Callington Community College

Access Arrangements Policy (Exams) 2026/2027

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and reflects centre practice.

Version	Date	Review Date
2026/2027	October 2026	December 2027
Originator: Pen Davies-Gregory (Exams Officer) Nick Griffiths (SENDCo)		

Key staff involved in the exams Access Arrangements process

Role	Name
Exams officer	**Pen Davies-Gregory**
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	**Becky Bailey**
Head of centre	**Wendy Ainsworth**
SENDCo	**Nick Griffiths**

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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 particular 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'."

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 a number of 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 time frames; **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.

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Callington Community College has a written record which clearly shows the college is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its "...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements..."

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4].

This document is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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 (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **mus**t create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([1]AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments t for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

[1]This document is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General Principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, 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 for whom English is an additional language and 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 disabled candidate.
>
> The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly 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 SENCo 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 of 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 Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the SENDCo. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The SENCo will have a **written** process in place to ~~not only~~ check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*... (GR 5.4)

Upon the first meeting with the college's SENDCo, the assessor has his/her qualifications verified and a photocopy is made and stored in the access arrangements file. This is in accordance with AARA guideline 7.4

Reporting the appointment of assessors

The college's SENDCo maintains the evidence of the assessor's qualifications in the Access Arrangements folder, and is therefore available upon request to JCQ inspectors in accordance with AARA guideline 7.4

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

The assessment procedure is led by the specialist external assessor, based on a referral system by the college's SENDCo

The SENDCo makes a referral based on observations and recommendations from teachers, teaching assistants and observations carried out within classes. The college has an EAA referral process.

The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement application. The original tests are stored in the candidate's files in the access arrangements folder.

Note… SENCos and assessors working within the centre should 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 7.3)

Picture of need/normal way of working

The college maintains a folder of Access Arrangement information, including evidence of need, Form 8s, and access arrangement application outcomes.

The folder is updated by the SEND team and the SENDCo as necessary

Evidence recorded includes, but is not limited to:

- Tests to measure reading comprehension, reading speed, and memory and learning
- Past papers completed under examination conditions
- Assessment profiles and reports
- Examples of class work and independent learning
- Doctors' letters and notes describing physical and/or mental needs.
- Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

Teaching staff are asked to provide examples of how they can demonstrate the need that has led to the application of an access arrangement being made. Names of teachers and subjects are recorded.

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

The Assessment Process

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 procedure for applying for access arrangements via AAO is as follows:

- The SENDCo will have identified candidates who would benefit from access arrangements, and has compiled evidence of need and evidence of normal way of working in the access arrangements folder

- Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Upon completion of a candidate's access arrangement portfolio, the SENDCo will complete the application via AAO. The SENDCo will provide answers to necessary questions as part of the application process
- The results of completed applications are printed and kept in the candidate's access arrangement portfolio along with the appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed data protection notice
- The access arrangements folder is available for inspection by the JCQ Inspection Service in accordance with AARA guideline 8

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

College-delegated access arrangements refer to those which are granted by the college.

The college offers a smaller, quieter examinations venue for candidates who may benefit from it, but do not have needs that require access arrangements with awarding body approval.

Candidates may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Having an identified SEND need that would be better served in the quiet venue
- Recent physical injuries or sickness
- Bereavement or other such upsetting that would impact a candidate's performance in the exam
- Behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the candidate, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

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.

Please refer to the separate word processor policy for more detail.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) 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 college (AARA 5.16)

The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** 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)

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

The EO is then responsible for ensuring that the venue is appropriately prepared for separate invigilation, in accordance with JCQ regulations.