repeat the translation if requested to do so by the candidate. An alternative translation of the carrier language may be provided. However, under no circumstances may an explanation of the question or clarification of the carrier language be given. These actions would be deemed as giving the candidate an unfair advantage and may constitute malpractice. Candidates may only sign their answers in question papers or in controlled assessment/coursework where it is possible to finger spell the answers or where the answers involve single words.</p> <p>Sign Language interpretation is done 'live' in the presence of the candidate during the examination to allow for the candidate's regional variations in BSL/ISL signs.</p> <p>Consequently, sign language interpretation cannot be checked by the awarding body for accuracy. Great care must be taken not to disadvantage or advantage the candidate.</p> <p>Candidates requiring the use of a Sign Language Interpreter may need to be accommodated separately in which case a separate invigilator will be required.</p>	
Alternative site	<p>The candidate will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking examinations in the centre; or</li> <li>• Social, Mental and Emotional Needs</li> </ul>	<p>The candidate has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect giving rise to</li> <li>• persistent and significant difficulties; or</li> <li>• a temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination(s).</li> </ul>
	<p>The centre must be satisfied that the candidate is able to take examinations.</p> <p><b>The SENCo, or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities, must produce written evidence confirming the need for an alternative site arrangement</b></p>	

	<b>to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request.</b>	
Practical assistance	<p><b>Is not a reader or a scribe.</b> The same person may act as a practical assistant, a reader and/or a scribe if permission has been given for these arrangements.</p> <p><b>The regulations for the use of each arrangement must be strictly adhered to.</b></p>	Students with poor motor co-ordination or/and <u>severe</u> vision impairment.
	<p>A practical assistant must not be allowed to carry out physical tasks or demonstrate physical abilities where they form part of the assessment objectives. A practical assistant will not normally be permitted in subjects such as Art &amp; Design, Design &amp; Technology and Music.</p> <p>Candidates using a practical assistant in externally set practical or written examinations may need to be accommodated separately, in which case a separate invigilator will be required.</p> <p>The invigilator must be made aware, prior to the examination, of the particular task(s) the practical assistant will be performing.</p>	
Other arrangements	<p>Amplification equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille</li> <li>• Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind</li> <li>• Coloured Overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers)</li> <li>• Low vision aid/magnifier</li> <li>• Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners</li> </ul>	
Exemptions	<p>An exemption is an agreement reached by an awarding body, before the examination, for a disabled candidate to miss a component or components. An indication will be placed on the candidate's certificate to show that not all of the assessment objectives were accessible.</p> <p>An exemption will not be granted if an alternative and accessible route through a qualification is available to the candidate.</p> <p>The centre in the first instance should select 'Other'. This will result in an automatic rejection. The centre must then make a referral to the relevant awarding body. The centre must indicate the candidate's disability in order that an awarding body has the necessary information to hand when considering an application for an exemption. The awarding body must be assured that the exemption is an arrangement of the last resort.</p> <p>In Functional Skills English where barriers to access remain, candidates can be exempted from up to two of the three assessed components. Such an arrangement does not apply to Functional Skills ICT and Mathematics qualifications, as these qualifications consist of only one component.</p>	

## How are Exam Access Arrangements applied for?

Students need to be tested at each Key Stage for EAA. Just because they were entitled to EAA at KS2 does not automatically entitle them to it at KS3 or KS4. Therefore, the Specialist Teacher tests students who are referred to us, or who have had EAA in earlier Key Stages. The Specialist Teacher will assess students using a variety of nationally recognised tests.

The tests that the Specialist Tester uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice. The test that the Specialist Tester uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further EAA, the Specialist Tester will arrange this. Following a report produced by the Specialist Tester an application is made to the Exam Boards for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s. Students are tested formally in the summer term of Year 9/ Autumn term of Year 10 in order to comply with the 26-month rule; so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 10 and 11.

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## What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from Specialist Teacher or Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests
- Medical evidence from a consultant

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## How would students be identified for Exam Access Arrangements?

- From baseline testing completed on the Cognitive Ability Tests (CAT)
- From an EHCP
- Subject Teacher Referral

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## Baseline Assessment in Year 7

All students in Year 7 are tested using Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), Reading and Comprehension. These tests can help identify learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The SENCo will contact parents where this is the case, do further testing, and if necessary, put an appropriate intervention into place.

## Parent Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

As a part of our support for students, we annually review and update our information regarding any student SEND or Medical needs that may impact upon their ability to access examinations fairly. Students’ needs may have changed over time and therefore this is an important process to ensure our records are accurate as possible. **If your child has an additional need, existing or new (Medical or SEND) that you feel will impact their ability to access examinations in the long-term, the schools microsoft form must be completed on an annual basis.**

In the interest of fairness an annual review will take place of all exam access arrangements at the end of each academic year in preparation for the following year’s assessments. At this point a Microsoft form is shared with parent/carers. This is the formal opportunity for a parent or carer to raise a request for EAA.

**The most recent request for EAA referrals through Microsoft form was sent to all Parents/Carers via Synergy on: 13th June 2023.**

**Deadline for submission: 1st July 2023.**

Parent/carers should aim to provide the following evidence in support of their request:

- Records of timed homework that your child has struggled to complete in the allocated time (eg Sparxs Maths)
- Incomplete assessments
- Statements of needs
- Letter from a consultant

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## Teacher Referral

As with Parent Referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENCo where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Where the SENCo identifies a possible need for EAA a laptop or rest breaks may be offered in the first instance. This is then used as proof to JCQ and the exam boards of a history of need. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCo initially if they feel that a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting parents about their concerns. The SENCo will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

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## Can I submit a Private Educational Psychologists Reports?

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCo as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or EAA.

Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money. This therefore means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is 'either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Often private educational psychologists, recommend that children should receive EAA which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Teacher) recommends. We will also look for evidence of a history of need.

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## What happens if my child had exam access arrangements in a previous key stage?

Students who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, it doesn't necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had a Reader for KS2 may not qualify for a Reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria.

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## How do staff and parents know whether a student has Exam Access Arrangements?

All staff can access the list on Staff Shared Area. It is reviewed annually and updated monthly or whenever students become entitled to updated EAA. The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in SIMs, are shared on a need-to-know basis.

Staff will be informed of any changes to the EAA list via email and pastoral log in synergy.

Parents will be informed of any relevant tests results via a letter home which states what they are entitled to, why and when.

## What happens if a student does not use their EAA?

In the event that a student does not wish to make use of their EAA in any given exam, they will be required to sign a form to indicate that they were aware that EAA was available to them, but it was their choice not to use them. However, where a student is deemed under the Mental Health Act (Code of Practice 2014) to be unable to make this decision the use of EAA will actively be encouraged.

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## What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the SENCo, Specialist Teaching Assistant or Exams officer then applies to the exam boards. The feedback is instant and at this point the EAA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed of the EAA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, health & Care Plans (EHCP)
- Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

The deadline for submitting applications for access arrangements and modified papers on-line for GCSE and GCE qualifications is: **September of the qualification year.**

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE and GCE qualifications **must** be processed using access arrangements online **as early as possible.**

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist teacher access arrangement report.