# Access Arrangements Policy

Policy/Procedure creator: Rosie Knos

Policy/Procedure created/reviewed: 14/03/2023

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| Centre Name | Thornden School |
| Centre Number | 58223 |
| Date policy first created | 12/10/22 |
| Current policy reviewed by | Rob Collar |
| Current policy approved by | Rob Collar |
| Date of next review | 30/09/23 |

## Key staff involved in the policy

| Role | Name |
|---|---|
| Exams officer | Rosie Knos |
| ALS lead/SENCo | Louise Peaston |
| Senior leader(s) | Rob Collar |
| Head of centre | Caroline Lowing |
| Other staff (if applicable) | Not Applicable |

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Thornden School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Acesss Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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

## Introduction

(AA 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 several 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 timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Thornden School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and:

- is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

## 1. General principles

The principles for Thornden School to consider 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 him/her 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 a disabled candidate (AA 4.2.1)
- The person who leads on additional learning support/special educational needs, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate (AA 4.2.1)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)

- 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 (AA 4.2.3)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2.5)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2.7)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in Not Applicable.

## 2. The assessment process

At Thornden School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

**Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)**

Chris Bevan

**Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties**

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Thornden School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3.4)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3.4)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1, 7.4.1)

Additional information:

Not applicable

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4.1)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by Rosie Knos.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AA 7.4.2)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AA 7.4.3)

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

Thornden School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning

Difficulties will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)

- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5.1)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AA 7.5.6)
- 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 using **Access arrangements online**. (AA 7.3.6)
- Relevant staff 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 (AA 7.3.6)

Additional information:

Not Applicable

### Picture of need/normal way of working

Thornden School confirms

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5.2)
- An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

  All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

  An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5.3)

Additional information:

Not Applicable

## 3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

**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 publication **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

**Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by Not Applicable. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Chris Bevan, Exams Coordinator.

- **The use of a word processor**

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Thornden School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and

assessments.

- **Separate invigilation within the centre**

The Separate Invigilation Policy details the criteria Thornden School uses to award separate invigilation within the centre.

Additional information:

Not applicable

**Modified papers**

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

**Roles and responsibilities**

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2.13)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2.13)

It is the responsibility of:

- Chris Bevan, Exams Coordinator to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate **Personal data consent form**) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- Chris Bevan, Exams Coordinator to complete the **Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved
- Rosie Knos, Exams Officer to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Chris Bevan, Exams Coordinator to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6)
- Rosie Knos, Exams Officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Rosie Knos, Exams Officer to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Not Applicable

CHANGES 2022/2023

(Amended bullet point) Under **Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties** - A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1) (to include additional detail) A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1, 7.4.1)

(Changed heading) **Painting a 'holistic picture of need' confirming normal way of working** (To) **Picture of need/normal way of working**

(Changed) Under **Centre delegated arrangements** - details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments (To) details the criteria the centre **specifically** uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

(Added bullet point) Under **Roles and responsibilities** (to add who will) complete the **Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved

CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES

Not Applicable