



Malbank School & Sixth Form College

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Contents

Exam Access Arrangements Policy	Page
1. Rationale	3
2. Key Terminology	3
3. What are Access Arrangements?	3
4. Reasonable Adjustments	3-4
5. Special Considerations	4
6. Access Arrangements at Malbank	4
7. When Might Students Need To Be Given Access Arrangements	5-12
8. What Evidence Is Needed For Malbank To Consider An Application For EAA	12-13
9. KS2 SAT EAA	13
10. Exam Access Arrangement Referrals	13
11. How Do Staff And Parents Know Whether A Student Has Exam Access Arrangements	14
12. How Are Exam Access Arrangements Applied For	14
13. What Support Is Given To Students With EAA	14-15
14. What Are The Procedures For Processing An Application	15-16
15. Deadlines For Submitting Applications For Access Arrangements And Modifying Papers On-Line For GCSE And GCE Qualifications	16

1. Rationale

The Examination Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the trust for all students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby all students may fulfil their full potential.

2. Key Terminology

The term **Additional Learning Need** is used as an umbrella term to incorporate ALL students known to be receiving intervention Learning Support provision including those pupils identified as having SEND.

Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'*.

Special Educational Needs

A candidate has "special educational needs" as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments 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.

3. What are Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a 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.'

4. Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

5. Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

6. Access Arrangements At Malbank

Malbank High School and Sixth Form College aim to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial SEND/or ALN which fall into the following four categories: -

- Communication and interaction.
- Cognition and learning.
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/ or physical needs.

We will do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ guidelines). We believe it is important to abide by the JCQ regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school.

Professional reports are requested that demonstrate a SEND/ALN and a recommendation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to meet the student's needs and the type of access arrangements that are appropriate. Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.'

7. When Might Students Need To Be Given Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. The following table identifies the Access arrangements and any that require and application through the online AA portal are highlighted in Green. All others are at the discretion of the School, and will be awarded according to the criteria set and evidence of need and the students normal way of working within the school.

Access Arrangement	Definition	Criteria
Reader	<p>A trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves.</p> <p><i>A reader can read instructions and questions to the student, read the whole paper if necessary or the student may prefer to just ask for some specific words to be read to them.</i></p>	<p>There is substantial evidence from staff that the students' normal way of working within the school, that they need reading support in most/all situations. This could be the occasional word or full sentences.</p> <p>Odd word readers will be accommodated in a 'reading room', with a specially trained invigilator</p>

<p>Extra time</p>	<p>Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25%, following a formal assessment.</p> <p>Extra time between 26 and 50% can be granted in extraordinary circumstances.</p> <p>Before the option of Extra time is considered, the option of rest breaks must be explored.</p>	<p>Students will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing. At least two standardised scores of <u>84 or below</u> (100 being average) can qualify for extra time. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.</p> <p>There must also be evidence that this is the students normal way of working within the school</p>
<p>Rest breaks</p>	<p>Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks.</p> <p>The amount or length of rest breaks will be determined on an individual basis</p>	<p>A student either has a physical disability or medical condition which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time, or a processing speed which benefits from breaks in the thought process to enable students to order their thoughts before proceeding with the examination. This must be the student's normal way of working within the school</p>

Access Arrangement	Definition	Criteria
Word processor/Laptop	Access to a laptop so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled, and a special examinations laptop would be used with no internet access.	The provision to use a laptop is put in place to address an underlying difficulty such as: speed of handwriting; medical condition; physical disability; sensory impairment; planning and organisational difficulties or poor legibility. There must be evidence that this is the students, normal way of working within the school
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.	A student who <u>persistently</u> loses concentration/focus and is not aware of time and this can also be put in place for students who are affected by OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Students with OCD often focus on one question in particular rather than moving onto look at other questions in the exam paper. There must be evidence that this is the students normal way of working within the school

