



St Matthew Academy

EXAMINATIONS (ACCESS TO EXAMS)

Policy

Our motto is 'Let your light shine'. It is taken from St Matthew's Gospel and captures our belief in the uniqueness of each individual. Our aim is to ensure that the talents and strengths of each pupil are encouraged, developed and celebrated

Successful, confident learners

High expectations, outstanding achievements

Inclusive, caring, Catholic community

Nurturing talent, cultivating ambition

Excellence for all

Date of Approval	Autumn 2019
Review Date	Autumn 2020

Key staff Involved in this policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mr H Vyas
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Ms J Chick / Mr A Young
Head of Centre	Ms M Baldwin
Assessor	Mr H Vyas
Exams Officer	Ms F Walker

1. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Matthew Academy has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo 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 Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in our Disability Policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. The exams Disability Policy is available to view on the School website.

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

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 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'."

2. The Assessment Process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3.

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 [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

Specialist qualifications are checked by the School HR Department; applicants are required to bring original certificates to interview. Copies of these are kept on file by the HR Department.

Members of staff who gain further qualifications whilst in the employ of the Academy are also required to present their original certificates to the HR department. Copies of these are kept on file.

In addition, copies of specialist awards certificates are kept confidentially by the SENCo and the Exams Officer. If a pupil assessment has been completed by an Educational Psychologist, or other appropriately qualified assessor, outside school, the SENCo will request and check their qualifications to ensure that they comply with current JCQ and exam board guidelines.

N.B. External candidates must comply with the same regulations as internal candidates.

How the assessment process is administered

Candidates who may have a learning difficulty and may therefore require access arrangements are highlighted to the SENCo by teaching staff. Candidates may also self-refer.

An assessment is carried out by one of the appropriately qualified Specialist assessors. Assessments are completed adhering to the timeframes required for regulations for external examinations.

The Inclusion department has a range of assessments which can be used depending on the individual needs /difficulties of the candidate. If assessment results meet the criteria for access arrangements they are combined with the candidate's history of need and supporting evidence gathered during their time at the Academy to show examples of where arrangements are required and used as the candidate's normal way of working.

The SENCo will make the decision to apply for access arrangements based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Recording evidence of need

At St Matthew Academy, where it is felt that access arrangements may be required in the classroom and for internal tests and examinations, a record of need is built up and recorded.

Where there is evidence of the need for access arrangements for a pupil who will be taking Public Examinations in an exam season, the pupil is assessed by one of the specialist assessors who will complete a JCQ Form 8. The Form 8 will be signed off by the SENCo.

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan*, the SENCo will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working by completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

The assessor will make full reference to AA 7.5 *Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor* and 7.6 *Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties* and record the process that reflects the requirements

The assessor will also detail any process (where relevant) for private candidates, distance learners and home educated candidates - refer to the requirement in GR 5.4

Gathering evidence of normal way of working

Evidence of the candidate's normal way of working throughout his/her time at St Matthew Academy is collected from teaching staff, using the St Matthew Academy. Teaching staff are encouraged to provide the SENCo with relevant copies of tests or classwork, and to email the SENCo with any further information.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

A historical picture of the use of access arrangements for each candidate is collated. The SENCo will bear in mind the "normal way of working" as defined by JCQ:

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre*, e.g.

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons; literacy intervention strategies; mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Part 1 of Form 8.

*The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3 of JCQ AA).

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.

The candidate must be assessed in 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 with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.

3. Processing Applications for Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements Online (AAO)

Access Arrangements Online is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE qualifications. This tool also to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

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

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. [\[AA 8.6\]](#)

Centre-delegated Access Arrangements

Some access arrangements can be “Centre-delegated” which means that an online application to JCQ is not required. Examples of such arrangements include:

- supervised rest breaks
- candidates who read aloud
- use of a word processor
- use of a prompter
- use of a live speaker
- coloured overlays
- separate invigilation within the centre

The assessor will complete a cover sheet to support the arrangement. The SENCo must be satisfied that there is a genuine need for the arrangement to be put in place. In addition, the candidate’s difficulties must be established within the school and thus known to a form tutor, the Director of Learning, the SENCo and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3 of JCQ AA).

Word processor policy

Approval of the use of a word processor will be granted following awarding body guidelines and where this is appropriate to the candidate’s needs and not simply because this is the candidate’s preferred way of working within the centre.

Further details and explanation are contained in the Word Processor Policy (Exams).

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within a centre will be made by the SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has had an adverse effect; and
- the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.16)

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs. The candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a Form Tutor, a Director of Learning, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.