HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Access Arrangements Policy

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Responsibility:	**Full Governors Committee**
Approved by full Governing Body	
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*subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines

This document outlines the school policy on Exam Access Arrangements. These arrangements are put in place to ensure that all candidates, including those with Additional Learning Needs or Special Educational Needs/ Disabilities (SEND) have equal access to examinations. The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the Joint Council Qualifications (JCQ) publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Exam Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and their normal way of working. The school must comply with the rules for Access Arrangements set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications publication.

Access Arrangements are the principle way in which awarding bodies comply with their duty to make *reasonable adjustments*, as per The Equality Act 2010.

The 2014 SEND Code of Practice outlines four areas of special educational need that include a range of difficulties and conditions:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make ***reasonable adjustments*** where a candidate has a disability or difficulty that has a substantial and long-term effect on performance in examinations. These difficulties and disabilities will usually fit within one or more of the four areas of need in order to be allocated or assessed for 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 needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access arrangements are put in place to meet the needs of:

Candidates with a history of SEN that may include:

- Physical
- Sensory
- Behavioural
- Complex needs
- Medical needs

Where access arrangements are requested due to a substantial impairment a letter/report confirming the candidate's disability from the following professionals would be appropriate:

- CAMHS, or
- HCPC registered psychologist, or
- Medical consultant- not a GP, or
- Psychiatrist, or
- Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), or
- Local Authority Specialist Service (e.g. Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health)
- Current EHCP, confirming candidate's learning difficulty, medical, physical, SI or MSI

Letters/reports from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice. Exam Access Arrangements cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.

Parents/carers may be requested to obtain letters from other professionals when a candidate requires arrangements due to their physical psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties.

Candidates with learning difficulties

There would normally be a long history of learning difficulties. Late identification of learning difficulties may occur, but concerns should be raised during the early months of the course leading to examination.

- JCQ publish deadlines by which arrangements must be processed in advance of the examination series.
- Arrangements should not be requested just before or during the time of the candidate's examinations, unless they are to be temporary and due to illness or injury.
- A candidate with learning difficulties must be formally assessed by a specialist teacher or educational psychologist.
- The assessment must have taken place no earlier than that start of Year 9. An approved range of standardised tests are used and Form 8 is completed.

Reasonable Adjustments

Access Arrangements should allow candidates with long term special educational needs or short-term illnesses or injuries to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without affecting the integrity of the assessment or examination.

Access arrangements are not intended to help certain candidates, or give them an advantage, but to give them 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.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the candidate's individual needs and will always have to comply with the most updated JCQ regulations.

Access Arrangements for Examinations

JCQ requirements can change annually and access arrangements encompass a wider range of provisions which may include:

- Rest breaks
- 25% Extra time
- 26-50% Extra time
- Use of word processor*
- Electronic papers
- Readers
- Reading aloud
- Scribes/practical assistance
- Prompts
- Separate invigilation
- Overlays, coloured paper, electronic or enlarged papers, etc.

***A word processor will only be allocated to the candidate in examinations if they sustain it as their normal way of working.**

A word processor cannot be used simply because a pupil wishes to use one, or is faster using one but may be allocated due to

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational difficulties when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting

This list is not exhaustive

The identification of candidates who may require access arrangements

There are several ways in which this may occur:

1. Based on information provided to Herschel Grammar School by the candidate's previous school(s). These candidates normally have a history of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a previously diagnosed Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD).
2. Subject teacher referral
3. Parental referral
4. EAAs for SATs at KS2
5. Internal Screening processes from Year 9 and Year 12.

In all cases, there must be a genuine need for the arrangement. The school must be *satisfied that the candidate has a substantial and longer-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties. 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for 12 months, or is likely to do so*.

Candidates with Special Educational Needs **are not automatically entitled to access arrangements.**

For example, a candidate with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in examination may not meet the criteria for access arrangements.

Where concerns are raised over a period of time, the Additional Needs Co-Ordinator, will gather information from all of the candidates' teachers in order to build a 'picture of need' and to see whether they have similar concerns. If the concerns are echoed by others, the candidate will be assessed for access arrangements.

Responsibilities in determining and Managing EAA

Assistant Headteacher- overseeing exams

The Assistant Headteacher will facilitate JCQ inspections of access arrangements and, assisted by the ANCo, will ensure the centre does not engage in malpractice, as regulated by the JCQ:

On behalf of my centre I confirm that I have read and understand the terms of use of Access arrangements online and the JCQ regulations and guidance concerning access arrangements. To the best of my knowledge the information provided is accurate. Appropriate evidence to support the application is available within the centre for inspection.

Examinations Officer:

- To ensure that the agreed EAA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding EAA provision.
- To put in place any on day provisions – such as medical emergencies.
- To ensure candidates are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other candidates also sitting exams.

Additional Needs Co Ordinator

- Access Arrangements are the responsibility of the ANCo, directed and managed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The ANCo will co-ordinate the gathering and collation of evidence, along with assessments for access arrangements.
- Organise submission of online requests for EAA's

External involvement

The following professionals are qualified to carry out assessments for access arrangements when needed:

- an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8; and/or
- a specialist teacher assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or Patoss and listed on the SASC website. A specialist teacher assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and, where necessary, undertake full diagnostic assessments; and/or
- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and, where necessary, undertake a full diagnostic assessment.
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Teaching Staff

Teaching staff can access the school's Access Arrangements register on the shared area. They are emailed with any updates and these updates are added to the register.

