



## **Access Arrangements**

### **What are 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'.

**Access arrangements must reflect the normal and current way of working within the centre.**

### **What are 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 a number of 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'.

In most cases it will not be reasonable for adjustments to be made to assessment objectives within a qualification. To do so would likely undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. There is no duty to make adjustments which the qualifications regulators have specified should not be made.



### **Assessing students for access arrangements at Notre Dame (including laptops, colour paper and small rooms)**

Notre Dame test for all access arrangements from Y9 onward, due to the assessments lasting three years.

For a child to be assessed for access arrangements, we must have a clear history of need, and their normal and current way of working must be using an adjustment, such as needing extra-time in lesson.

If you do have concerns that your child may have SEND and or need to be tested for access arrangements, email them to [mowczarek@notredame-high.co.uk](mailto:mowczarek@notredame-high.co.uk).

All parental concerns for access arrangements must be submitted by Christmas of Y11.

Guidance from JCQ states that schools are not obliged to accept privately commissioned assessment reports. A report carried out without prior consultation with the school and without the assessor having obtained FORM 8 Part 1 before the assessment, cannot be used as evidence for access arrangements or used to process an application for access arrangements. Such a report however can be used by the SENDCO to determine if there is evidence to investigate the need for access arrangements further.

If there is a request to sit an exam in a smaller room and not the main venue on medical grounds, such as anxiety, we must have a signed doctor's note stating this. If there is a request to sit an exam in a private room then we must have a signed consultants note stating this.

For a student to use a laptop in lessons and in exams, we look at the following:

- Does it state the use a laptop in a child's EHCP, if so, a laptop can be used.
- Does the child have a dyslexia diagnosis (by for example Dyslexia Action) which recommends the use of a laptop? In this case, a laptop will be trialed for a half-term for its effectiveness. If there is no improvement in performance, the laptop will be removed. A dyslexia screening recommending will not suffice.
- Or the SENDCO will assess the student's handwriting and decide whether or not to trial a laptop in lessons for a half-term. If they are satisfied performance has improved, the provision will be applied for.

Parents can request the SENCO assesses the student's handwriting for a laptop request. Following this, the SENDCO will consult teachers and support staff.