



**BROOKTHORPE
HALL SCHOOL**

Access Arrangements Policy 2025/26

Brookthorpe Hall School
part of
Options Autism

Access Arrangements Policy

Centre name	Brookthorpe Hall School
Centre number	
Date policy first created	12/11/2024
Current policy approved by	Jon Bell
Current policy reviewed by	Chloe Boothman
Date of next review	30/09/2026

Key staff involved in the procedures

Role	Name
Head of centre	Jon Bell
Senior leader(s)	Deputy Headteacher Curriculum Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) & SENDCo
Exams Officer	Chloe Boothman
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Sabrina Chowdhury (Deputy Headteacher Inclusion/SENCo)
Other staff (if applicable)	

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Brookthorpe Hall School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

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 Brookthorpe Hall School 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

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. (AA 4.2)

The principles for Brookthorpe Hall School to consider 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 a disabled candidate (AA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements 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)
- 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. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AA 4.2)
- It is important that SENCOs consider and, where appropriate, implement access arrangements that will prepare candidates for the workplace. 25% extra time may not always be the most appropriate arrangement. SENCos should instead consider alternative arrangements, such as assistive technology, listening to music/white noise, supervised rest breaks or a timer (AA Int)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in Equalities Policy (Exams).

2. The assessment process

At Brookthorpe Hall School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake a full assessment (AA 7.3)

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Brookthorpe Hall School:

- The Schools HR Officer checks all required qualifications as part of the organisations' recruitment process
- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the examinations officer, SENCo or head of centre.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

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

Brookthorpe Hall School confirms:

- All students of Brookthorpe Hall School hold an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) which provides a history of special educational needs for the individual.
- In preparation for examinations and formal assessment, a picture of need is collected for each student from subject leads to help determine the level of classroom support that is appropriate and required for each individual.
- Those who demonstrate persistent difficulties are individually flagged to the SENCo for a picture of need to be developed and assessment can be undertaken by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5), and the most appropriate support is applied for from the awarding bodies. The student's normal way of working is reflected in the Access Arrangement which has been put in place.
- Prior to application, Form 9's are completed to detail the student's current difficulties to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in examinations, summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff (AA 5.2.3).
- Once the Form 9 is completed an application on Access Arrangements Online (AAO).

Recording Evidence of Need

Brookthorpe Hall School confirms:

- All assessment evidence is retained and kept on individual files for each student who have Access Arrangements in place.
- Where a student has complex needs including communication and interaction needs; a learning difficulty with a current EHCP; sensory or physical needs; social, emotional and mental health needs; or a medical condition formally diagnosed by a registered specialist; which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her way of working, a Form 9 is completed and supported with a current EHCP which confirms the candidate's difficulty (AA 5.2.3).

Picture of need/normal way of working

Brookthorpe Hall School confirms:

- Teachers and support staff are asked to make individual comments with regards to those students who have been identified as having specific difficulties. They are asked to complete a Pupil Picture of Need form which includes responding to the following questions:
 - How has this student's difficulty impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom?
 - What support is regularly provided for this student? *Tick-sheet provided*
 - Provide evidence of examples such as unfinished timed tests or handwriting samples, which are then kept on file.
 - Information collected in Year 9 or at the earliest opportunity should the pupil start after Year 9.

- Information regarding students specific circumstances or learning difficulties are kept on file along with reports from outside agencies, parents or students own concerns.
- Those students who have been awarded an access arrangements will continue to receive that provision routinely in the classroom as their normal way of working. The support given in the centre reflects the arrangement put in place for the examination series.

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

AAO is accessed through 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.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

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.

The assessor retains all original test papers, work samples and other supporting evidence along with a copy of the form and correspondence with parents/carers/outside agencies within each student's clinical file.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustment

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by SENCo. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENCo.

• The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Brookthorpe Hall School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

• Alternative rooming arrangements

The Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy details the criteria Brookthorpe Hall School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or 1:1 invigilation.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to submit applications for approval using AAO
- SENCo to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or 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) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AA 8.6)
- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to order modified papers