Teaching staff are key agents in the process of gathering the evidence required to build a picture of need. Teaching staff:

- Refer pupils to the ANCo if they are concerned that a barrier to learning may be causing them to underperform in assessed conditions, providing evidence of the pupil's **persistent and significant difficulties.**
- Review the impact of the reasonable adjustment upon the quality of the candidate's work
- Ensure that the access arrangement is the candidate's ***normal way of working*** **in formal timed tasks and within formal assessment conditions**.
- Ensure the correct EAA's are in place for controlled assessments.
- Provide evidence that the pupil is consistently utilising the access arrangement in order to prove continued need.
- Support the candidate in managing how they can best use the access arrangement within their specific subject area.

Parental involvement

Parents must give their consent in order to allow the external SpLD assessor/Educational Psychologist to work with their child.

Reviewing Access Arrangements

Access arrangements will be allocated and reviewed at three key stages:

Key Stage 3: Year 7 – Year 9	Key Stage 4: Year 9-Year 11	Key Stage 5: Year 12 – 13

Pupils will usually retain the access arrangements allocated to them for their 11+ examination, SATs and other KS2 assessment. The school must be informed of these arrangements with supporting evidence. Teachers monitor candidates closely and gather evidence of continuing need for EAA. Pupils will be screened in Year 9 and the school will gather evidence to build a picture of continued need. End of Year 9 Form 8 initiated by ANCo based on evidence supplied by teachers. Specialist Assessor then tests candidates and completes Form 8	If pupils are allocated an access arrangement, they will retain it until after their GCSE examinations. * June of Year 10 – deadline for teachers to submit evidence for requests for EAA. Mock examinations are the last chance to trial EAA. Candidates must use them or lose them.	External entrants to the Sixth Form will be asked to declare if they had EAA's for GCSE. Where appropriate, external applicants will be screened for access arrangements in Year 12. Teachers monitor candidates closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the ANCo. Trial EAA are put in place for the Year 12 examinations. Teachers give feedback from these exams to the ANCo (did candidates use them? Were they effective?). Year 12 exams provide a final chance to identify any other candidates who have not been identified. We accept that candidates can slip through the net initially, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, Year 12 exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a candidate may have. In the case of **all pupils** transitioning from GCSE to A level courses, the school will follow the rules and guidelines issued each year by the JCQ.

Where the candidate has been allowed extra time for the GCSEs, *the ANCo must have available evidence which clearly shows that extra time is still required for GCE A level examinations and that the candidate continues to have an impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his/her speed of working.*

*** Candidates may find that they are no longer eligible for access arrangements if they do not meet the criteria. From Y7-Y13, if an access arrangement is not used consistently, then it is not the candidate's normal way of working and the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.**

Evidence of Need to Apply for Exam Access Arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence required to apply for access arrangements to the JCQ:

1. Form 8 report from the SpLD assessor/Educational Psychologist. Or Form 9 with supporting evidence for example, an ASD diagnosis letter.
2. Previous access arrangement from primary school/other education providers.
3. Subject teachers: evidence of need in the classroom (form) and examples of work as appropriate.
4. Results of baseline tests or screening tests.
5. EHCP plan/review, if appropriate.

The Process

1. **Referral received – if the school is unaware.**
2. **Gather evidence from teachers.**
3.
    a) **Inform parents for testing – if the pupil needs to be assessed by the Specialist teacher – and arrange testing. Sixth Form pupils can self-refer.**
    b) **Request evidence of medical/physical/sensory/behavioural/emotional need.**
4. **If a compelling picture of need is established between teachers, the candidate, external agents and the ANCo, then the school will apply to the JCQ for the most appropriate access arrangement. The candidate will be asked to sign a data protection form in order to allow the centre to apply on their behalf.**

Submitting Applications

Applications must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment, no later than the published deadline set out by JCQ. Late applications on account of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the published deadline are permissible. Any application processed after the published deadline may be subject to scrutiny. The ANCO must ensure that the appropriate paperwork is on file and available for inspection.

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents in writing or verbally where the type of arrangements awarded have been outlined.
- Students are informed verbally.
- Access Arrangement list is made available to the exam officer.
- A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.

Private Educational Psychologist Reports

Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money, meaning that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage.

As an exam centre, we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no candidate is *either given an unfair disadvantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place*. Private educational psychologists may recommend that candidates should receive access arrangements which are in conflict with what the centre assessor (Specialist Teacher) recommends. We will establish a history of need prior to accepting an external report.

Awarding Body Referrals and JCQ Application Rejection:

If the JCQ reject an application for access arrangements and the school has a body of evidence to paint a picture of need, the Additional Needs Co-Ordinator may decide to fill in a referral to the individual exam boards, on a subject-by-subject basis. The boards may request additional evidence of need to accompany the referral. The decision of the exam boards is final.

Malpractice

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually every summer during the examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. Examples of malpractice include:

- Candidates being granted EAA which are not their normal way of working.
- EAA being 'suddenly' granted before examinations.
- EAA being granted when a candidate has no history of need or provision.
- EAA being granted without sufficient evidence.
- Candidates not using their EAA in a mock examination and still being allowed it in the real examination.

Further information can be found at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:

Regulations and Guidance - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications