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ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2017/18 (Draft)

What are access arrangements?

Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment; for example, having a reader and/or a scribe. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the UK Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. The Awarding Body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper for a visually impaired candidate.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

(For further information please read JCQ document "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties 2018)

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to confirm that Haute Vallée School fulfils "*its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.*" (JCQ:General regulations for approved centres, Chapter 5)

This policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication – "Adjustment for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Access Arrangements and the Equality Act 2010

The rationale behind Access Arrangements is to allow reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment/exam and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment/exam.

The Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013 will ensure that schools do not discriminate against disabled children/young people in respect of admissions for a reason related to their disability once it becomes a protected characteristic.

A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Jersey Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice, 0 – 19 years, where 'their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

The Code of Practice (Draft May 2017) has outlined the statutory duties of schools to follow the demands of the DDA for students with disabilities and learning needs, as we are following the UK's educational model and curriculum.

Special Educational Needs

A candidate's special educational needs are determined by the SENCO and other agencies involved with the candidate. The SENCO will inform teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any access arrangements required.

Access Arrangements

Students with a disability or learning need have their individual needs assessed in advance and arrangements are put into place and shared with the student, parents and teachers, to ensure that they have full access to all examinations. Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO working in conjunction with the Examinations Officer.

Training

Invigilators and other members of the school staff who are involved in the examination process receive training in respect of Access Arrangements on a yearly basis. This training is provided by the SENCO and the Examinations Manager.

Complaints

Any complaints made by candidates with disabilities should be directed in the first instance of the Examinations Officer who will initiate an enquiry.

What are exam access arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is the candidates **'normal way of working'** and gives the candidate appropriate access to the exam.

Access Arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries 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 with a disability or learning need without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access Arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Haute Vallée School Policy for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments is written in line with **the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document: "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments" – with effect from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018.**

Access Arrangements can be in the form of:

- **A scribe:** a trained adult who writes for the student. The student will dictate their answers and the scribe will write exactly what they say. This must be processed online and evidence of need must be made available for inspection. This would normally apply to students to have access to a key worker in lessons to enable it to be 'normal way of working'.
- **Speech Recognition Technology:** is computer software that writes the information the student dictates. This must be processed online and evidence of need must be made available for inspection.
- **A reader:** a trained adult who will read the question and any relevant text for the student. (Only where permitted in English exams) This must be processed online and evidence of need must be made available for inspection. This would normally apply to students to have access to a key worker in lessons to enable it to be 'normal way of working'.
- **Computer Reader:** is computer software which accurately reads out text but does not decode or interpret the paper. This must be processed online and evidence of need must be made available for inspection.
- **ICT:** access to a computer or laptop for an exam to enable the student to word process their answers. Spelling and grammar is disabled with no internet access. Must be candidates normal way of working and no evidence is needed to support this arrangement. (Word Processing/ICT Policy for its use is, however, good practice – stating an exam candidate is using a word processor due to an appropriate need and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.)
- **Supervised Rest Breaks:** where students are permitted to stop for short breaks during the exam. The time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time. Evidence of need must be made available for inspection.
- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left. Evidence of need must be made available for inspection.
- **Examination Reading Pen or Read Aloud:** a candidate who reads aloud must be accommodated separately within the centre. A permitted examination reading pen must not have an in-built dictionary, thesaurus or date storage facility. No evidence is needed to support this arrangement.
- **Extra Time:** students may be entitled to allowance of 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the SENCO who is currently the Designated Specialist Teacher. This must be processed online and evidence of need must be made available for inspection.

For extra time students will have an assessment to determine their **speed of processing**. A standardised score of less than 84 (100 being average) can qualify for extra time. Examination Boards now recommend that before extra time is awarded, rest breaks must be considered, since this is more appropriate for a student with a medical or psychological condition. (ASC, ADHD etc)

There is evidence to suggest that students who receive extra time do not always use it effectively and may in fact damage their chances of achieving a good grade because they go back and undo the work they have produced, or they rush their work as they do not want their peers to know. Therefore, giving extra time needs careful consideration. It must be practised, evidence collected from teachers, discussions with students and evidence from exams manager during mock exams.

- **Bilingual translation dictionaries:** There is not a requirement to process an application for a bilingual translation dictionary online. No evidence is needed to support this arrangement but the student must be confident in its use. (Rules and regulations for this access arrangement changes on a regular basis)
- **Bilingual translation dictionaries with 10% extra time:** an application must be processed and evidence of need must be compiled by the EAL Co-ordinator. Extra time can only be awarded when:

The candidate's first language is not English and entered the island within two years of the examination, with no prior knowledge of the English language.