Read Aloud	Where a candidate is reading difficult text he/she may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read.	A candidate who <u>persistently</u> struggles to understand what they have read, but who does not qualify for a reader, to read aloud. There must be evidence that this is the students normal way of working within the school, and the student must be accommodated in a separate room
Small Room	Where the student takes their examination in a room of less than 30 people with key stage recommendation and with approval from SLT	There must be medical/behavioural evidence and SENCO approval to support this.
Separate room	A student is accommodated in a separate room with a 1:1 invigilator	There must be substantial medical/behavioural evidence and SENCO approval to support this.
Modified Paper	Students have papers either enlarged or printed onto coloured paper. Enlargement of papers requires the school to notify the examination boards of this requirement well in advance	There must be evidence that this is necessary for either medical reasons, or through Irlen's/visual screening This must be the student's normal way of working within the school

Access Arrangement	Definition	Criteria
<p>Bilingual translation dictionaries (with up to 10% extra time)</p>	<p>Only to be used by student's whose first language is not English, Irish, or Welsh. The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g., notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.</p>	<p>Should reflect the student's normal way of working. <i>Candidates may also be allowed up to 10% extra time, depending on need, if they have been resident in the UK for less than two years at the time of the examination.</i> <u>Exceptions to these rules are:</u> <i>Writing Test in GCSE Languages where the specification states that all candidates must have access to a bilingual dictionary</i></p>
<p>Live speaker</p>	<p>A live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g., MFL listening examinations, to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre. The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a Listening examination.</p>	<p>Students who have <u>persistent and significant</u> difficulties in following speech at normal speed.</p>

<p>Oral language modifier</p>	<p>A responsible adult who may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a candidate.</p> <p>The Oral Language Modifier must not explain technical terms or subject specific terms. The ability to understand these terms is part of the assessment. If such terms are explained to the candidate, then the demands of the question will have been compromised and may constitute malpractice.</p>	<p>Students whose disability has a very <u>substantial and long-term</u> adverse effect resulting in very persistent and significant difficulties in accessing and processing information.</p> <p><i>An Oral Language Modifier <u>must be seen as a rare and exceptional arrangement.</u></i></p> <p><i>An Oral Language Modifier is an adjustment of last resort so an application must only be made once all other relevant access arrangements have been considered and found to be unsuitable or unworkable. There must be a very strong justification as to why an Oral Language Modifier is required.</i></p>
<p>Scribe</p>	<p>A trained adult writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write <u>exactly</u> what they say.</p> <p>In MFL, the student must dictate <u>every word in the target language</u> and must do so letter by letter.</p>	<p>This must be the student's normal way of working within the centre There must be evidence that the student has persistent and significant difficulties with writing that cannot be addressed using a word processor.</p> <p>The student must not be competent or confident in the use of a word processor.</p>

		There must be specialist evidence to support the use of a scribe
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Access Arrangement	Definition	Criteria
Sign language interpreter	<p>A trained adult who presents the questions in a different language without: changing the meaning; providing any additional information; or providing an explanation as to what the question requires of the candidate.</p> <p><i>Sign Language interpretation is done 'live' in the presence of the candidate during the examination in order to allow for the candidate's regional variations in BSL/ISL signs. Consequently, sign language interpretation cannot be checked by the awarding body for accuracy. Great care must be taken not to disadvantage or advantage the candidate.</i></p> <p>Under no circumstances may an explanation of the question or clarification of the carrier language be given</p>	<p>Students whose 'normal sign way of working' requires will sign language interpretation.</p> <p>Students who require language interpretation require a separate room.</p>
Alternative site	<p>The candidate will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, for example:</p> <p><i>a medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking examinations in the centre; or Social, Mental and Emotional Needs.</i></p>	<p>The candidate has:</p> <p>an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties;</p> <p>or a temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination(s).</p> <p>this must be documented in writing.</p> <p><i>a full risk assessment must be completed and both parents/carer and school must abide by the Home visit arrangements documentation</i></p>

<p>Practical assistant</p>	<p>A person may act as a practical assistant, if permission has been given for these arrangements. The regulations for the use of each arrangement must be strictly adhered to. They must not carry out Physical tasks which form part of assessment objectives.</p>	<p>Students with poor motor coordination or/and <u>severe</u> vision impairment, or significant temporary injury or illness which prohibits the students normal motor skills. There must be written evidence of this</p>
<p>Other arrangements</p>	<p>Amplification equipment Brillers Closed circuit television (CCTV) Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind Coloured Overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers) Low vision aid/magnifier Optical Character Reader (OCR) Ear Plugs for noise reduction</p>	<p>Centres must note that candidates are <u>only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act</u>. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. There must be evidence of this and applied for under the 'Other' category of AA online submissions if necessary.</p>

