

BLOOMFIELD COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY



Approved by the Board of Governors 24 February 2022

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**THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN IN LINE WITH THE
JOINT COUNCIL FOR QUALIFICATION (JCQ) GUIDANCE.**

The JCQ is a membership organisation comprising the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK. The JCQ provides a single voice on issues of examination administration and, when appropriate, qualification and wider education policy. These regulations for schools can be accessed on the JCQ website.

What are Examination Access Arrangements?

An Examination Access Arrangement is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an examination, where a particular need has been identified.

They allow candidates with **special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries** to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

This can be in the form of:

- **Extra time:** students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% (or more in exceptional circumstances) depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher.
- **A reader:** a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of the 'Reading Section' of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would write the answers themselves but can ask for them to be read back to them.
- **A scribe:** a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers, or may type on a computer themselves with the spell and grammar check on.
- **Word processor:** for exceptional reasons, a student may be given access to a computer for an exam so they can word process their answers (without the spell and grammar check facility). This **cannot** be because a student types faster than they write or because they prefer it, but must be to account for significant disadvantage.
- **Rest breaks:** where 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.

- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, 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.

What evidence is needed to apply for Access Arrangements?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that are needed to apply for Access Arrangements to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)¹:

- Report from Specialist Teacher (Mrs Waterworth) which notes
 - Evidence of persistent and significant difficulties, which would usually have been identified in Primary school and/or during Key Stage 3
 - Evidence from teachers that this difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom
 - Evidence that the Access Arrangement is the student's normal way of working in school i.e. that they routinely take more time to complete work, or always need a scribe to complete written work
- Educational assessments and tests e.g. reading speed, reading comprehension, writing tests. These are conducted by Mrs Waterworth as the School's Specialist Teacher. JCQ states that '*significant difficulties*' are those which place a student in the bottom 14% of the population, and it should be noted that it is not necessary to have a diagnosis, nor does a diagnosis guarantee Access Arrangements if the student scores above this criterion.
- If Medical issues are the difficulty (and this includes ADHD and ASD) then a letter from a Consultant stating the need for extra time is required.

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by Private Educational Psychologists and submitting the reports to Learning Support as evidence that their child should be awarded Access Arrangements.

¹ 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties –Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' Joint Council for Qualifications (updated annually)

Often Private Educational Psychologists recommend that children should receive Access Arrangements which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Teacher) recommends. The school will not accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist reports, but will instead follow the recommendations of the Specialist Teacher as required by JCQ regulations.

JCQ regulations state that ‘a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process an application’

Private reports should only be requested in consultation with Mrs Waterworth. They can be helpful in the case of concerns which cannot be identified by school testing, or if a diagnosis is required. If this is the case, Mrs Waterworth will speak to the Psychologist before the consultation in order to complete the report on the student’s background, provide the evidence from teachers and the student’s normal way of working in school.

How would students be identified for Examination Access Arrangements?

Information from Primary Schools

Reports and IEPs from Primary school are very useful to give evidence of the persistent nature of the difficulty however it should be noted that even if a student received Access Arrangements for the Transfer test, this does not guarantee that they will receive it at GCSE or A level because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had Extra Time in the Transfer Test may not qualify for Extra Time at GCSE because their speed of working has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria.

Baseline testing completed in KS3

All students in Year 8 are tested at the start of the year. We use computerised Cognitive Ability Tests to baseline general ability, and Progress Test in English/ Progress Test in Maths to look at attainment in these two core pillars of education. These tests are primarily to look at progress though school but can also help identify learning difficulties. Learning Support will use this information to put appropriate interventions into place.

Evidence of need gathered during internal examinations and assessments

JCQ states that ***“if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time.”*** We pay close attention to the use of Extra Time during internal examinations and to comply with JCQ regulations, will not process applications where there is no evidence of need in past exams.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the Tutor to ask for advice if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the Tutor will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. 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 Learning Support where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s 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.

Individual educational tests conducted at staff or parental request

Once the decision to test has been made, the student will attend Learning Support to meet with the Specialist Teacher. They usually complete a self-evaluation form and the appropriate Psychometric tests are selected.

If the nature of the difficulty is proven ***‘significant’*** and meets the strict criteria, and if the Specialist Teacher can confirm the persistent nature of the problem the student’s normal way of working and the evidence from teachers, then an application to JCQ can be made. The student must sign a Data Protection Notice to give consent for some of their personal data to be shared with JCQ and the Examination awarding bodies.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has Examination Access Arrangements?

- If deemed necessary, a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is written and appropriate targets made. This is given to each teacher and a copy sent home. Teachers give feedback on targets twice a year and the PLP is reviewed annually.
- Teaching and support staff can access an 'Access Arrangements List' on the school network. It is updated whenever students become entitled to it. The information about results of assessments for Access Arrangements are kept confidentially in line with school policy, are shared on a 'need to know' basis.

What support is given to students with Access Arrangements?

Students with Access Arrangements are encouraged to use their Access Arrangements during internal assessments and examinations so that they gain practice at using them effectively.

Students with Extra Time are given a handout on how to use the additional time allowance effectively and PLP targets are set around the use of the accommodation to make best use of it. They then need to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal examinations and assessments.

Students who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in examination situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader/scribe during the examination, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.

All teachers are given access to the list of students with Access Arrangements, and they are asked to give Learning Support notice before they do tests or controlled assessments so that support can be provided for students who require it during the tests/assessments. Students who have a reader can be supported by the teacher supervising the test or may have individual support if necessary. Learning Support can provide a separate room, reader, access to ICT and a scribe with the required amount of notice.

AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

This policy is published on the School website; however, a hard-copy can be collected from the School by request.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed every two years; however, when necessary the School may update the policy when it deems it necessary. The latest version may be obtained by contacting the School.

Reviewing Committee: Education Committee

Date Review Completed	Nature of Review	Date Ratified by Board of Governors
November 2018	New Policy	22 November 2018
January 2022	Amendments	24 February 2022