Our Lady Queen of Peace

Catholic High School

Access Arrangements Policy

2026/2027

Mission Statement

In Christ We Grow – As a learning community we live out our Mission Statement striving for excellence through caring, sharing and achieving.

Contents

- Purpose of the policy
- What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?
  Access arrangements
  Reasonable adjustments
- General principles
- Equalities Policy (Exams)
- The assessment process
  The qualification(s) of current assessor(s)
  Appointment of assessors
  Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor
  Picture of need/normal way of working
- Processing access arrangements
  Arrangements requiring awarding body approval
  Centre-delegated access arrangements
- Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements
  Word Processor Policy (Exams)
  Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy
- Appendix – table detailing types of Access Arrangement

The policy is next due for review on 1st October 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High 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.
(JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, section 5.4)
This document is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained by the EO and held by the SENDCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

> Where the SENDCo is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA, section 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*'.

This document is further referred to in this policy as AARA

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

(AARA 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. (AARA, Definitions)

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.

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine and implement appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties or disabilities, those candidates for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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.

The SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

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.

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 SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way or working.

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.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equalities Policy (Exams) can be found on the school website Exams | Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School and on the 'T' drive in the exam policies T:\# EXAMS\Policies

The Head of Centre/SLT will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20 (7). This **will** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **will not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Educational Psychologist – registered on the HCPC website as an EP.
Assessor – appropriate qualifications (on record)

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)
The Head of Centre/senior leadership team has a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but also that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.* (GR, section 5.4)

The Head of Centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) will be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCo. Document 'Process for checking AA Assessor qualification' can be found on the 'T' drive in the exam policies T:\# EXAMS\Policies
(AARA, section 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of assessors
Evidence of qualification of the assessor are held centrally on record within the school and in the Access file managed by the SENDCo.

The SENDCo **will** hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor is suitable qualified. This will be in the form, as appropriate, of:

- copy of current Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by Patoss, Dyslexia Guild or British Dyslexia Association; or
- copy of Level 7 assessment qualification certificate; or
- screenshot of HCPC registration showing the Unique Registration Number; or
- screenshot of SASC listing showing the APC code number and expiry date; or
- screenshot of listing for PAPAA Graduates showing the certificate number; or
- screenshot of listing for CPT3A Certificate Holders showing the certificate number; or
- screenshot of listing for ETAAC Certificate Holders showing the certificate number: or
- screenshot of listing for Patoss AAA Certificate Holders showing the certificate number.

(AARA, section 7.4)

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

- Following identification of learner difficulties and from the history of need produced in collaboration with teaching staff, the SENDCo makes arrangements for the candidate to be assessed by Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School's appointed assessor;
- Prior to assessment, the SENDCo provides the assessor with a picture of need, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo and assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.
- The assessor will personally conduct tests which are relevant to support an access arrangements/reasonable adjustments application and **will not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional.
- The assessor will discuss arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo, whose specific responsibility it is to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments.

(AARA, section 7.5)

The head of centre confirms that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment. (GR 5.4)

The SENDCo and assessor working within the centre always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AARA, section 7.3)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo provides the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

Subject teaching staff are consulted prior to assessments being carried out to confirm the normal way of working and to ensure the history of need is correct.

If an independent assessor is used they will contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This takes place before the candidate is assessed.

All candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo. (AARA, section 7.5)

The SENDCo refers to Supplementary Guidance March 2026 which provides additional exemplification to support understanding of the evidence that may be used to support an online application for 25% extra time.

The assessor will also take into account any medical evidence provided by the candidate. This can include:

- Educational Psychologist reports
- Speech Therapist Reports
- Occupational Therapist reports
- Letters from hospital consultants and other medical practitioners in support of the need, e.g. epilepsy, asthma, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers
- Copies of Statements of Educational Needs, or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other mental health professionals

Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD is used to record information about each candidate's access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments and is available for inspection. The candidate's name is recorded on every page of Form 8 and where the form is stored in hard copy format it will be stapled together. Form 8 will only be used for candidates with learning difficulties or where a Language Modifier is required. The completed Form 8 (parts 1, 2 and 3) enable the JCQ Inspector to see clearly the candidate's **normal way of working** and the results of assessment.

