



St Peter's  
Catholic School



*Faith is our Foundation*

# *Exam Access Arrangements Policy*

## Details

---

Last reviewed on: September 2023  
Approved by & date: GB Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Next review due by: September 2024

## **Rationale**

This document outlines St Peter's policy on Exam Access Arrangements. These are the arrangements put in place to ensure that all pupils are given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in all assessments and examinations, without being disadvantaged by any learning, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience.

## **What are Exam Access Arrangements?**

- Access Arrangements are intended to facilitate pupils with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment due to a difficulty or disability, to access the exam without changing the demands of the assessment.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled (within the definition of the Equality Act 2010) would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.
- Access Arrangements are intended to increase access to assessments but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- Access Arrangements are not intended to give an unfair advantage.
- Access Arrangements may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- Access Arrangements should reflect a pupil's normal way of working unless such arrangements would compromise the integrity of the assessment.

## **Examples of Access Arrangements:**

<b>Access Arrangement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Reader	A trained adult reads the question and any relevant text for the pupil (but not where the skill of reading is being assessed e.g. the reading section of English examination papers or assessments).
Scribe	A trained adult writes for the pupil. The pupil dictates their answers. The scribe writes exactly as the pupil dictates. In MFL, the pupil must dictate spellings letter by letter in the relevant language.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt the pupil with a few permitted phrases to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ refocus</li><li>▪ indicate how much time is left.</li></ul>
Read Aloud or use of an Exam Reading Pen	When a pupil is reading difficult text, he/she may work more effectively if he/she can hear him/herself read.
Alternative Rooming within a centre	The pupil can take the examinations in a smaller/separate room to the main exam room. Medical evidence must be provided, or it must be part of the pupil's normal way of working.
Modified Papers	Specially prepared papers, e.g. enlarged to a specific font size or colour.
Rest Breaks	Pupils are permitted to stop for short break/s during the assessment/exam and the time taken is added to the finish time. Pupils are not permitted to have the assessment/exam materials with them during the rest break. Medical evidence must be provided.

Extra Time	<p>Pupils may be entitled to up to 25% additional time. Extra time between 26% and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances.</p> <p>In very exceptional circumstances, a pupil may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.</p>
Live Speaker	<p>A pupil with a hearing impairment may need a live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g. MFL listening examinations.</p> <p>The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a Listening examination.</p>
Language Modifier	<p>An adult who has successfully completed accredited training may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a pupil. The language modifier must not explain technical or subject specific terms.</p>
Bilingual translation dictionaries (with up to a maximum of 25% extra time in some cases)	<p>For pupils who have English, Irish or Welsh as an additional language only. The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.</p>
Alternative Site	<p>The pupil will be sitting his/her examination (s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a medical condition which prevents the pupil from taking examinations in the centre; or</li> <li>▪ Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs – with accompanying specialist medical evidence.</li> </ul>
Practical Assistant	<p>Help with practical tasks such as turning pages in music or holding a ruler in Mathematics. Medical evidence, or requirement of EHCP is required.</p>
Laptop	<p>Access to a laptop for an assessment/examination so that a pupil can word process their answers. The spelling and grammar checks are disabled on the laptops. The school has a number of specifically prepared laptops for this purpose. The use of a laptop must be the pupil's normal way of working, or for a temporary condition supported with appropriate medical evidence.</p>
Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes	<p>Due to a serious medical condition (e.g. diabetes) the pupil will need to access their mobile phone during an examination. Medical evidence must be provided, along with a completed Form 9. The pupil will be subject to 1:1 invigilation when in possession of their mobile phone to ensure the integrity of the examination.</p>
Remote Invigilation	<p>Remote invigilation is only acceptable in <b>exceptional circumstances</b> to support a candidate who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formally diagnosed medical or psychological condition; or</li> <li>• A physical disability; or</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very substantial temporary illness or temporary injury.</li> </ul> <p>Formal evidence must be available to confirm the pupil's impairment and evidence that all other options (alternative rooming and an alternative site) have been exhausted.</p>
--	---

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities Relating to Access Arrangements**

### **Examinations Officer:**

- To ensure that the agreed Access Arrangement provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To ensure the agreed Access Arrangement provision is updated in the school's examination software.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding Access Arrangement provision.
- Deal with any emergencies, such as accidents or medical conditions, on the day of the exam (in conjunction with the SEND department).
- To ensure pupils are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and provided with specialist equipment e.g. laptop.

### **SENDCo:**

- To encourage a 'whole centre' approach to Access Arrangements but to lead on the process within the centre.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding Access Arrangement provision.
- To ensure that they, together with the head of centre and members of the Senior Leadership Team are familiar with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidelines and regulations. These should also be communicated with staff where it is relevant to do so.
- To ensure that adults supporting Access Arrangements are provided with necessary training on an annual basis.
- To ensure that a timetable is in place for adults supporting Access Arrangements prior to the examination season (in conjunction with the SEND department).
- To determine, apply for and implement appropriate Access Arrangements with the support and help of teaching and support staff as well as members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The SENDCo will arrange for the assessment of pupils by a qualified assessor, complete administrative tasks e.g. compile Form 8's, Form 8RF's, Form 9's and gather evidence from teachers as well as process applications online and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE/GCE qualifications.

### **Teaching Staff:**

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties.
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENDCo.
- Detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct Access Arrangements are in place for controlled assessments.

