Tadcaster Grammar School

Access Arrangements Policy

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E/SLT	JLE

Regulations for examination access arrangements and reasonable adjustments reflect a strict whole-centre approach. It is the collective responsibility of the Head of Centre (Headteacher), members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the SENCo, the Examinations Officer, the school's appointed Assessor(s), and the SEN Governor to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy and the statutory frameworks established by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the Standards and Testing Agency (STA).

In accordance with JCQ General Regulations:

- The Head of Centre will ensure that the SENCo is allocated sufficient time and resources to effectively manage the access arrangements process and remain fully conversant with the annual updates to the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments publication.
- The SENCo, fully supported by teaching staff and the Senior Leadership Team, holds operational leadership of the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments process within Tadcaster Grammar School.
- Teaching staff and senior leaders must actively support the SENCo in identifying, determining, and implementing appropriate, practical accommodations.

The school holds sole accountability for determining appropriate exam access arrangements for its candidates.

While advice and diagnostic reports from external organisations or independent professionals will be fully reviewed, they cannot dictate or determine the school's decisions. External professionals do not possess a working knowledge of an individual candidate's everyday needs or how their barriers impact them within the classroom and during timed assessments. Final, compliant decisions rest entirely with the SENCo and Head of centre, guided strictly by JCQ criteria and internal school data.

Collaboration and Implementation:

- The SENCo will collaborate continuously with teaching staff, pastoral teams, learning support assistants, and the examinations office to ensure that all approved accommodations are actively mirrored in internal school tests, mock cycles, and formal public examinations as the student's "normal way of working."
- Where specialised profiles emerge, the SENCo will liaise with specialist advisory teachers, educational psychologists, and medical professionals to inform the candidate's school profile.
- The Head of Centre ensures that a robust process is in place to verify the professional credentials of the school's appointed specialist assessor(s) prior to any testing. The SENCo will work in partnership with the assessor to evaluate individual candidate

cases, analyse psychometric profiles, and ensure a unified, compliant approach before finalising submissions.

What are access arrangements?

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments allowed for candidates who have verified learning difficulties, disabilities, or temporary injuries.

In strict compliance with JCQ regulations, the sole purpose of these arrangements is to remove barriers to the assessment process, allowing a student to demonstrate their knowledge without ever compromising the academic rigor, demands, or integrity of the examination. They are designed to provide equity of access, not an unfair advantage.

The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on both the awarding bodies and the school to make reasonable adjustments for a candidate who has a disability that places them at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers.

Whether an adjustment is deemed "reasonable" depends on a holistic evaluation of specific criteria outlined by the JCQ, including:

- The specific, proven clinical or educational needs of the disabled candidate.
- Whether the proposed adjustment genuinely mitigates the specific barrier faced by the student during timed testing.
- The practical ability of the centre to safely deliver the accommodation within national exam windows.

An adjustment will not be approved or implemented by Tadcaster Grammar School if it:

- Compromises the security, validity, or overarching integrity of the national assessment.
- Alters the specific skills or knowledge being assessed by the qualification (e.g., a reader cannot be used in an exam testing a student's personal reading ability).
- Involves unrealistic, unreasonable, or unsafe timeframes to implement.

The school is fully committed to ensuring that all legally approved and operationally viable adjustments are flawlessly delivered to candidates on the day of their examinations.

How will school decide who qualifies for help?

The school strictly adheres to the regulations laid down by the JCQ on behalf of the awarding bodies. For each type of access arrangement, the JCQ sets out precise evidence requirements that must be met for a student to qualify. The JCQ inspects schools via unannounced audits to check that these evidence requirements are strictly followed. JCQ

regulations are detailed and are updated annually. For full information, the statutory rules can be accessed directly on the JCQ and STA websites.

To be considered for exam access arrangements, there must first be a formalised recognition of an underlying learning need or disability.

Our Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy at Tadcaster Grammar School outlines the robust mechanisms used to identify all pupils who experience learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Identified students are recorded on either the school's SEN Register or the Recognised Educational Need (REN) Register.

Placement on either of these registers triggers an individual review by the Learning Support Team to determine whether the student's difficulties present a substantial disadvantage in timed assessments, requiring further investigation for access arrangements.