(AARA, section 7.6)

Processing access arrangements

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 a shared digital service that enables centres to request and manage pre-agreed adjustments, such as extra time, readers, scribes or modified papers, for students with specific needs, disabilities or temporary injuries in a consistent and efficient way across JCQ member qualifications.

It sits within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and is used by centres to submit a single application per student, rather than applying separately to each member, helping to streamline administration while supporting regulatory compliance and data protection requirements. (www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/shared-services/#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 (AARA 8.1)

The SENDCo keeps detailed records 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) for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Centre delegated access arrangements

Centre delegated arrangements are detailed within the school Access file along with the evidence of a history of need and is the candidates' normal way of working. The SENDCo will inform the EO of the specific candidate need who will in turn ensure that the need is implemented.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

(AARA, section 5.8)

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) can be found on the school website Exams | Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School and on the 'T' drive in the exam policies T:\# EXAMS\Policies

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENDCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA, section 5.16)

The criteria at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School to approve a candidate for alternative rooming are:

- the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect
- where a candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room
- alternative rooming reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations
- the receipt of letters from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other mental health professionals.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for alternative rooming within the centre.

(AARA, section 5.16)

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)

In cases where a GP has provided medical letters for anxiety or depression, these will only be accepted if the normal way of working evidence shows that school has been working with the candidate, for example with the school counsellor, to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. If school teaching staff or the candidate are unable to provide this evidence, then the access arrangement cannot be awarded.

<table>
<tr><th>Access Arrangement</th><th>What is it?</th><th>Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Reader</td><td>A trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English Language GCSE exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer(s) themselves.</td><td>A student has a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Teacher (100 is the average).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">A trained adult reader may read instructions and questions to the student or read the whole paper if necessary. The student may prefer to just ask for specific words to be read to them.

When a student enters Year 9 they will be trialled with a Reading Pen in place of a physical reader.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scribe</td><td>A trained adult writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers and the scribe would write exactly what they say.

A scribe must only be used where a candidate is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility switched off.</td><td>A student has a physical disability, or where their writing:
is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood
writing speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time.
If a scribe is used in Modern Foreign Languages, the student must dictate every</td></tr>
</table>

		word in the target language letter by letter.
Rest Breaks	Students are permitted to stop for short breaks during the exam and the time accrued whilst stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time. **Students are not permitted to view exam materials during rest breaks and must close their exam paper.**	A student has a physical or mental disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time.
Extra Time	Students may be entitled to an allowance of up to 25% of extra time depending on their history of need evidence and the recommendation of the specialist assessor. Extra time of between 26% and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances.	Student will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing. A standardised score of 84 or below (100 being average) can qualify for extra time.
Alternative Rooming	A student with a physical or mental medical condition where it isn't appropriate for them to sit in the main exam hall. Where a candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.	Medical evidence **must be provided in advance** to support this arrangement. Medical evidence will be accepted from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other mental health professionals. Where the candidate's disability is established within the centre and alternative rooming reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs. Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. GP medical letters for anxiety or depression will not be

		accepted unless the normal way of working evidence shows that school has been working with the candidate, for example with the school counsellor, to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage.
Laptop	Access to a laptop for an exam (for appropriate subjects) so the student would type their answers. Spelling and grammar checks and internet access are all switched off.	The provision to use a laptop is applied to address an underlying difficulty such as: • speed of handwriting • medical condition • sensory impairment • planning and organisational difficulty • poor legibility
	The use of a laptop in exams must reflect the student's normal way of working within school and has been agreed as appropriate for the student's needs. The use of a laptop cannot be granted to a student simply because it is their **preferred** way of working.	
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt a student with a few permitted phrases or signals to re-focus or move the student on to the next question.	A student who persistently loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time.
Modified Paper	These are individually prepared papers for candidates. Modifications available are: - A4 modified 18 point bold - A3 modified 24 point bold - A4 modified 24 point bold - A3 modified 36 point bold (not available for all subjects) - Tactile diagrams with print labels for use with enlarged modified papers - Braille papers including tactile diagrams with Braille labels	Students with a visual impairment or those for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable.