



SOUTH WILTS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
SLT	
Date of next review	Autumn 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	Mrs Jayne Proctor
Senior leader(s)	Ms Jill Bellamy (Deputy headteacher – Pastoral), Mr Jake Lean (Deputy Headteacher – Academic) Mr Stephen Jones (Assistant Headteacher – exams)
Head of centre	Dr Amanda Smith
Exams officer	Mrs Nicola McCarney
Assessor(s)	Mrs Lynne Bostock

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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 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' (AARA¹, Definitions).

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 several 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates (AARA¹, Definitions).

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that South Wilts Grammar 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**, 5.4) This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy is maintained and held by SENDCo 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. When stored electronically there will be an e-folder for each individual candidate containing all of the required documents for inspection (AARA 4.2, Definitions).

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA, as referred to in this policy)**'.

General principles

The head of centre will appoint a SENDCo to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury (GR 5.4).

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in (AARA 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 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 SENDCo **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the **start** of the course or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 and their normal way of working.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination in a public examination series.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Mrs Lynne Bostock (SpLD)	Electronic copies saved in the SENDCo folder and paper copies held in the SENDCo office.
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Appointment of assessors

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 AARA by the HR Manager. 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 an assessor

The administration of the assessment process works as follows: SENDCo identifies the need to test from subject teachers (teachers are guided by JCQ guidance document "The role of the teacher in the access arrangements process" and "Access Arrangements: A guide for teaching staff"). Assessment is carried out by Access Arrangement Assessor (AAA) making sure that the assessment process is administered correctly. Results to SENDCo for analysis

and action. Results are then shared with parents and teachers.

Also noted from AARA 7.3.6, "A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. This would be where the assessor has not contacted the centre, has not liaised with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received a completed Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENCo."

The school will consider enquiries from parents or carers regarding potential access arrangements. However, access arrangements can only be approved where the school has clear, documented evidence of need and where the arrangement reflects the candidate's normal way of working, in line with JCQ regulations.

Parents and carers should be aware that requests alone do not constitute evidence, and an access arrangement cannot be granted solely on the basis of preference or diagnosis. The SENDCo will review any request by consulting teaching staff, examining classwork, timed tasks and assessments, and considering the candidate's usual practice in lessons.

Where the school's evidence does not support the need for an arrangement, the request will not be approved. The school will provide an explanation referencing JCQ guidance.

To ensure the SENDCo has sufficient time to complete investigations, gather evidence and meet JCQ deadlines, parents and carers must raise any concerns at the earliest possible stage. Late requests may not allow adequate time for the school to establish evidence of need, and therefore the arrangement may not be possible.

The school must prioritise investigations where there is a clear indication of need from teaching staff or existing evidence. Requests that are not supported by classroom practice or internal assessments will be triaged accordingly. This ensures that the SENDCo can complete statutory and regulatory duties effectively and in line with JCQ expectations.

Picture of need/normal way of working

The arrangements put in place must reflect the support agreed by the SENDCo and given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

- In the classroom (where appropriate)
- Working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- Literacy support lessons
- Literacy intervention strategies
- In internal school tests/examinations
- Mock examinations

Arrangements will be reviewed by the SENDCo each year and may be changed if processes/procedures within the AARA have been updated or if the student's level of need has changed.

Students joining SWGS may or may not have had special arrangements in place at their previous school. Evidence can be provided from previous schools for the SWGS SENDCo to review. There is no guarantee or automatic right that this previous arrangement at another centre may continue at South Wilts Grammar School (unless otherwise specified on the JCQ Form 8RF, for the transition between GCSEs and A Level). Parents / carers are responsible for informing the school if their child may require access arrangements when joining South Wilts Grammar School late in Years 9–13. If this is raised with the SENDCo promptly during the

admissions process, an AARA investigation can begin. However, if concerns are shared too late, there may not be sufficient time to carry out the necessary assessments and the arrangements may not be possible.

The master SEND register is held by the SENDCo and is kept up-to-date with all approved arrangements. Any arrangement not on the register will not be implemented without approval from the SENDCo.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included (AARA 8, Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments and AARA 6 Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place (AARA 8, Summary).

The SENDCo is responsible for completing the applications on AAO for all applications except requests for coloured paper. Coloured paper requests are made by the Exams Officer, under guidance from the SENDCo, before the deadline of 31 January each year. Candidates will be assessed by the specialist advisor who will provide a detailed report for the SENDCo to review and agree access arrangements.

The SENDCo keeps detailed records for inspection purposes, 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);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The school provides appropriate access arrangements for candidates where these have been formally assessed, evidenced and approved in line with JCQ requirements. Most candidates will sit their examinations in the main exam rooms, unless a specific, evidenced need requires an alternative arrangement. Any approved aids or materials must meet JCQ regulations and will be checked by the exams team before use. Seating arrangements are determined by the Exams Officer to ensure the smooth and fair running of the examination, and while individual needs are taken into account, specific seating requests cannot always be guaranteed. Any medical requirements or permitted items will be managed by the Exams Officer in consultation with the SENDCo.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not 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.

Word Processor Policy (exams) is appendix 6 of the Public Exams Policy

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or an individual room will be made by the SENDCo.

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 (AARA 5.16)

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.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)