Where a potential need for an exam adjustment is flagged, the school will compile a comprehensive evidence profile. This process involves:

- Sourcing qualitative data, teacher testimonials, and timed work samples from classroom teachers and relevant staff.
- Consultation with the student, parents, and any external professionals involved.
- Where necessary, the school will carry out formal standardised assessment testing (for example, evaluating reading accuracy, spelling, comprehension, writing speed, or cognitive processing speed).

External documentation, such as an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a private report from an Educational Psychologist, provides valuable context and will be used to support an application. However, in accordance with JCQ rules, external reports do not automatically entitle a student to access arrangements without additional, concurrent evidence generated by the school.

An access arrangement will only be formally applied for and implemented when three criteria are simultaneously met:

- There is a verified, documented need for support.
- There is a clearly established and recorded normal way of working within the classroom and internal assessments.
- The configuration of the requested adjustment complies fully with current JCQ criteria.

This process is outlined in 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. In accordance with the Act, "long-term" is defined as an impairment that has lasted, or is expected to last, for **at least 12 months. 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 that 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.*

For the purposes of examinations, a student on the REN register may still qualify for access arrangements (such as supervised rest breaks or a word processor) if their condition constitutes an impairment under the Equality Act and reflects their normal way of working.

Difficulties arising from English not being the student's first language are treated as linguistic needs, not learning difficulties. EAL students may qualify for specific linguistic exam accommodations, such as bilingual dictionaries, under separate JCQ criteria.

Requests for Access Arrangements

The identification of a need for access arrangements is a collaborative process involving teaching staff, the Learning Support Team, and parents/carers.

Teachers may formally refer a student to the SEN Team if they observe persistent learning and processing barriers, even after high-quality classroom differentiation and interventions have been implemented.

Upon referral, the SEN Team will initiate a holistic review. All of the student's current teachers will be required to submit supporting evidence (e.g., timed work samples, mock scripts, or round-robin feedback forms).

The SEN Team may also conduct formal classroom observations and review internal assessment data. If these investigations confirm a substantial, long-term disadvantage, appropriate classroom support will be implemented, which may form the baseline evidence for future exam access arrangements.

Parents, carers, or guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns regarding their child's academic progress or suspected additional needs.

The SEN Team will investigate parent concerns by auditing the student's current school performance, gathering teacher feedback, and conducting internal assessments.

In strict accordance with JCQ regulations, the school does not accept independent, privately commissioned psychological or educational reports as automatic grounds for access arrangements. To protect the integrity of any future application, parents must consult the SENCo before pursuing external specialist or medical testing. Any external evidence can only be considered alongside an established, school-evidenced history of need and a "normal way of working."

Securing access arrangements is a rigorous process requiring extensive administrative processing, evidence compilation, and formalised standardised testing. While JCQ permits late applications for sudden-onset medical conditions or late-emerging needs, the school uses internal deadlines to ensure applications can be processed safely and equitably:

To ensure accommodations are firmly established as the student's "normal way of working" from the onset of Key Stage 4, the primary referral deadline is the May half-term of Year 9. Referrals received after this point will be treated as late internal entries.

The standard internal deadline for routine access arrangement referrals is the end of the Spring Term in Year 10 (for GCSE/Vocational courses) and the end of the Spring Term in Year 12 (for GCE/A-Level courses).

Referrals submitted after the Spring Term deadlines cannot be guaranteed for the upcoming examination cycle unless they are triggered by exceptional, newly arising circumstances. These include a sudden physical injury, a newly diagnosed acute medical condition supported by hospital/specialist evidence, or a critical late escalation of need formally approved by the SENCo and Head of Centre.

Appropriate Applications for Access Arrangements

The school will only submit formal applications for access arrangements when there is a robust, documented body of evidence that meets the strict criteria set out by the JCQ.

While an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or a formal medical diagnosis provides essential context, neither automatically entitles a candidate to access arrangements. In accordance with JCQ regulations, the school must still demonstrate that the underlying condition or need creates a substantial disadvantage during assessments compared to the student's peers, and that the requested adjustment reflects their established "normal way of working."

Where a student exhibits an unmapped literacy or processing barrier, the school will conduct specialist standardised testing. These assessments will be administered strictly by a qualified assessor who has been formally appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor's professional qualifications (e.g., holding a recognised Level 7 qualification in access arrangements assessment) will be held securely on file for inspection purposes.