8. What Evidence Is Needed For Malbank To Consider An Application For EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report
- Previous EAA from Primary Schools/ other Education Providers or transition information from previous school.
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate, and evidence of normal way of working
- Parental referral

- Concerns raised by SEN/Pastoral Team
- Evidence from Medical Professionals
- Private Education Psychologists reports (please note that as Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money. This therefore means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is '*either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged*' by any arrangements put in place. Often private educational psychologists, recommend that children should receive EAA which can be in conflict with what the centre recommends. We will consider this evidence alongside the history of need, the other evidence available, including an assessment from a specialist assessor, and the students' normal way of working within the centre)

9. KS2 SAT EAA

Students who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, it doesn't necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had a Reader for KS2 may not qualify for a Reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria. If a student attends **Malbank School and Sixth Form College** who has had EAA at KS2, they will be monitored during KS3 to see if EAA still apply. This will also be assessed at the start of KS4.

10. Exam Access Arrangement Referrals

Parent Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

Teachers can refer a student to the SENCo where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. The students' current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCo initially if they have EAA concerns about a student.

11. How Do Staff And Parents Know Whether A Student Has Exam Access Arrangements?

- Teaching and support staff can access the SEN folder on their desktop and open the Exam Concessions folder. It is updated on a regular basis or whenever students become entitled to it. The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy.
- Parents will be informed of any tests results

12. How Are Exam Access Arrangements Applied For?

Just because they were entitled to EAA at KS2 does not automatically entitle them to it at KS3 or KS4.

Therefore, the Specialist Assessor tests students who are referred, or who have had EAA in earlier Key Stages. The Specialist assessor will assess students using a variety of nationally recognised tests such as:

- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP)
- Other suitable nationally recognised Screening tests

The tests that the Specialist Assessor uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice. The test that the Specialist Assessor uses depends very much upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further EAA, the Specialist Assessor will arrange this. Following a report produced by the Specialist Assessor an application is made to the Exam Boards for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s.

For EAA which require a formal JCQ application, Students are tested formally in either the summer term of Year 9 or Year 10 in order to comply with the 26-month rule; so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 10 and 11.

13. What Support Is Given To Students With EAA?

Students with EAA will have support to show them how to effectively use EAA. In addition, students with EAA are encouraged to use their EAA during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using it effectively. Confirmed EAA will be provided for all Students during formal PPE's.

Students who have access to a reader are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give. They then need to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal exams and assessments.

All teachers are given access to the list of students with EAA, and they are asked to give the SENCo at least two weeks' notice before they assess students so that support can be provided for students who require it during the assessments/exams. Students who have a reader can be supported by a teaching Assistant in the classroom setting, or a specially trained invigilator in formal examinations or PPE's. The SENCO/Exams Officer can provide a separate room, access to ICT with the required amount of notice. The SENCo require two weeks' notice so that teaching assistants can be redeployed if necessary to other students. A classroom is determined as a small room, so if students have this AA, they can stay in a classroom setting to complete their assessment/examination.

Students with EAA are monitored regularly by the school SENCO and Exams Officer.

In the event that a student does not wish to make use of their EAA in any given exam, the class teacher/invigilator will make a written note that the student was aware that EAA was available to them, but it was their choice not to use them. However, where a student is deemed under the Mental Health Act (Code of Practice 2014) to be unable to make this decision the use of EAA will actively be encouraged.

14. What Are The Procedures For Processing An Application?

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist assessor access arrangements report.

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the SENCo, then applies to the exam boards. At this point the EAA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Educational psychologist reports
- Recommendations by teachers
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)

- Education, health & Care Plans (EHCP)
- Permission from the JCQ for the arrangements/s
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student

15. Deadlines For Submitting Applications For Access Arrangements And Modified Papers On-line For GCSE And GCE Qualifications

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE and GCE qualifications **must** be processed using access arrangements online **by the deadline set by the JCQ for each examination series.**