



Wakefield Grammar School Foundation

Document Reference	WGSF Exam Access Arrangements Policy
Version Number	V1.00
Author / Lead / Job Title	James Summers, SENDCo
Consultation	Jayne Windeatt
Checker Person Name / Title	Martin Shevill, Chair of Governors (and Deputy Chair of Education Committee)
Quality Assurance	
Name of Approver / Committee	Education Committee
Date Approved	12.11.2025
Date of Next Review (Annual)	November 2026

CHANGE RECORD - REVIEW PERIOD (Annual)

Version	Date	Change details
V1.00	Sept 2025	New Policy written

To be published on the following:

Staff shared	X	School website	X
---------------------	----------	-----------------------	----------

WGSF Exam Access Arrangements Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

At the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation (WGSF), we are fully committed to ensuring that education is accessible to all. We recognise that some pupils may require support and additional arrangements to be able to access and undertake exams. This policy outlines the school's procedures for identifying and applying for access arrangements before an exam and the reasonable adjustments that will be put in place as required.

2.1 Linked Policies

WGSF Exams Policy (*internal staff policy*)

WGSF Exams Word Processor Policy (*internal staff policy*)

[WGSF SEND Policy](#)

[WGSF Data Protection Policy](#)

[WGSF Privacy Notice](#)

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure WGSF fulfils its responsibilities concerning the identification, request, and implementation of access arrangements. This document details the school's procedures for Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs) in compliance with JCQ regulations for 2025–2026 and relevant legislation, accordance with The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, 2015, The Equality Act, 2010 and The Children and Families Act, 2014. It offers guidance to teachers and parents on supporting pupils with learning needs, including those diagnosed with SEND, as part of the school's commitment to facilitating equitable access and provision.

2.2 This policy ensures that:

- Candidates defined as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 are not put at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers.
- Pupils' individual needs are recognised and supported promptly.
- Adjustments accurately reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Exam integrity is upheld while ensuring fairness and equality.

2.3 The policy is reviewed each year to ensure compliance with the latest JCQ guidelines on access arrangements for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties.

2.4 General Principles:

- The school adheres to the JCQ's Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance (JCQ – AARA 2025 – 26). EAAs are granted based on clear evidence of need and reflect the candidate's normal way of working.
- 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 SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- The SENDCo makes decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre as 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 SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
- 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.

3 Exam Access Arrangements

- 3.1 Exam Access Arrangements are adjustments made to exam conditions, designed to allow candidates with specific needs to demonstrate their abilities without altering the exam's difficulty.

JCQ 2025–2026 Definition:

“Access Arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.”

- 3.2 Reasonable Adjustments Defined - The Equality Act 2010 stipulates that reasonable adjustments are actions implemented to prevent disabled individuals from experiencing significant disadvantages relative to non-disabled persons. Such adjustments are required to be both practical and proportionate.

Common examples include:

- Extra time
- Use of a reader
- A scribe
- Rest breaks
- Modified exam papers

- 3.3 When and Why pupils Might Need EAAs - Pupils may require EAAs for reasons including:

- Specific learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Physical disabilities or health conditions
- Sensory impairments (e.g., visual or hearing impairments)
- Mental health difficulties (e.g., anxiety, depression)
- Temporary injuries (e.g., a broken arm before an exam)
- Developmental or communication needs

The core purpose of EAAs is not to offer an unfair advantage, but to remove barriers and ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Following JCQ 2025–2026 regulations, responsibilities are distributed as follows:

4.1 Head of Centre:

- Maintain thorough familiarity with annually updated JCQ publications and ensure relevant centre staff are appropriately referred and directed to these resources.
- Clearly define and document procedures for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for individual candidates.
- Explicitly outline staff roles and responsibilities regarding the identification, request, and implementation of access arrangements within this policy.
- Appoint a qualified specialist assessor and retain documented evidence of their appropriate qualifications on file. Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in EAA 7.3.

4.2 The qualification of the current assessors:

Name	Job Title	Qualification
Sarah Armson	Access Arrangements Assessor (AAA - Patoss)	National Award for SEN Coordination Qualification
Andrea Beall	Access Arrangements Assessor (AAA - Patoss)	National Award for SEN Coordination Qualification
James Summers	SENDCo	PGDiploma SpLD Dyslexia

All Assessors working within the centre or appointed by the centre must submit copies of certificates confirming their relevant professional qualifications to assess for Access Arrangements. Copies of these certificates are signed by the Head of Centre and kept on digital file by the SENDCo.

4.3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo):

- Oversees the access arrangements process.
- Identifies candidates who may require Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs).
- Collects and maintains evidence of need.
- Communicates with parents, pupils, staff, and external professionals.
- Collaborates with specialist assessors to coordinate assessments when necessary.
- Ensures all assessments and implemented arrangements comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance.
- Confirms that arrangements reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Considers the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

4.4 Teaching Staff:

- Raise initial concerns with SENDCo.
- Prior to assessment provide feedback and documentation of the pupil's typical approach to learning, current challenges within the classroom, performance in timed internal assessments or mock examinations, and their usual methods of working (Normal way of working).
- Provide a sample of internal school tests/mock exam papers across relevant subjects showing the application of 25% extra time.
- Provide comments and observations in relevant subjects as to why the candidate needs 25% extra time and how they use the 25% extra time awarded.
- Support pupils in using EAAs during internal assessments.

4.5 Exams Officer:

- Implements EAAs during internal and external exams.
- Ensuring all access arrangements are in place for each external exam eg GCSE exams
- Works with invigilators to ensure arrangements are in place.
- Orders modified exam papers and manages logistical arrangements.
- Keeps detailed records of arrangements used for each exam session.

5. **Assessment Process**

- 5.1 Identifying the Candidate's Needs - Early identification is vital to ensuring appropriate pupil support and may be raised by teachers, parents, or the pupils themselves. The SENDCo gathers information through observations, assessments, discussions, and by reviewing external documentation such as medical, disability and mental health reports or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Each pupil's needs are considered on an individual basis, using school evidence and in line with the SEND Policy, rather than being determined solely by diagnosis. Parents or guardians are required to provide official diagnostic documentation/reports from a consultant to the SENDCo. It should be noted that a diagnosis alone does not guarantee entitlement to exam access arrangements.
- 5.2 Evidence Required for EAA Applications - The online application process will provide prompts as to the evidence required. Evidence and history of need and provision will be provided by the SENDCo as required for each access arrangement applied for.

Evidence will be stored for inspection purposes in line with JCQ guidance. Core evidence required will typically include, but is not limited to the following:

- EHC plans
- Pupil Passports, IEP's and or a one-page profile.
- Fully completed Form 8 with an assessment carried out by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty.
- Where applicable, qualifying scores from a recognised test carried out by a suitably qualified assessor.
- Teaching staff testimony about a pupil's difficulties and evidence of normal way of working.
- Specialist evidence when appropriate (completion of Form 9)

- History of support and provision in place for the pupil in line with the requested access arrangement or reasonable adjustment

The SENDCO will recognise that access arrangements and reasonable adjustments may differ for a pupil depending on each assessment's specification, and arrangements will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis. The final decision on access arrangements will be made under the professional judgement of the SENDCO, which is in line with JCQ guidelines. External agency advice and reports (including those privately commissioned) where a parent produces advice or report on their child's needs, school must follow the guidelines of JCQ 4.2.1:

"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 times assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCO to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations".

5.3 Normal Way of Working

Normal way of working refers to arrangements a pupil regularly uses in daily lessons, learning activities, and internal assessments.

Examples include:

- A pupil who usually types assignments may need a word processor in exams.
- A pupil who uses rest breaks due to processing speed in lessons should have them during exams.
- A visually impaired pupil who requires enlarged text in class will need modified exam papers.

JCQ requires that EAAs are based on a consistent and genuine pattern of support, rather than a one-off request.

5.4 The Assessment Process

- Before assessment: Concerns are raised by the teacher, and initial evidence is collected by the SENCo. Parental consent is obtained if a formal assessment is needed.
- During assessment: Specialist assessors conduct testing according to JCQ guidelines. Evidence from staff and health professionals is compiled.
- After assessment: The SENCo determines whether the evidence meets the JCQ threshold. Applications are submitted to JCQ via the Access Arrangements Online (AAO) system. Parents and pupils are notified in writing about approved arrangements, which are then put in place for internal exams and reviewed regularly.

5.5 Dealing with cases of Anxiety (including exam anxiety)

- We acknowledge that many pupils may experience some level of anxiety around tests and exams. Alongside our teaching staff, our dedicated pastoral team is highly experienced in providing strategies to help pupils manage the symptoms and effects of anxiety. We are committed to maintaining a positive and supportive environment that encourages resilience and motivates pupils to achieve their best.

- Access arrangements cannot be granted for anxiety unless there is a formal medical diagnosis from a consultant and/or the pupil is taking prescribed medication for the condition. Any letter confirming a diagnosis and/or medication must come from a consultant, and it is the responsibility of parents or guardians to provide this documentation to the SENDCO. In addition, for access arrangements to be approved for pupils with anxiety, there must also be clear evidence that the arrangements reflect the pupil's normal way of working prior to the exam period.

6. Preparing for an assessment

6.1 Once an access arrangement has been approved, the school will:

- Inform the pupil's parents in writing.
- Inform the pupil that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access Arrangements Online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Inform the exam officer and make an access arrangement list available to them.
- Ensure all staff are aware of which pupils have had approved access arrangements via SIMs.
- Where a candidate requires access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, appropriate opportunities to practise using them will be provided. The school will be particularly mindful of the need to practise using their access arrangements, prior to an exam.
- For internal assessments, teaching staff will inform the SENDCO well in advance of the assessment date, to allow sufficient time for access arrangements to be prepared.
- Pupils will be informed to raise any concerns or questions with the SENDCO about their access arrangements before an exam, and what to do if they encounter any issues during an exam.

6.2 The Use of word processors

- Pupils who normally work with a word processor for internal assessments as their normal way of working will be permitted to have the same access in external examinations where appropriate.
- A word processor will also be used where necessary due to a temporary injury or impairment. In most cases, word processors will have the spelling and grammar check disabled.
- The SENDCO will consider if a word processor would benefit a pupil where an additional need is identified. Word processors will only be used where they meet an additional need and will not be permitted simply because a pupil prefers it or can work faster using one.
- The SENDCO will prepare and produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the school's criteria for awarding and allocating word processors for exams.

6.3 Appeals Procedure - Relating to centre decisions on access arrangements.

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that candidates receive access arrangements to which they are entitled, and which are their 'normal way of working' within the centre. If a candidate has concerns that they should have access arrangement(s) in place which have not been identified by the Learning Support department the candidate should first speak with the Learning Support department to discuss these concerns.

The Learning Support department will follow the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments regulations to test, gather evidence and put in place access arrangements as appropriate. If, following discussion with Learning Support, the candidate still has concerns that appropriate access arrangements have not been put in place then the candidate should make an appeal in writing to the SLT Exams Lead. The appeal must detail where the candidate feels the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments have not been followed in their case. The SLT Exams Lead and SENDCo will review the appeal together, alongside the relevant regulations to determine whether the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments has been properly applied. The final decision will rest with the SENDCo.

7. Maintaining Records

The SENDCO will keep detailed records of all essential information on file for an application. This will include a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need as required in line with JCQ guidelines. All personal data will be treated confidentially and handled in line with the WGSF Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice for Pupils and their Families.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Head, SENDCo, Governing Body and exam officer on an annual basis, in line with JCQ regulations.