



Da Vinci Academy  
A L.E.A.D. Academy



"One Team, Changing Worlds"

# Access Arrangements Policy and Procedures

Reviewed and updated September 2022

# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2022/23

This document outlines Da Vinci Academy's policy on access arrangements. These are arrangements put in place to ensure all pupils have equal access to examinations. Pupils should not be disadvantaged by any learning, medical, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience.

The Academy must comply with the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications publication.

Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make '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 disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. According to statutory guidance, disability means 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'.*

A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a **substantial** and **long term effect** on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. Access arrangements should allow pupils with substantial long term special educational needs or short term illnesses or injuries to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without affecting the integrity of an assessment or examination. Access arrangements are not intended to help certain candidates, or give them an advantage, but to give them a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The intention is to remove barriers that may prevent them from demonstrating their knowledge and to allow them on to a 'level playing field' with other candidates.

However, the academy must assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete and achieve the qualifications. Some types of disability may affect the candidate's ability to demonstrate one or more of the assessment objectives. An alternative route may be available in the specification and advice must be sought from the awarding body. In some cases, a disabled candidate may have to be exempted from a component if that is the only reasonable adjustment available to enable him/her to overcome a substantial disadvantage in accessing the specification.

Access Arrangements encompass a wide range of provisions which may include: being allowed to sit examinations in a smaller room, supervised rest breaks, use of colour overlays, prompter, extra time, reader, scribe, use of a word processor, practical assistant, etc.

JCQ publish deadlines by which arrangements must be processed in advance of an examination series. Arrangements should not be requested just before or at the time of a candidate's examinations, unless they are to be temporary and due to illness or injury.

The link to JCQ's Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/examinations-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES WHO MIGHT NEED ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

There are several ways in which this might occur:

1. Da Vinci Academy acts on the information provided by pupils' previous schools to identify those who may need access arrangements. These pupils normally have a history of Special Educational Needs (SEND).
2. A teacher may voice a concern about a pupil with difficulties that prevent them from completing tests or practice papers.
3. A parent/carer may raise concerns about their child who is attempting but unable to complete work set.

In all cases, there must be a genuine need for the arrangement. The Academy must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a **substantial** and **long term** adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties. 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so. Pupils with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for access arrangements. For example, a pupil with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an examination may not meet the criteria for access arrangements.

However, when concerns are raised about a particular pupil, the SEND department will gather information from the pupil's teachers to see whether they have similar concerns. If the initial concerns are echoed by others, the pupil will be assessed for access arrangements.

### CANDIDATES WITH A HISTORY OF SEN

#### Candidates with Medical, Physical, Sensory, Behavioural or Complex needs

Where access arrangements are requested due to medical or physical difficulties, a letter from a GP or consultant is required. The SEND Department will ask parents/carers to obtain a letter with a brief outline of the pupil's condition or disability and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. Parents/carers may be requested to obtain letters from other professionals when a pupil requires arrangements due to their psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties.

#### Candidates with learning difficulties

There would normally be a long history of learning difficulties, for example access arrangements at the end of Key stage 2, teachers will feed back information to the SEND team of any concerns to show the pupils need. At Da Vinci we use the New Group Reading Test and other subject screening assessments to monitor pupils for intervention and support in years 7 to 9. Late identification of learning difficulties can occur, but concerns should be raised during the start of year 10.

A pupil with learning difficulties will be screened at the start of year 10 using appropriate resources such as Diagnostic Reading Analysis, Handwriting Speed, and Graded word spelling assessment. If the pupil scores below a standardised score of 84 they will be formally assessed by a qualified specialist assessor. This formal assessment with a specialist assessor will take place at

the start of year 10 if the pre-screening and evidence met the requirements. An approved range of standardised tests are used and Form 8 is completed.

A Data Protection Notice must be signed by the pupil, which enables the Examinations Officer/Assistant SENCO to make the online application using their information and results.

An application is made online, and the awarding bodies approve access arrangements only if the pupil's scores meet the criteria issued by JCQ. Supporting evidence must be filed and available for inspection.

