

## **Tadcaster Grammar School**



## **Access Arrangements**

Date	September 2025
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E/SLT	JLE

Regulations for examination access arrangements and reasonable adjustments require a whole school approach. It is therefore the responsibility of the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the SENCo, the exams officer and where relevant the SEN Governor to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of this policy and the regulations set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the Standards and Testing Agency (STA).

All parties must ensure that the SENCo has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and familiarise themselves with the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

JCQ regulations state that the SENCo, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within the school.

Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENCo in identifying, determining and implementing appropriate and practicable access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

School 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 school. 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.

The SENCo must work with teaching staff, support staff and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

Where appropriate, the SENCo will also need to work with specialist advisory teachers, educational psychologists and medical professionals.

The SENCo must work with the centre's appointed assessor to ensure a consistent, joined-up process. This will also allow the SENCo to discuss individual candidate cases with the assessor before making final decisions.

### **What are access arrangements?**

JCQ outlines that additional help in public exams, known as access arrangements, is for students who have learning difficulties and disabilities. This is to allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment.

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments for a candidate who has a disability as defined by the act which would present a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

Whether an adjustments is deemed 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.

### **How will school decide who qualifies for help?**

The rules laid down by the JCQ on behalf of the exam boards will always be consulted. For each type of access arrangement, there are particular evidence requirements that JCQ sets which must be met for the pupil to qualify. The JCQ inspects schools to check that the evidence requirements are strictly followed. The JCQ rules are detailed and are updated every year. For full information, the rules can be accessed on the [JCQ website](#) and [STA website](#).

To be considered for access arrangements there must first be a recognition that there is a need for support to be put in place.

Our Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy at Tadcaster Grammar School helps to identify all pupils who have learning difficulties and/or a disability. They will be recognised by being on the SEN register or the Recognised Educational Need register. All students on these registers will automatically be considered for access arrangements when they are placed on either of these registers.

Where we are aware that a pupil or student may need access arrangements, we will gather the necessary evidence of need from class teachers and others (such as parents, the student and any other staff and external professionals involved). We may need to carry out assessment tests (for example of reading, spelling, comprehension, writing or processing speed).

Documents such as an EHC Plan or a report from a professional such as an educational psychologist may be supportive but do not automatically entitle a pupil to access arrangements without additional supportive evidence from the school.

Where there is a recognised need, there must then be a recognised way of working, known as a 'normal way of working'.

Where there is a recognised need, evidence of this need and of a normal way of working, school will put in place access arrangements. (See Appendix 1)

### **How do we define a learning need and/or a disability?**

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 defines 'special educational need' as a learning difficulty or disability which calls for specialist educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010, defines a disability as a substantial and long-term impairment, 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.

Our school SEN Policy outlines this in the following way:

*A child is considered to have special educational needs (SEN) if they have an identified learning difficulty or disability which requires specialist educational provision.*

*A pupil will be recognised as having a learning difficulty where there is a significantly greater difficulty in learning for them than for the majority of their peers. A disability which prevents or hinders a pupil from making use of facilities and provisions which are available for all pupils would be considered a learning difficulty. A formal medical diagnosis or assessment is not a requirement.*

*Specialist educational provision is defined as provision that is additional and/or different to the educational provision which is offered to all our pupils as inclusive and universal practice.*

*Pupils should not be regarded as SEN for the following reasons:*

- difficulties with understanding English because English is not the child's first language (EAL);*
- academic achievement and attainment which is at a lower level to a child's peer group or lower than age related expectations;*
- concerns over the academic progress a child is making;*

- concerns with a child's behaviour, including persistent withdrawn or disruptive behaviours;
- low attendance.

*However, each of these should be considered as part of a holistic review of each child's individual need for support.*

*A child is considered to have a recognised educational need (REN) if they have an identified learning difficulty or disability, but do not require specialist educational provision.*

## **Requests for Access Arrangements**

Teachers can refer a student to the SEN team when they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class, even when resources and activities are being adapted to support their learning. All of a student's teachers will be invited to contribute supporting information to support a decision about the most suitable course of action. A student's work and assessments may also be consulted, and in some cases an observation of the student in a lesson. If investigations highlight substantial difficulties, support will be put in place, and this support may include access arrangements.