English is not one of the languages spoken at home.

Prior to arrival on –island the candidate was not educated in an International School where some of the curriculum was delivered in English.

The candidate has to refer to the bilingual dictionary so often that examination time is used for this purpose, delaying the answering of questions.

The provision of 10% extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working with the dictionary.

In line with JCQ regulations, **Haute Vallée School** will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working at **Haute Vallée School**.

Procedures

a) How will students be identified for Exam Access Arrangement and what evidence will be needed?

- Baseline testing
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from Primary Schools
- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term effect (history of need/history of provision/interventions and strategies)
- Evidence that difficulties are persistent and significant (history of need/history of provision/interventions and strategies)
- Evidence of how the disability/difficulty/impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom (intervention strategies – assessment results – history of need and provision – staff observations)
- Confirmation that the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment. (history of need/history of provision/interventions and strategies)
- Confirmation that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working within the school as a direct consequence of their disability (history of need/history of provision/interventions, observations and strategies). It is the responsibility of the subject teachers to provide the SENCO with evidence prior to the application being made to reflect the student's 'normal way of working'.
- Evidence is required from Year 7 so that by Year 9 it is the students 'normal way of working'.

b) How will students be assessed?

- A Specialist Teacher who has successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, will assess students using a variety of nationally recognised tests.
- Annette Temperton, who is the school's SENCO, is the named teacher at **Haute Vallée School**.
- The tests that are used are replaced / upgraded periodically in line with current practice.
- Following a report produced by the Specialist teacher an application is made to the Exam Boards for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s.
- Year 9 students are formally tested, starting in the Summer Term and into the Autumn Term and all exam arrangements are in place by the deadline date, when the student is in Year 10.
- Assessments will not be completed if there is not enough evidence, over time, to support that this is the student's 'normal way of working'

c) What supporting evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with for example:

- A Form 8 completed by the SENCO and the Specialist Teacher showing evidence of need.
- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist; hospital consultant.
- A letter from the Educational Psychology Service
- A letter from the Hearing Impaired Service, Visually Impaired Service, Speech and Language Service, Occupational Therapy Service and other outside agencies.
- Copies of marked work and assessments given to SENCO (not for SENCO to collect) to be filed for evidence to support the application. This must start at Year 7.
- Termly written evidence to be provided by teachers for the exam folder. Without teacher evidence, in writing, examples of work in student folder, access arrangement must be withdrawn.

It is very important that the regulations are followed closely. In section 4.2.11 of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document it states that **'Failure to comply with the regulations contained in this document have the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result(s).**

Failure to comply is defined as:

- putting in place access arrangements that are not approved; **or**
- permitting access arrangements within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence.'

Providing Evidence: examples

25% additional time

If a student requires extra time the teacher must ensure that they student uses a different coloured pen when the extra time has started. The piece of work must be marked firstly, before the extra time and secondly with the extra time, to determine how the grade has improved. It should then be marked and have a written comment that states to the student that the extra time has improved their grade. Without this feedback the student will not realise and understand the importance of the access arrangement.

A Reader

If a student requires a reader and the student has regular TA support they must work together to support the student. If information is read to the student during the lesson, the TA must inform the teacher and state that the student would not have completed the work without having it read to them. In exercise books and/or tests, the TA must write on the test how much they read to the student and how much the student read themselves. The teacher, when marking the work, will then comment on how much better the student did having the information read to them and how their grade has improved.

A scribe

If a student requires a scribe and the student has regular TA support they must work together to support the student. If information is scribed for the student during the lesson, the TA must inform the teacher and state that the student would not have completed the work without having it scribed. In exercise books and/or tests, the TA must write on the test how much they wrote for the student and how much the student wrote themselves. The teacher, when marking the work, will then comment on how much better the student did having the information scribed for them and how there grade has improved. SPAG must also be taken into account and marking must reflect this.

Rest Breaks/Prompts/Separate Room

Normally given to students who have Autism / ADHD / medical issues (with supporting medical letter) in preference to extra time. This arrangement must be practised by the student when taking tests to ensure it becomes their normal way of working and evidence collected to support this. This is standard practice for student's in the ARC as they are able to staff this arrangement. If is used for a mainstream student the SEN Team must be informed in advance of any assessments taking place so that it can be staffed and organised.

Use of a word processor

This may be for student's whose handwriting is not legible or for students who write very slowly due to medical issues. This does not have to be processed on line but it must be the student's normal way of working and evidence collected to process the application.