In all cases, access arrangements should reflect the support that is usually given to the pupil in the classroom, internal tests and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as the '**normal way of working.**'

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a **history of need, history of provision** and reports from teachers or other professionals. Pupils with no previous history of SEND will require significantly more evidence of need. For instance, the evidence required for extra time must include comments and observations from teaching staff as to why the pupil needs extra time and how s/he uses the time awarded. Therefore it may be necessary for the pupil to sit tests or practice papers with extra time for a trial period. It can then be gauged whether the quality and quantity of written answers improves significantly with the allowance of extra time, and will establish having extra time as a 'normal way of working'.

A candidate may require access arrangements in all his/her written examinations, or they may only need arrangements in those requiring extended answers. The Academy must compile evidence that supports each candidate's particular need for arrangements.

If not already on the SEND Register, the pupil will be placed on it and a Pupil Support Plan will be drawn up. In this way their teachers will be provided with information on their needs, teaching strategies and access arrangements.

## **NOTIFICATION ABOUT ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

Parents/carers are informed by Student Support Plan when formal applications for access arrangements are approved. The arrangements are named and further information is available upon request.

## **CONDUCT AND PROCEDURES**

### Staffing and accommodation

The Deputy SENCO liaises with the Examinations SLT lead, Examinations Officer, departmental staff to ensure sufficient rooms and staffing are organised for candidates with access arrangements when examinations are taking place.

Candidates sitting their examinations in smaller rooms are expected to comply with the general regulations issued by JCQ. For example, mobile phones and data recording devices are not permitted in examination rooms for candidates with access arrangements under any circumstances.

However, some procedures may vary slightly from those followed in the main rooms. For instance, in a room for candidates with extra time or rest breaks there may be more than one examination taking place and so the seating is arranged to accommodate their needs and to take into account the duration of each examination: wherever possible, those with the shortest examination and/or those with rest breaks are seated nearest to the door.

It must be noted that staffing and room constraints mean that candidates cannot normally be seated alone in a separate room. In the event of there being a core subject examination with a large number of candidates having access arrangements, it may be necessary for some of them to sit the examination at a later time so that sufficient staffing is available for all the arrangements to be maintained. Those candidates must arrive at the scheduled time but will have to be kept in isolation until their examination can take place.

Candidates' evidence files are kept in a secure area, but must be available for inspection. The Examinations Inspector visits during each examination session and may check several Access Arrangement files at random.

#### Notes regarding the use of word processors

Certain candidates may be allowed the use of word processors in written examinations. This should be appropriate to the candidate's needs and may only be allowed when a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to write is the result of:

- A learning difficulty
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- Illegible handwriting

Examination word processors must have the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled; unless an assessment by the specialist assessor shows otherwise i.e. a scribe or word processor with grammar and spell check enabled is awarded by JCQ.

Candidates must be reminded to save at regular intervals. In this way, loss of work is kept to a minimum if a complication or technical difficulty occurs.

The candidate using a word processor must be present when the script is printed off so as to verify that the work printed is complete and is his or her own. Candidates sign each sheet.

#### Candidates with access arrangements sitting several examinations on the same day

Occasionally, a candidate may have several examinations scheduled on the same day. If the total time, including extra time, adds up to more than 5½ hours (GCSE), it may be possible to carry one examination over until the following day, providing certain guarantees regarding supervision are made by parents or carers.

Sometimes a candidate with medical difficulties causing fatigue may have a clash of examinations. In such a case one examination might be delayed, in order to allow the candidate to rest, before sitting the second examination. They must be supervised in isolation during the intervening period.

#### Candidates sitting examinations set by awarding bodies not regulated by JCQ.

When a candidate is entered for an examination set by an awarding body that is not by JCQ, she/he may find that the rules regarding access arrangements are different. In most cases, the candidate's evidence of need will be accepted, although a separate application must be made, but the awarding body set their own rules regarding access arrangements and their use in specific subjects, e.g. a scribe may be allowed in English by JCQ but not by CIE.

#### Recording the use of access arrangements

Da Vinci Academy follow the advice given by JCQ and maintain a record of the use of access arrangements.

