

# Bedales Senior Access Arrangements Policy

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# Bedales Senior Access Arrangements Policy

## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed after once there is substantial school-based evidence and an assessment has taken place (which has been agreed with School). Access arrangements create a level playing field which allow candidates with special educational needs, substantial impairments, or temporary injuries etc to access examinations and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the examinations. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the examination. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty of care 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 definition 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 candidate.
- the effectiveness of the adjustment.
- the cost of the adjustment.
- 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.
- 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 Bedales 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. (JCQ's *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, section 5.4)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo/Access Arrangements Lead (AAL) 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.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication '*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*'.

## General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in the JCQ publication, '*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*' (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 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 the disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within Bedales, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments can be processed from Year 9 (Block 3).

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 his/her first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments 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 assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in '*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*', (section 7.3).

## The qualifications of the current assessors

Zoe Beezer    SPLD Assessment Practising Certificate (1016/404)

Louise Toft    PAPAA Level 7 Assessing for Access Arrangements (06112032)

## Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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

## Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by the appointed assessor(s)

In preparation for the assessment, Part I of the Form 8 is shared with the assessor.

Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with Bedales School and cannot be used to award access arrangements.

## 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 qualification listed within the current JCQ publication.

Strict 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 are made by the SENCo/AAL. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENCo/AAL.

### Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

#### Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved to use a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs:

- a learning difficulty which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- a medical condition.
- a physical disability.
- a sensory impairment.
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
- poor handwriting.

The use of a word processor will not be approved 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 'Word Processor Policy'.

#### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision for alternative rooming for a candidate will be made by the SENCo/AAL.

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 centre.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangement, the candidate's disability is established within the centre ('Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments', section 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

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

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. ('Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments', section 5.1.6).

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All School policies are available to staff and can be found here:

<https://bedalesschools.sharepoint.com/sites/bdd-wholeschoolpolicies>