Parents/carers/guardians can contact the school to ask for advice about a need and/or access arrangements if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. The SEN Team will investigate their concerns requesting information from all teachers, complete assessment and/or advise parents how to obtain further testing for additional needs that must be identified or diagnosed by a specialist, for example a medical professional. Following this, a decision will be made about the most suitable course of action, which may include access arrangements if investigations highlight substantial difficulties.

The process for putting access arrangements in place can take time, the arrangements have to be proved to be normal working practice and testing may need to be organised and arranged. Therefore, there are deadlines for referrals that school will follow.

Regulations also state that they should be in place at the start of the course being studied.

The deadline for referrals for access arrangements for Year 11 examinations is May half-term in the summer term of Year 9. Any referrals after these date will be considered late referrals. (See appendix 2)

The final deadline for all referrals will be the end of Spring Term in Year 10 for KS4 examinations and the end of the Spring Term in Year 12 for KS5 examinations. In order

for school to comply with the regulations of the JCQ and meet all of their deadlines no new referrals can be accepted after this deadline.

### **Appropriate Applications for Access Arrangements**

School can only make applications for access arrangements where there is sufficient evidence that there is a required need for this adjustment during the examination period. The evidence required is set out by the JCQ. This may be an EHC plan or a medical diagnosis. Where there is no appropriate medical evidence in place that will meet the requirements set out by the JCQ, school will carry out access arrangement testing. This will determine if a candidate qualifies under the JCQ guidelines. These assessments will be carried out by an appropriately trained assessor who is appointed by the school.

The adjustments must also be evidenced as an established way of working for the candidate.

There is then also a requirement to prove that the arrangements are used and have an impact. Access arrangements must therefore continue to be monitored when put in place. When a student has received access arrangements previously, it does not necessarily follow that they will continue to receive these adjustments as their needs may have changed.

### **KS2 Access Arrangements**

Where access arrangements are in place for Key Stage 2 assessments, these are determined by the STA. JCQ regulations are in place for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 assessments, and there will be different qualifying measures.

The needs of students may also change. For example, a student whose baseline testing at KS2 shows a reading speed score below the threshold required for access arrangements may not qualify for the same at KS4 as their reading speed may have improved to the extent that it no longer meets the exam board criteria. Conversely, it may be that students who have previously coped with their learning difficulties during Primary School, require further support as their educational career progresses. A history of need must still be evidenced, but it may not be initiated from Key Stage 2 data.

### **How will Access Arrangements be used in KS3?**

Whilst information from KS2 will be considered, it is not always the case that the same arrangements will be in place for KS3. This is due to the differences outlined above.

A register of arrangements is used for all year groups and shared with all teachers. Teachers will be expected to use their professional judgment as to when the access arrangements will need to be applied. We would expect this to be for assessments and any important and/or lengthy piece of work, but this may not always be the case. For example, additional time may not be required in an assessment that is not timed, or students may find it easier to write rather than type.

Teachers should communicate with students when access arrangements are to be used so that it is clear and understood by all.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that all the arrangements are in place within the classroom.

### **How will Access Arrangements be used in KS4?**

Any Access Arrangements in place for students in KS4 will be in place for all assessments and tests.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that all the arrangements are in place for classroom assessments.

For mock exams it is the responsibility of the exams team to ensure the arrangements are in place.

### **Applying for Access Arrangements**

Once a student has a completed Form 8 or Form 9 in place which outlines the evidence of need and a personal data consent form has been signed by the examination candidate then school will apply to the awarding bodies who will determine if the adjustments made are approved.

A record of evidence, required forms and approval of the arrangements will be kept securely by the SENCo. Each student will have a separate file which can be provided to inspectors who will inspect the school to ensure all regulations are being followed correctly.

## **Sharing Information**

An access arrangements register will outline all the arrangements for all students in school who qualify for access arrangements. This will be linked directly to the SEN and REN register, which can be accessed by all teachers and support staff in school.

Each individual student will also have their arrangements listed on Provision Map, which links directly to teachers' seating plans to share this provision. On provision map, access arrangements are highlighted as 'access arrangements' to differentiate them from other provisions and classroom advice. Teachers can then clearly identify what support is required for assessments and examinations.

Not all students will require their access arrangements for all of their exams. For example, they may type their English exams, but handwrite their maths exam. Extra Time may also not be required in all exams. A record of which exams the adjustments are to be in place for will be recorded clearly for the exams team to ensure that adjustments are applied where they are required.

## **Factors To Consider**

The decision to award access arrangements for students will be determined by the SENCo who at all times will consult the requirements set out by JCQ.

Some students may require access arrangements only in specific exams or practical assessments, for example, the use of a practical assistant.

Some access arrangements cannot be applied to some examinations. For example, students completing a practical assessment where time is explicitly part of the assessment objective. Extra time may be awarded where a physical disability or a sensory impairment has a substantial and adverse effect on their manual dexterity or physical coordination. The candidate would be demonstrably slower because of their disability or impairment. JCQ state that only in 'rare and exceptional circumstances' will candidates with slower processing, poor memory skills, difficulties with sequencing and/or visual perceptual weakness have additional time in such examinations and assessments. There must be evidence that there is a substantial impact on their ability to perform the skills to their elected level when under timed conditions.

Methods of assessment vary, so the demands on students will vary. To maintain the integrity of the examination process there must be evidence that the nature of a student's learning need and/or disability has an impact on their ability to perform the assessment task they are required to do. Extra time may not be appropriate, therefore, in practical examinations.



## **Communication with parents/carers/guardians**

When students join our school Year 7, parents/carers/guardians of all of those identified as having SEN will be invited to a welcome meeting to discuss support and provision. Access arrangements and the processes outlined in this policy will be shared with them.

At the beginning of each school year, in September, the updated and reviewed policy will be made available for all parents/carers/guardians to access.

Each students' access arrangements will be made available on Provision Map. All parents of students with SEN are invited to join Provision Map.

School will always communicate with parents/carers/guardians where access arrangement testing is to take place. The outcomes of these assessments will also be shared with them.

After access arrangements have been determined at the start of Year 10 and Year 12, parents/carers/guardians will be given notice of what access arrangements will be in place for their child. Any changes to these arrangements will also be communicated with parents/carers/guardians.

## **Maintaining the integrity of the examination process**

School must maintain the integrity of the examination process at all times. In order to meet the criteria set out by the JCQ that access arrangements and reasonable adjustments must be an established way of working for each student; the arrangements for KS4 and KS5 external examinations should be made at the beginning of the course being studied, if not before.

For students taking exams at the end of Year 11 this will mean arrangements are in place before the end of their first term in Year 10. For students taking exams at the end of Year 12 or Year 13, this will mean that arrangements are in place before the end of the first term of Year 12.

Late applications may be considered, but only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a substantial learning difficulty that has not previously been identified.

Requests for students to have access arrangements where the student has no previous record of having a recognised learning need and/or a disability must first have their needs investigated by the school SENCo. It will be the school SENCo, with guidance from teachers and other professionals, who will determine if there is a learning need or disability that requires the consideration of access arrangements. (See Appendix 2)

If there is no time to develop an established way of working than access arrangements cannot be considered, as they would not meet the requirements set out by the JCQ.

### **Final Important Points**

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

Deadlines for submitting applications for access arrangements and modified papers online for GCSE and GCE qualifications are set by the JCQ. The deadline dates are final.