If an access arrangement is never used then it is not a candidate's normal way of working and the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.

#### Staffing and training

The staff employed to provide candidates with access arrangements are normally staff who work at the school, although there are times where this isn't possible and we will have to employ external readers and scribes to support pupils. In GCSEs we have external invigilators to ensure we meet JCQ guidelines.

Training is provided, using JCQ training resources, which are updated each year to comply with the current JCQ guidelines.

#### Temporary arrangements

Temporary arrangements may be required by candidates suffering from illness or injury. In general, candidates with leg injuries are accommodated in the main rooms near the doors for easy access and exit.

Candidates with 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 candidate 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. Therefore, the Examinations Officer will then apply for Special Consideration.

A candidate with a painful back condition 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 Academy 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 SEND department and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time.

For example:

- A candidate who suffers from panic attacks in test or examination situations and will have a substantial and long term effect on his/her speed of processing should obtain a letter from CAMHS, a hospital consultant or psychiatrist or a Local Authority specialist service.
- In an emergency, a scribe can be provided with 24 hours' notice. It may not be possible to provide a scribe if the request is made without notice.

#### Alternative accommodation away from the centre

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.

The centre must ensure that JCQ guidelines are followed with regard to conduct, procedures and staffing. The centre must be satisfied that the candidate is well enough to take the examination and there must be appropriate evidence of need held on file.

#### Types of Access Arrangements

Access Arrangement	What it is?	Criteria
<b>Scribe or Laptop with Spell Check &amp; grammar enabled</b>	<p>A trained adult writes for the pupil. The pupil would dictate their answers. The scribe would write exactly what they say.</p> <p>A word processor available to support the pupil in exams with extended writing if they struggle with spelling but are used to a word processor in class and not a scribe</p>	<p>A pupil has a physical disability; where her/his spelling or writing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood.</i></li> <li>• <i>speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In MFL, the pupil must dictate every word in the target language</b></p> <p>A pupil has a standard score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Assessor</p>
<b>Reader</b>	<p>A trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of the English GCSE Exam) for the pupil when asked. The pupil would then write the answer/s themselves.</p>	<p>A pupil has a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by Specialist Assessor</p>

<b>Prompter</b>	A trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move them on to the next question or indicate time left	A pupil who persistently loses concentration / focus, and is not aware of time.
<b>Transcript</b>	An exact copy of a pupil's exam script made after the exam without the participation of the pupil.	Only to be used where a pupil's handwriting or spelling is difficult to decipher for those not familiar with it.
<b>Read Aloud</b>	Where a candidate is reading difficult text he/she may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read.	A pupil who persistently struggle to understand what they have read, but doesn't qualify for a reader, to read aloud
<b>Separate room</b>	Where a pupil has a medical condition or they have a psychological condition that stops them from accessing the exam in the main hall.	Medical evidence from CAHMS/ GP/ Paediatrician obtained in advanced and logged with the Examinations officer
<b>Modified Papers</b>	Individually prepared papers. Often modified by size, braille	Medical evidence required
<b>Laptop</b>	For pupils to have access to a laptop in exams. Spell check and grammar will not be enabled unless assessed by a Specialist assessor scoring below 84 on a standardised score	The provision of a laptop is given to pupils who struggle with speed of handwriting, legibility of handwriting, planning and organisation of work. A laptop cannot be granted to a pupil simply because it is their preferred way of working.
<b>Extra time</b>	Pupils may be entitled to an allowance of extra time depending on history of evidence of need	Pupils will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing.
<b>Bilingual translation dictionaries</b>	Only a pupil whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh can be entitled	The pupil needs to have been resident in the UK for less than 2 years when the exams take place.
<b>Practical assistant</b>	Is not a reader or scribe. The same person may act as a practical assistant as long as they meet the requirements of JCQ	Pupil's with poor vision, poor motor co-ordination. A practical assistant can't be allowed to carry out physical tasks where they form part of the assessment objectives
<b>Other Arrangements</b>	Colour overlay Low vision aid/magnifier	