



## Access Arrangements Policy

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## 1. Introduction

'Access Arrangements' is the term used for special arrangements to support specific students in exams. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment and allow candidates with support 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. Access arrangements are the main way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make '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.

Our approach to access arrangements at Stoke Newington School (SNS) is to make the best adjustments we can to meet our students' support needs and access requirements. We use our resources as creatively as we can to ensure we deliver an inclusive provision; however, adjustments must be reasonable and workable within a mainstream school setting. We operate a teacher referral system and we do not accept self-referrals or parent referrals for access arrangements for exams.

## 2. Aims

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate, preventing them 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. The Head of Inclusion/SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

## 3. Assessment and testing

All students are initially assessed for access arrangements in the autumn term of Year 9 using a screening tool which assesses aspects of reading, spelling and writing. Students with below average scores in this screening tool are further assessed in Year 9 and Year 10 to identify if they are eligible for access arrangements in assessments and exams by a specialist assessor.

All students with a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty (SpLD i.e. dyslexia/dyspraxia) on the SEND register or who have an Educational Health Care Plan are assessed for access arrangements in Key Stage 4. In addition to this, students can be assessed if they have been referred by subject teachers who are able to present enough evidence to suggest a significant and persistent learning difficulty over time.

To qualify for certain access arrangements including extra time, students require teacher-based evidence *in addition* to below average standard scores; if a student has below average standard scores and a clear history of need within the school, then an application may be made to the awarding body and parents/ carers will be notified in writing if the application is approved. If the application is approved, students are covered for controlled assessments, mock exams and public exams for 26 months, at which stage they will need to be re-assessed.

It is important to note that a diagnosis of dyslexia or a learning difficulty or standard scores of 84 and below alone do not necessarily mean a student will qualify for access arrangements from the JCQ. There must be evidence of significant and persistent difficulties with learning and below



average scores in the access arrangement tests conducted by the specialist assessor. The school cannot submit privately commissioned assessment reports as evidence and the testing must be conducted by the school's nominated specialist assessor and be complimented by:

Further information can be found on the JCQ website: [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

- confirmation that the access arrangement continues to be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010
- evidence from teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning.

If a student has a long-term medical or psychological condition that affects their exams, then please contact the school to discuss as soon as possible. Arrangements cannot be made for students with medical or psychological conditions unless those needs are made known to the school, are established within the school over a period of time and are supported with evidence from a specialist i.e. a letter or report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), a Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service. We cannot accept referrals or letters recommending access arrangements from a GP.

We only process requests made with a minimum of 30 days' notice prior to an exam or the first exam of a series of exams.

#### **4. Additional regulations for Access Arrangements in Key Stage 5**

Students joining SNS Sixth Form who did not sit GCSE exams at Stoke Newington School may have been awarded access arrangements in their GCSE exams. It is imperative that we know what these arrangements were so we can ensure the arrangements are in place for their exams in Year 12 and Year 13. Students need to bring proof of the arrangements to the Inclusion department as soon as they join the sixth form.

When a candidate progresses from GCSE to GCE A-level qualifications the school must re-submit all applications. If the student's application has expired, then an application must also be re-submitted. In some cases, the student may need to be re-tested.

In rare circumstances students can be referred for testing in Year 12 and Year 13 by teachers who are able to present enough evidence to suggest a significant and persistent learning difficulty over time and in circumstances where there is a recent diagnosis. We accept very few referrals in sixth form as there must be a body of evidence to suggest a significant difficulty over a period of time throughout school and most candidates with learning difficulties have been identified at this stage in their education. We do not accept parent or self-referrals.

As previously stated, if a student has a long-term medical or psychological condition that affects their exams then please contact the school to discuss as soon as possible. Arrangements cannot be made for students with medical or psychological conditions unless those difficulties are made known to the school, are established within the school over time and are supported with evidence from a specialist i.e., a letter or report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), a Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service. We cannot accept referrals or letters recommending access arrangements from a GP. We only process requests made with a minimum of 30 days' notice prior to an exam or the first of a series of exams.



### **5. Access Arrangements in Key Stage 3**

All students with a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty (SpLD i.e. dyslexia/dyspraxia) on the SEND Register or who have an Educational Health care Plan can be awarded arrangements to support them in formal assessments if there is evidence that they are struggling to demonstrate what they know in assessments. Please contact us for further advice.

Please note that the arrangement in Key Stage 3 is part of our inclusive policy to support SEND students with exams and assessments before they can be formally tested but it does not guarantee they will qualify for Access Arrangements in Key Stage 4.

### **6. Provisions for students with Access Arrangements in public exams**

The students with the following access arrangements sit their exams in the main exam hall:

- 25% extra time (students remain in the hall for the extra time at the end)
- Rest breaks
- Reader pens
- Enlarged papers

Students with the following access arrangements are collected from the gym and escorted to the relevant locations:

- Reader
- Scribe
- \*Separate invigilation to the exam hall
- \*Use of a word processor
- \*Separate invigilation

Separate invigilation may be offered to students in exceptional circumstances with a long-term medical condition or social, mental or emotional health needs supported with evidence from a specialist (a letter from a GP is not accepted as evidence). These difficulties need to be established within the center and known to the pastoral team, the SENDCo and head of year. Requests for separate invigilation at short notice are not accepted.

The use of a word processor in exams may be offered to students with a diagnosed learning difficulty or if there is persistent and significant difficulty with handwriting legibility or accuracy. A word processor cannot be used in exams if the rationale alone is that students prefer to work this way or work faster, this on a word processor.

### **7. Further enquires**

Contact Access Arrangements Team

Email: [access@sns.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:access@sns.hackney.sch.uk)

Contact Head of Inclusion/SENDCo, Alex Bell

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