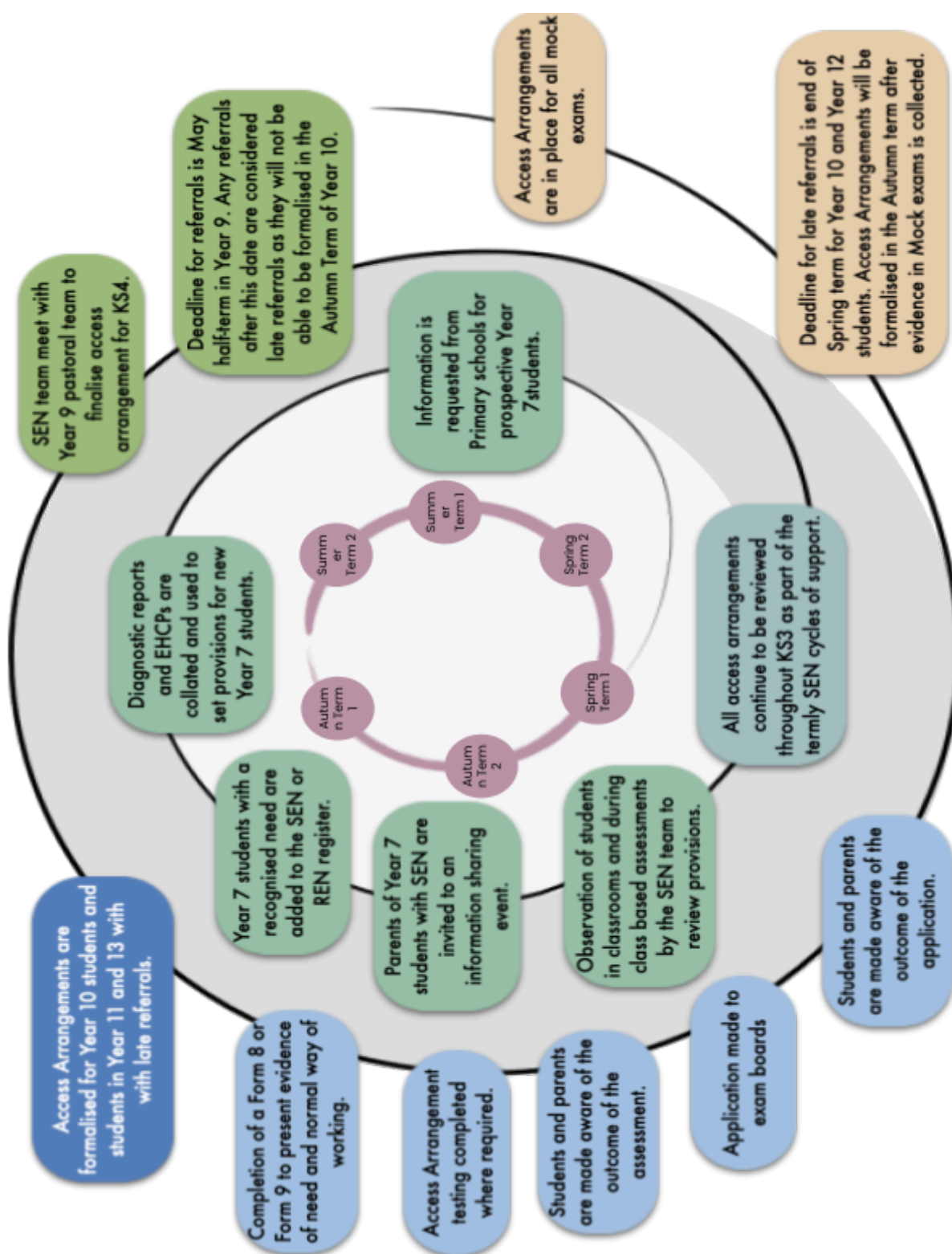
The decision to apply for access arrangements is based upon evidence of a history of need, history of provision, medical diagnosis, and an access arrangements report from a qualified assessor.

If we have evidence of students not consistently using their Formal Access Arrangements in KS4 or KS5 during mocks or external exams, these may be removed as it demonstrates this is not their normal way of working.

### **Reviewing This Policy**

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the access arrangements process at Tadcaster Grammar School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations. This will be each September, so that the new JCQ regulations can be considered and understood in preparation for the review.

## Access Arrangement Process



## Appendix 2

### Late Referrals