Access arrangements are dynamic interventions that must be continuously reviewed. They are never treated as a permanent or blanket entitlement:

- Any proposed adjustment must be a well-evidenced, routine part of the student's day-to-day classroom support and internal assessment cycle before a formal application is processed.
- The SENCo and teaching staff will routinely monitor the implementation of these adjustments. "Impact" is defined by the JCQ as the effective removal of a barrier or disadvantage (e.g., allowing a student with physical or processing deficits to

complete a paper), rather than a mechanism to artificially inflate academic performance or grades.

- Because a student's developmental profile can change over time, historical arrangements (including those from previous key stages) will not automatically roll over. If ongoing monitoring or standardised tracking reveals that a student's skills have matured to the extent that the barrier no longer exists, the access arrangement will be ethically and legally withdrawn in line with JCQ guidelines.

KS2 Access Arrangements

Access arrangements for Key Stage 2 (KS2) National Curriculum assessments are governed by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA). These arrangements do not automatically transfer to Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 (GCSE/Vocational) assessments.

Secondary school access arrangements are strictly regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). JCQ operates under different qualifying measures, standardised score thresholds, and evidence requirements.

A student's developmental and academic needs naturally change over time. Consequently, a history of receiving adjustments in primary school does not guarantee eligibility at secondary school:

A student who required an arrangement at KS2 may see their literacy skills or processing speeds improve to a level that no longer meets the strict JCQ deficit thresholds at KS4.

Conversely, a student with mild learning difficulties may cope well in primary school but find that the increased reading, writing, and cognitive load of secondary school exposes a previously unevidenced barrier.

In line with JCQ regulations, the school must conduct a fresh review of any student transitioning from KS2.

While KS2 data and primary school arrangements provide valuable context to establish a "history of need," they cannot be used as the primary evidence for a Access Arrangements application. All adjustments at KS4 must be supported by current data, teacher observations, and a well-documented "normal way of working" established within the secondary school environment.

How will Access Arrangements be used in KS3?

While information from Key Stage 2 (KS2) will be fully considered as part of a student's historical profile, it does not guarantee that identical arrangements will be implemented at

Key Stage 3 (KS3). All arrangements at KS3 and KS4 must be substantiated by current school-based evidence.

The Learning Support Team maintains a centralised Access Arrangements Register for all year groups. This register is shared securely with all teaching and support staff to ensure visibility.

In accordance with JCQ regulations, access arrangements are not optional or discretionary adjustments. If a student is awarded an arrangement, it will be made available to them as their default "normal way of working" in all formal assessments, mock examinations, and substantial timed classwork.

JCQ recognises that a candidate may not require the same access arrangements across all subject specifications. The necessity of an arrangement is evaluated on a subject-by-subject basis, depending on the specific assessment methods (e.g., a student may require a word processor for extended writing in English and History, but choose to handwrite in Mathematics).

Teachers may not alter or withhold an arrangement based on ad-hoc classroom preferences. Any permanent changes to how a student uses their provision within a subject must be formally agreed upon with the SENCo and updated on the central register to preserve the evidence trail.

Teachers must proactively communicate with students prior to assessments to ensure they know their arrangements are in place and available.

It is the direct responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that all approved accommodations (e.g., laptops, extra time allocations, or separate desk space) are physically in place for classroom-based assessments.

Teachers must notify the SENCo if a student consistently refuses to use an allocated arrangement, as a persistent failure to utilise a provision will result in its removal under JCQ "normal way of working" guidelines.

How will Access Arrangements be used in KS4?

Approved access arrangements for students in Key Stage 4 (KS4) must be consistently applied across all timed assessments, formal mock examinations, and external assessments. This rigorous application ensures that the accommodations strictly mirror the candidate's established "normal way of working" as mandated by JCQ regulations.

An arrangement cannot be utilised in an external examination if it has not been routinely implemented during the student's internal preparatory assessments and mock cycles.

To ensure the seamless delivery of approved accommodations, operational duties are divided as follows:

- It is the direct responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure that all approved arrangements (e.g., providing a word processor, allocating extra time, or setting up a separate workspace) are operational and active for any in-class timed assessments.
- The implementation of arrangements during formal, whole-school mock exam cycles is a shared responsibility between the Learning Support and Examinations teams:

  The SENCo is responsible for maintaining the accurate, JCQ-approved access arrangements register and communicating this data to the Exams Officer ahead of internal entry deadlines.

