



**Children's Hospital School**

# **Access Arrangements Policy**

**2024/25**

Date of Approval: 12/02/2025

Approved by: Stephen Deadman

Date of next review: 11/02/2026

## Key staff involved in the policy

| Role                               | Name(s)                       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| SENCo                              | Stewart Scragg                |
| SENCo line manager (Senior leader) | Diane Davies / James Stafford |
| Head of centre                     | Stephen Deadman               |
| Assessor(s)                        | Stewart Scragg                |
| Access arrangement facilitator(s)  |                               |

## Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Key staff involved in the policy .....   | 1 |
| What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments? .....                         | 4 |
| Access arrangements .....  | 4 |
| Reasonable adjustments .....   | 4 |
| Purpose of the policy .....  | 4 |
| General principles .....   | 5 |
| Equalities Policy (Exams) .....  | 5 |
| The assessment process .....   | 5 |
| The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s) .....                                  | 5 |
| Appointment of assessors .....   | 6 |
| Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor ..... | 6 |
| Picture of need/normal way of working .....  | 7 |
| Processing access arrangements and adjustments .....                                   | 8 |
| Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval .....                        | 8 |
| Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments .....  | 8 |
| Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments .....                 | 9 |
| Word Processor Policy (Exams) .....  | 9 |
| Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy .....  | 9 |

## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### 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'. (AA 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'. (AA Definitions)

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Willow Bank 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 policy is maintained and held by the SENCo 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 SENCo 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 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.

## General principles

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

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AARA](#) (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

The SENCo **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

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/reasonable adjustments 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) is stored electronically in the school's policies folder.

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 is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AARA](#), section 7.3.

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

Stewart Scragg

- PGCE Primary Education, University of Derby
- Level 7 Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements, Dyslexia Action and Real Training (November 2009) Certificate: DA00020
- Postgraduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Coordination, October 2019
- National Award for SEN Coordination, November 2019

## 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 named member of staff who acts as the SENCO and assessor is Stewart Scragg.

Relevant qualifications are checked on the appointment of the SENCO to the school and found in the Staff File.

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring the assessors qualifications are kept up to date annually.

Evidence of the assessor's qualifications are held on file for inspection purposes and can be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector when required.

## Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor (Form 8)

Willow Bank School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- The assessor will establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. (AA 7.5.3)
- Arrangements will be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor (AA 7.5.1)
- Assessors will personally conduct the assessments. They will not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. (AA 7.5.4)
- The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AA 7.5.5)
- Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores will be used, where published. (AA 7.5.6)
- The candidate's chronological age will be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age. (AA 7.5.7)
- Test results will be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. (These are standard scores.) Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Part 2 of Form 8 will not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores will be converted into standard scores. (AA 7.5.8)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre will not be used to award access arrangements and will not be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. However, the SENCo will carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to establish 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 (AA 7.3.6)

All assessors, as appointed by the head of centre and thus having an established relationship with the centre, will use Form 8, Part 2, to record the results of their assessment. At the same time, the assessor will sign and date Part 2. (AA 7.6.3)

### Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor (Form 9)

Willow Bank School confirms Form 9 will only be used for:

- candidates with communication and interaction needs
- candidates with a medical condition (formally diagnosed by a registered specialist)
- candidates with sensory and/or physical needs
- candidates with social, emotional and mental health needs
- candidates with speech, language and communication needs
- candidates with learning difficulties who are subject to a current EHCP (England)
- candidates with learning difficulties who require a computer reader/reader but **do not** require extra time or a scribe
- **all** candidates requiring supervised rest breaks.

Evidence will be provided to confirm it is the normal way of working within the centre. Teaching staff evidence will show how a persistent and significant difficulty substantially impacts on teaching and learning.

Form 9 will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability e.g. letter from a medical professional, letter from Local Authority Specialist Services, a current EHCP

### Picture of need / normal way of working

The SENCo will gather background evidence prior to the candidate's assessment and provide the assessor with this background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor will work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5.2). Where Form 9 is required the SENCO will paint a picture of the normal way of working within the centre.

Part 1 of Form 8 is a pen portrait of the candidate's needs. In it, the SENCo will 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working bringing together a selection of evidence which may include:

- if known, arrangements made for Key Stage 2 tests;
- comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers);
- intervention strategies (e.g. individual education/learning plans) in place for the candidate;
- pupil premium indicators;
- screening test results;
- use of baseline data;
- information about any differentiation in the classroom;
- normal way of working in the classroom (where appropriate);
- arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations. (AA7.6.1)

If very little information is available on a candidate then the SENCO will endeavour to 'paint a holistic picture of need' using a selection from the following evidence:

- screening test results;
- the candidate's self reported difficulties;

- comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers) who have noted the candidate's difficulties;
- comments in school reports and/or pupil tracking data;
- information relayed by telephone, with notes taken, or a photocopy of Form 8, where a candidate has moved from one provision to another. (AA 7.6.1)

All candidates will be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. (AA 7.6.2)

Part 3 of Form 8 will be completed by the SENCo once the assessor has completed their testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. In this, the SENCO will make recommendations for access arrangements/adjustments taking into account:

- the information from the assessment (Part 2 of Form 8);
- the requirements of the specifications; and
- the candidate's normal way of working in the centre (Part 1 of Form 8).

The completion of Form 8, Parts 1, 2 and 3 will enable the JCQ Centre Inspector to see clearly and concisely the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and the results of an assessment.

## Processing access arrangements and adjustments

### Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AARA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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 Summary)

Applications for Access Arrangements are carried out by the SENCO. After approval a paper copy is held within the student file. An electronic copy is also kept in the e-file for each student. Candidates complete the Personal data consent form prior to the application of the access arrangement and the SENCO completes the 'Data protection confirmation'.

This is retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Modified papers orders are completed by the exams officer in liaison with the SENCO.

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre-delegated arrangements are made by Stewart Scragg (SENCO). Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement is held on file by the exams officer (paper copy) and electronic copy (SENCO). A centre delegated file note is completed.



## Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

### 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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

The Word Processor Policy is stored electronically in the school's policies folder.

### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

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 5.16](#))

The Alternative Rooming Policy is stored electronically in the school's policies folder.