## **Identifying the need for Access Arrangements**

### **Stage 1: Early Screening and gathering evidence**

In transition meetings during the summer term with a pupil's year 6 teacher and the SENDCo, information is gathered as to what Access Arrangements are already in place, along with information that supports the history of need. The latter is compiled initially in the One Page Profiles documents to support teaching and learning. All staff are involved in monitoring these adjustments.

Throughout KS3, teachers monitor pupils closely and gather any evidence of need for Access Arrangements, passing it to the SENDCo. Access Arrangements are trialled in tests/exams. Additionally, with any specialist reports undertaken for cognition and learning, whether there is a need for Access Arrangements is a crucial objective of the assessment.

### **Stage 2: Formal Testing**

In the summer term of Year 9, Part 1 of the Form 8 is completed by the SENDCo based on their history of need and evidence supplied by teachers. Evidence for the Form 9 (for pupils with a substantial impairment, including those pupils with an EHCP, such as a physical disability, sensory impairment, or medical condition) is gathered and the Form 9 completed.

A qualified Access Arrangements Assessor then assesses the pupils in the autumn term of Year 10 at the start of their examination courses. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidelines. Permission to allow Access Arrangements expires after 26 months, after which the pupil may need to be re-tested, depending on which arrangement(s) they have. Access Arrangements are always determined by the most recent testing.

Throughout KS4, Access Arrangements are in place and being used as the pupil's normal method working. The pupils continue to be monitored and teacher's complete classroom feedback sheets at key points of assessment and, or mock examination periods.

In the October of Year 11 is the final deadline for teachers to submit evidence and requests for Access Arrangements. Mock examinations in November provide the last opportunity to trial Access Arrangements and allow for any further adjustments in February/March mock examinations.

### **Sixth Form Provision**

Records of existing pupils with Access Arrangements are maintained and published to staff. A Form 8RF is completed with updated centre-based evidence specifically relating to GCE AS and/A-level courses that clearly shows the Access Arrangement is still required.

For new pupils, they are to declare their Access Arrangements in their application or interview. The SENDCo will contact the feeder school for evidence of Access Arrangements at KS4. Teachers monitor pupils closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENDCo. In light of evidence received from teachers and the previous school, the Access Arrangements Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the autumn and spring terms and the SENDCO applies/reapplies for Access Arrangements.

Trial Access Arrangements are put in place for the mock examinations in the latter stages of the autumn term, or early spring term in Year 12. Teachers complete mock feedback Microsoft forms from the mocks to the SENDCo. These mock examinations also provide a final chance to recognise any other pupils who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the

SENDCo by July of Year 12. Occasionally pupils can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to Level 3 courses. However, the end of Year 12 examinations provides a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a pupil may have.

### **Support offered to pupils with Access Arrangements**

- Pupils with Access Arrangements meet with the SENDCo either individually, or in small groups to show them how to effectively use their specific arrangements.
- Pupils who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader/scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.
- Pupils with extra time are given sessions with either the SENDCo or Learning Support Assistant on how to use the additional time allowance effectively. They are then encouraged to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal exams and assessments.
- All staff are given access to the list of pupils with Access Arrangements, and they are asked to give the SENDCo at least two weeks' notice before they carry out any 'in class' assessments with pupils, so that support can be provided for pupils who require it during the tests/exams. Teaching staff can also provide support in terms of reading to a pupil as long as they have read the recommended guidance.

### **Evidence required for Access Arrangements**

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), depending on the arrangement required. These could include:

- Form 8 report from Access Arrangements Assessor
- Form 9 with evidence of a pupils' Substantial Impairment
- Form 8RF confirming the need for a continuation of Access Arrangements from GCSE to A Level study
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and classroom feedback forms
- Results of cognition tests e.g. spelling, writing, reading comprehension and processing tests
- Any letters from outside agencies, hospitals, or doctors
- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Once the Access Arrangement (s) is/are applied for and granted, this evidence will be held on file and available for inspection, together with:

- permission from the awarding body for the arrangement
- a data protection notice signed by the pupil
- records of all occasions where the student has been supported by Access Arrangements.

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations for Access Arrangements – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files so that it can be inspected at short notice.

### **Medical Letters and Private Assessments**

We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. External Assessors, such as Educational Psychologists, are required to contact the SENDCo before carrying out the assessment. The SENDCo will provide the Assessor with any existing information about previous support and current difficulties. A pupil's 'normal way of working' in school is key, and Access Arrangements will not be awarded purely on the basis of a private report. Similarly, with letters from medical professionals this will trigger an investigation, but it will need supporting evidence from within school.

In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.

### **Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary arrangements may be required by pupils suffering from injury or illness. Normally, pupils with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main exam hall near the doors for easy access and exit. Pupils experiencing an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed pupil whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A pupil with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENDCo and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time.

Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists further evidence will be required for the next session.

### **Alternative Accommodation**

On very rare occasions, a candidate may need to sit an examination at a residential address or at a hospital due to a severe medical condition or profound psychological condition which prevents them from taking examinations within the centre. In this situation, St. Peter's will ensure that JCQ guidelines are followed with regard to conduct, procedures, and staffing. We must be satisfied that the candidate is well enough to take the examination and there must be appropriate evidence of need held on file.

### **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. The candidate will have been fully prepared for the exams, but due to some unforeseen circumstance could not demonstrate what they knew. If you have a query regarding this then contact the Examination Officer.

### **Malpractice**

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations. Examples of malpractice include:

- pupils being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working
- Access Arrangements being granted when a pupil has no history of need or provision
- Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence.

### **Further Information**

Further information can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)  
If you have questions about Access Arrangements, please contact the SENDCo.