  The Exams Officer/Exams Team is responsible for operationalising these arrangements within the formal exam halls or designated access accommodation rooms (e.g., scheduling separate invigilation, allocating physical laptops, and arranging readers or scribes).

The Exams Officer, guided by the official approvals secured by the SENCo via Access Arrangements Online (AAO), holds final operational responsibility for ensuring all regulatory requirements are met on the day of the external exam.

Applying for Access Arrangements

An access arrangement cannot be implemented for formal examinations until the legal application process is complete and formal approval is secured.

Once a student has a fully completed Form 8 (for learning difficulties) or Form 9 (for medical/profile-based needs) detailing a comprehensive history of need and valid test scores, the application is processed.

The SENCo is responsible for ensuring that a fully compliant, secure evidence trail is maintained for every candidate.

In accordance with JCQ regulations, the school will maintain a separate, clearly indexed file for each individual student. To satisfy unannounced, no-notice JCQ inspection audits, these files will be kept securely but remain accessible at all times to the Examinations Officer and Senior Leadership Team in the SENCo's absence.

Each individual file will contain:

- The completed Form 8 (signed and dated in all relevant sections by the qualified assessor before the application was made) or Form 9.
- The printed AAO approval notification page.

- Robust supporting evidence of the student's "normal way of working" (e.g., teacher testimonials, mock exam scripts showing extra time used in a different coloured pen, or tracking sheets).

All documentation will be retained securely until the certificates for that examination series are issued or any appeal windows have closed.

Sharing Information

The school maintains a centralised Access Arrangements Register detailing all approved adjustments for qualifying students. To ensure a holistic overview of student support, this register is linked directly to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Recognised Educational Need (REN) registers, which are accessible to all teaching and support staff.

To guarantee seamless classroom implementation, each student's approved exam accommodations are hosted on Provision Map.

These provisions are explicitly categorised as "Access Arrangements" to clearly differentiate them from standard classroom differentiation, learning plans, or general teaching advice.

Provision Map feeds this data directly into live teacher seating plans. This layout ensures that classroom teachers can instantly identify and operationalise the exact adjustments required during routine classroom activities, timed assessments, and internal examinations.

In strict compliance with JCQ guidelines, access arrangements are evaluated on a subject-by-subject basis and are only applied where a barrier exists. They are not blanket accommodations across all subjects:

A student may be approved to use a word processor for extended writing components (e.g., English or History) but opt to handwrite in calculation-based assessments (e.g., Mathematics). Similarly, Extra Time allocations may only be utilised when an assessment is strictly timed and a speed-of-processing deficit creates a disadvantage.

A definitive, subject-specific record of which exams the arrangements apply to is compiled by the SENCo.

Factors To Consider

The final decision to award and allocate access arrangements rests with the SENCo and Head of Centre, who will at all times ensure strict adherence to the statutory requirements set out by the JCQ and the relevant awarding bodies.

Access arrangements are component-specific and are not automatically applied as a blanket provision across different types of examinations:

- A student may require specific access arrangements exclusively for practical tasks or localised assessment components, such as the utilising of a Practical Assistant.
- Accommodations cannot be permitted in examinations or practical assessments where the adjustment would directly undermine or compromise the explicit Assessment Objectives. For example, extra time will not be permitted in components that explicitly test the velocity or time framework in which a skill is executed (such as physical performance, dance, or music assessments).

In strict alignment with modern JCQ core principles, 25% Extra Time is never treated as the default or first-line option for candidates experiencing assessment barriers. Extended examinations can inadvertently increase cognitive fatigue, cause loss of focus, and exacerbate exam anxiety for many students. SENCos are textually required by national guidelines to actively evaluate less intrusive, independence-promoting alternative accommodations prior to initiating applications for extra time.

Before an application for Extra Time is processed, the SENCo will formally investigate whether a student's specific needs can be effectively resolved through alternative provisions:

- Supervised Rest Breaks is the primary JCQ-recommended intervention for students presenting with medical conditions, mental health needs, or neurodivergent profiles (such as ADHD or ASD). Pausing the examination clock to allow a student to step away, decompress, or ground themselves is frequently more legally appropriate and effective than elongating the total exam duration.
- For students experiencing mechanical handwriting deficits or motor-coordination difficulties, typing via an approved word processor is the primary targeted accommodation. Assistive software, such as computer readers or examination reading pens, will similarly be prioritised to handle decoding or tracking barriers before extra time is introduced.

While the school prioritises these alternative provisions, the SENCo and Head of Centre will always apply context-driven professional judgment on a case-by-case basis. If standardised psychometric testing or classroom observation confirms a severe cognitive speed-of-processing deficit (evidenced by a standardised score below 85), 25% Extra Time will be implemented as the necessary, data-backed accommodation.

In timed practical or design examinations (e.g., Art and Design), extra time allocations are highly restricted:

- In accordance with JCQ guidance, 25% extra time may be awarded in a timed practical assessment where a candidate has a documented medical condition, physical disability, or sensory impairment that exerts a substantial, adverse effect on their manual dexterity or physical coordination. The evidence must demonstrate that

the candidate is physically and demonstrably slower at performing the assessment tasks (such as mixing media, sketching, or manipulating equipment).

- JCQ explicitly mandates that only in "rare and exceptional circumstances" will candidates with slower cognitive processing speeds, weak memory skills, sequencing difficulties, or visual-perceptual weaknesses be granted additional time for practical assessments. For these applications to be considered, there must be a compelling internal evidence profile proving that the candidate's cognitive barriers heavily impede their physical ability to demonstrate the underlying skill under timed conditions.

Where a Practical Assistant is utilised, they may carry out minor, secondary tasks (such as holding a ruler steady or safely guiding a student to a resource). However, in strict accordance with JCQ instructions, a Practical Assistant must never perform any skill that forms part of the core assessment objective or independent competency criteria being evaluated. If an assistant performs a marked skill on behalf of a student, those specific marks cannot be legally credited to the candidate.

Communication with parents/carers/guardians

Tadcaster Grammar School is committed to transparent, collaborative communication with parents, carers, and guardians regarding exam access arrangements.

When students join the school in Year 7, parents, carers, and guardians of all pupils identified on the SEN Register will be invited to a welcome meeting to discuss transition support and provision. During this meeting, the access arrangements framework and the evaluation processes outlined in this policy will be clearly shared.

At the commencement of each academic year in September, the updated and reviewed Examination Access Arrangements Policy will be published on the school website and made available to all parents, carers, and guardians.

Approved access arrangements are hosted dynamically on Provision Map. All parents and carers of students on the SEN and REN registers are securely invited to join the Provision Map platform, allowing them live, transparent access to view their child's active exam provisions and classroom adjustments.

The school will always formally communicate with parents, carers, and guardians before any formal access arrangement testing takes place.

In line with current data protection regulations, this communication serves as the official notification to the candidate and their family that their data will be processed via the secure Access Arrangements Online (AAO) portal.

Following the completion of testing, the standardised outcomes and recommendations of these specialist assessments will be shared transparently with parents and carers.

Once access arrangements have been processed and formally approved via AAO during Key Stage 4 (Year 10/11) and Key Stage 5 (Year 12/13), parents, carers, and guardians will be issued a formal notification detailing the exact adjustments that will be operational for their child's examinations. Any subsequent amendments, removals, or additions to these provisions - driven by the student's evolving "normal way of working" - will be communicated to parents and carers.

Maintaining the integrity of the examination process

Tadcaster Grammar School must maintain the integrity of the examination process at all times. To meet the strict statutory criteria set out by the JCQ, access arrangements and reasonable adjustments must reflect a student's established and documented "normal way of working."

To ensure accommodations are thoroughly practiced, integrated, and verified before formal examination series, the identification and screening process should ideally be initiated at the beginning of the course of study:

For students sitting external examinations at the end of Year 11, the screening, evidence-gathering, and assessment process will ideally be initialised during Year 9 and formalised during the autumn term of Year 10.

For students entering Key Stage 5, past access arrangements do not automatically carry over. The review and re-application process must be initiated at the start of Year 12 to ensure continuity of provision.

While early identification is highly encouraged to establish a robust evidence trail, the school recognises that learning barriers, medical conditions, and physical injuries can emerge at any stage of a student's academic career.

The school will not operate a blanket exclusion on late requests. Instead, late applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis under the following regulatory frameworks:

- Requests for students with no prior history on the SEN or REN registers must undergo a rigorous investigation led by the SENCo. The SENCo, utilising qualitative evidence from classroom teachers and standardised diagnostic testing data, will determine if a latent learning need or disability exists.
- In accordance with JCQ guidelines, if a student experiences a sudden medical crisis, a newly diagnosed acute health condition, or a physical injury (e.g., a broken dominant hand) late in Year 11 or Year 13, the requirement for a long-term "normal way of

working" is waived. The SENCo and Head of Centre will fast-track an emergency or late application supported by specialist medical evidence.

- For non-emergency, cognitive-based arrangements (such as extra time for slow processing), an application cannot be submitted if there is insufficient opportunity for the student to practice and utilise the adjustment during internal mock cycles. This restriction exists because implementing an unpracticed accommodation during an external exam violates JCQ validity standards and compromises exam integrity.

Managing Disagreements and Requests

We encourage parents and carers to advocate for their children, including discussing potential access arrangements where they believe a need exists. However, in accordance with JCQ regulations, access arrangements cannot be granted simply upon request or based solely on external private reports.

The school will consider a request when there is evidence of a persistent and significant barrier to learning. Primary evidence must be generated internally by the school, demonstrating that the requested adjustment reflects the student's "normal way of working" in the classroom, internal tests, and mock examinations.

In most cases, a common understanding is reached, and appropriate arrangements are put in place to support the student.

Some requests cannot be accommodated. The school must strictly adhere to the national criteria set by the JCQ to avoid examination malpractice. The following factors alone are not sufficient grounds for access arrangements to be considered:

- Low-level anxiety or exam nervousness
- Simply not finishing a mock paper in time (without an underlying, evidenced speed-of-processing deficit)
- Desire to achieve an aspirational or target grade
- Lower levels of academic ability

A diagnosis or additional need alone does not automatically entitle a student to access arrangements. Adjustments are only permitted if the student's difficulty creates a substantial disadvantage during assessments compared to their peers.

Where the school is unable to comply with a request, we will endeavour to explain the relevant JCQ criteria and centre data clearly to parents. If a parent disagrees with the initial decision:

- The request will be formally reviewed by the school SENCo alongside the student's teaching profile.

- The operational decision regarding assessments and testing accommodations rests with the SENCo.
- If an agreement cannot be reached, the final decision regarding centre compliance and the allocation of arrangements rests with the Head of Centre.

The school has a strict duty to maintain the integrity of the assessment process. If a parent or carer places undue or persistent pressure on school staff to implement specific arrangements without the required regulatory evidence, this will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

Continued and persistent demands for adjustments that the school has deemed inappropriate or unevidenced could be regarded as an attempt to compromise the integrity of the examination system. Where this occurs, the SENCo will formally notify the parents of this boundary.

If the pressure persists, the SENCo is required to escalate the matter to the school leadership. The Head of Centre will review the case as a matter of potential malpractice and, where necessary, report the incident to the relevant awarding bodies.

Final Important Points

All approved access arrangements covering the duration of GCSE, GCE, and vocational courses must be processed via Access Arrangements Online (AAO) as early as possible within the key stage.

The strict deadlines for submitting applications are mandated annually by the JCQ and are absolute. The school is legally unable to bypass these national cutoff dates:

- Applications for modified assessment materials (e.g., Braille, enlarged print, or modified language papers) must be submitted much earlier in the academic year (typically late January).
- Applications for standard accommodations (e.g., 25% extra time, readers, scribes, or word processors) must be finalised and approved prior to the spring deadline (typically late March).

The definitive decision to submit a formal application for access arrangements is data-driven. It is determined collectively by the SENCo and Head of Centre based upon a fully compiled evidence file, which must include:

- A documented history of learning needs and classroom difficulties.
- A recorded history of school-based provision and standard adjustments.
- A specialist access arrangements psychometric report from the school's qualified assessor (where a cognitive deficit is identified).

- A formal medical diagnosis or specialist clinical report (where a physical, sensory, or mental health condition is identified).

In strict accordance with JCQ "normal way of working" regulations, access arrangements are active accommodations, not dormant entitlements.

If the Learning Support Team or invigilators gather definitive evidence that a student is consistently choosing not to utilise their formal access arrangements during internal timed assessments, classroom tasks, or formal mock examination cycles, the provision will be formally reviewed.

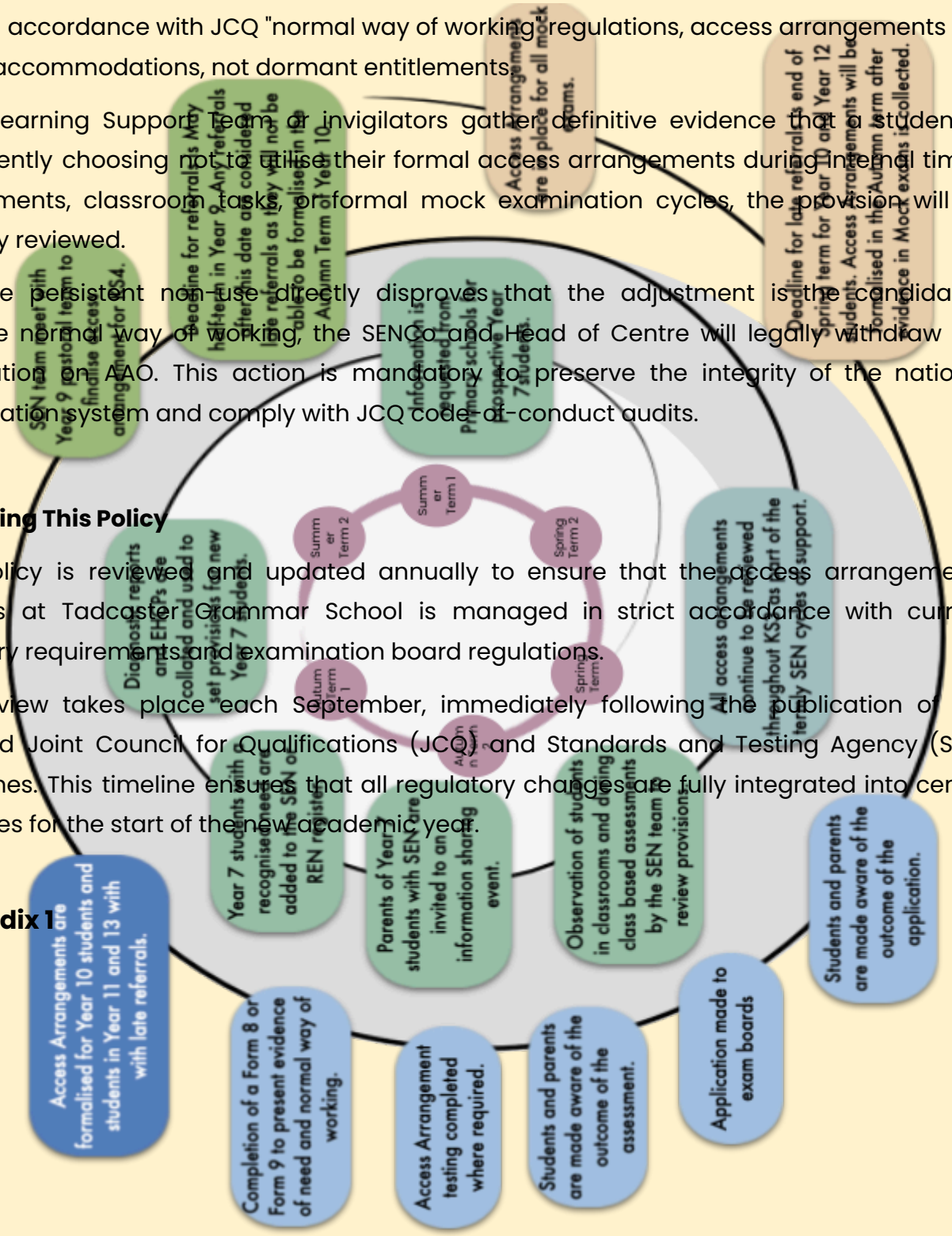
Because persistent non-use directly disproves that the adjustment is the candidate's genuine normal way of working, the SENCo and Head of Centre will legally withdraw the application on AAO. This action is mandatory to preserve the integrity of the national examination system and comply with JCQ code-of-conduct audits.

Reviewing This Policy

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the access arrangements process at Tadcaster Grammar School is managed in strict accordance with current statutory requirements and examination board regulations.

This review takes place each September, immediately following the publication of the updated Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and Standards and Testing Agency (STA) guidelines. This timeline ensures that all regulatory changes are fully integrated into centre practices for the start of the new academic year.

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Management of Referrals

