



# SOUTH WILTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Access arrangements for 11+ and late entrance test applicants who have special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries or who speak English as an additional language.

### Introduction

Some pupils who apply to sit the entrance tests may be considered to be at a disadvantage due to the testing arrangements that would normally apply.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty upon schools not to discriminate against disabled people or pupils in their access to education. Selection for admission for a grammar school education by way of academic testing is a “permitted form of selection” under the Equality Act 2010. Schools do, however, have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils in operating a selection process. Such adjustments may include making access arrangements.

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for an applicant preventing her from being placed at a **substantial disadvantage** as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties or a temporary injury. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for the applicant.

The arrangement(s) put in place **MUST** reflect the support given to the applicant in her current school, e.g. in the classroom or in internal school tests. This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

Applicants with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or temporary conditions are likely to have a number of the needs and may require a range of access arrangements. This may include:

- extra time
- supervised rest breaks
- a prompter
- separate invigilation
- alternative accommodation arrangements
- coloured overlays (supplied by parent)
- coloured/enlarged papers.

(Note that the examples given are illustrative only and not exhaustive.)

Any other difficulty not covered by a speed of working assessment will need to be supported by a letter from a medical professional e.g. Educational Psychologist, SaLT.

Access arrangements that offer candidates an unfair advantage over others or that give rise to misleading test outcomes will not be made.

Consideration will always be given to the individual needs of pupils. The school will also determine whether the test papers and their method of administration constitute a suitable form of assessment for the disadvantaged pupil. In certain circumstances, it may be decided that a test is wholly inappropriate for a particular pupil.

For the sake of clarity, and to avoid any misunderstanding, the following terms are clearly defined in the Appendix (page 5 onwards):

- Access arrangements
- Reasonable adjustments
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs

## **The Process**

Applications for access arrangements **MUST** be received by the deadline set. The application **MUST** be accompanied by the supporting evidence which must be less than two years old on the date of the test. This will allow the school to consider the application and evidence in detail, and to make provision for any access arrangements from the perspective of timetabling, logistics, accommodation and staffing.

A panel comprising a minimum of 3 of the following: the SENCO, the SWGS specialist advisor, two members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Admissions Officer will sit to consider all applications for access arrangements received by the deadline. They will carefully review all the evidence presented and determine the access arrangements that will be put in place.

Parents will be advised of the outcome of their application for access arrangements shortly after the meeting.

## **The Evidence**

You **MUST** identify on the form the specific arrangement(s) you are requesting for the application to be considered.

The panel must be convinced that without the access arrangement the applicant would be at a substantial disadvantage (when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.)

The panel will expect parents at the time of application for access arrangements to:

- be specific about the access arrangements that they are requesting;

- provide relevant information/evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty; i.e. the applicant has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her speed of processing (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.), **or** provide evidence of the extent of a temporary injury;
- confirm that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information, **or** that their temporary injury necessitates access arrangements being made;
- provide evidence of how the disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning and confirm that the access arrangement/s requested is the applicant's normal way of working in their current school as a direct consequence of their need (The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place because of a temporary injury or impairment).
- provide evidence showing what support is given in current school if English is not the applicant's first language.

The evidence provided may include, for example:

- a letter from CAMHS, a clinical psychologist, a hospital consultant, or a psychiatrist;
- a letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service;
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);
- a specialist assessment completed **no earlier than the start of Year 4** showing standardised scores in relation to:
  - speed of reading; or
  - speed of reading comprehension; or
  - speed of writing; or
  - cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working
- an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability;

If evidence from one of the examples above is not available, then information from the applicant's current school to evidence their "normal way of working" will be considered by the panel. If this is the case, then consultation with the applicant's current school will take place prior to a decision being made.

*Please note: we will follow current JCQ guidelines for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. We cannot guarantee to support any request that does not meet current JCQ guidelines.*

## Extra Time

The panel must be convinced that without the application of 25% extra time the candidate would be at a **substantial disadvantage** (when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.).

**1. Extra time for children with learning difficulties – core evidence required:**

- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia

In order to award extra time, the panel must determine the needs of the candidate based on either one of the following:

- a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which confirms the child's disability  
**or**
- So as not to give an unfair advantage, an assessment by a suitably qualified professional that evidences:
  - two below average standardised scores of 84 or less;  
**or**
  - one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89).

Extra time will be allocated at 25% and must reflect the child's normal way of working in their current educational setting.

**2. Extra time for children with other educational needs - core evidence required:**

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Sensory and/or physical needs (HI, MSI, PD, VI)
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (e.g. ADHD)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the parents must provide:

- a letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);  
**or**
- a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service;  
**or**
- a current EHCP or a Statement of special educational needs (Northern Ireland) or an Individual Development Plan (Wales), which confirms the child's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multisensory impairment.

Extra time will be allocated at 25% and must reflect the child's normal way of working in their current educational setting.

**3. English as an Additional Language – core evidence required:**

A candidate **does not** have a learning difficulty simply because their first language is not English. If access arrangements are requested in this case, the parents must provide:

- information on how long the candidate has been resident in the UK
- evidence of the nationality of both parents
- details on what support the child receives in their current school.

Extra time may be allocated at up to 25%.

## **Supervised Rest Breaks**

The panel must be satisfied that:

- the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act);  
**and**
- there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

The provision of supervised rest breaks will always be considered before awarding extra time, since they may be more appropriate for candidates with a medical condition, a physical disability or a psychological condition. Where extra testing time is allowed 25% extra time will be awarded.

## **Alternative Accommodation / Separate Invigilation**

In some circumstances, the school may decide that an applicant should sit the entrance tests in a separate room. This will ensure the integrity of the exam for all candidates. Such decisions will be based upon the evidence provided.

Parents should only request such an alternative when an applicant has:

- an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; or
- a temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination(s).

## **Request for other Access Arrangements**

Requests for other access arrangements should include evidence in support of the request and show that this is the way of working for the applicant at their current school.

### **An example of reasonable adjustments for a disabled candidate**

A candidate with dyslexia needs to use a coloured overlay and requires 25% extra time. The use of a yellow-coloured overlay is a reasonable adjustment for the candidate since it helps her to improve her reading accuracy. The parent provides evidence that the candidate has been assessed by a specialist assessor using an up to date nationally standardised test. **The assessment shows that the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment as her working memory score is in the 'below average' range. The candidate has two standardised scores of 79.** The parent provides evidence from the child's current school showing 25% extra time as her normal way of working. The application of 25% extra time is a reasonable adjustment.

#### ***Responsibilities***

##### **It is the parent's responsibility to:**

- submit the application for access arrangements and **all** supporting evidence on time (by the published deadline);
- specify the nature of the access arrangements requested;
- liaise with other parties (such as the applicant's current school and medical professional) to ensure that the necessary evidence is submitted with the application;
- provide any materials (such as coloured overlays) that may be reasonably required following the outcome of the panel's deliberations.

##### **It is the schools' responsibility to:**

- review the application and supporting evidence in detail;
- determine any access arrangements that will be made ensuring that without such an arrangement the applicant would be at a substantial disadvantage;
- communicate the outcome of the assessment of the application and evidence in a timely manner following the meeting of the Consortium school staff.

## Appendix

### Definitions

#### Access Arrangements

Access arrangements must be agreed before the assessments. They allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary conditions to:

- access the assessment;
- 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 the schools comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

#### Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires the schools 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 schools are required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

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/learner;
- 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;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not "reasonable".

#### Disability

Generally, impairments have to meet the statutory requirements set out in section 6 and Schedule 1 to the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long-term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions) to help better understand and apply this definition.

The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means *'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'*.

*'Substantial'* means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.

*'Long-term'* means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.

*'Normal day to day activities'* could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors in pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010.

*Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:*

- persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person's native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions.

*Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:*

- minor problems with writing or spelling;
- inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document, which is in the person's native language without assistance;
- inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours.

### **Special Educational Needs**

A candidate has "special educational needs" as defined in the Education Act 1996 if she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for her.

A candidate has a "learning difficulty" if:

- she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of her age;  
**or**
- she has a disability which either prevents or hinders her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of her age in schools within the area of the local authority.

*The existence of a medical diagnosis or a physical disability in itself does not imply that the candidate in question has special educational needs.*