



# Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service

*"For Special Educational Needs and Disability"*



## Access arrangements – support in examinations

### What are access arrangements?

Access arrangements allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to complete a test to the best of their ability, without compromising the integrity of the test. Access arrangements are the principal way in which the examination bodies comply with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Put simply, access arrangements remove the barriers towards completing the tests, without giving an unfair advantage.

It is important that these arrangements are planned for and organised well in advance of tests.

### What is a reasonable adjustment?

The Equality Act 2010 requires examination bodies (awarding bodies) to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled student would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. An example of reasonable steps to overcome a disadvantage might be providing a braille paper for a visually impaired candidate who could read braille.

## **How do I know whether my child requires access arrangements?**

If you are not sure whether your son/daughter is eligible for access support during examinations, you should speak to their class teacher or the SENCO. A student does not need to have an EHCP, be receiving 'SEN Support' or even have a diagnosis of anything specific, to gain access arrangements. It

is the identification and effect of any difficulty in accessing the test, which is important.

It may be that access arrangements are only needed for one particular test. Teachers should talk to you about which arrangements are best for each of the tests your child is taking.

Though not an exhaustive list, access arrangements might be used to support pupils who:

- have difficulty reading
- have difficulty writing
- have difficulty concentrating
- have processing difficulties
- use sign language
- have a hearing impairment
- have a visual impairment

In all the above cases the difficulty should be significant, persistent and it should have a substantial adverse effect on learning.

## **My son/daughter has support in class. Can they have the same support in examinations?**

Your child's 'normal way of working' is important. This is evidence that a specific type of support is necessary for them to access the curriculum and learn. Teachers will use evidence of 'normal way of working' to apply for access arrangements for individual students. The rules for applying for access arrangements are more stringent for GCSE examinations and beyond, so building a history of need is very important. For some access arrangements teachers may have to arrange for additional standardised tests to be completed during the school year. These standardised scores in reading, for example, together with 'normal way

of working' may provide the evidence required to claim access arrangements at *GCSE* and beyond.

## **What type of access arrangements are there?**

There are many sorts of access arrangements. Some of these are listed below:

- Additional time
- Reader (human or computer)
- Word processor
- Scribe
- Prompter
- Practical assistant
- Enlarged papers
- Modified paper (colour, font size, braille, language etc.)
- Smaller/individual room
- Read aloud
- Rest breaks

The access arrangements must be appropriate to the exam and the student. For example, a student with dyslexia may require additional time for a written exam, but not for a practical one.

## **My child has a reader for exams. Is this cheating?**

No, it can be a 'reasonable adjustment' and used as part of access arrangements. There are strict rules that readers and scribes must follow during exams (at *GCSE* and beyond). This is to make sure no unfair advantage is given. Exam inspectors can make unannounced visits to schools to check the rules are being followed. In class the use of a reader or scribe will be less formal, so your son/daughter will need to practice using a reader or scribe under exam conditions. For *SATs*, the support will seem to the child to be less formal, but adults providing the support will, nevertheless, be aware of guidelines they must follow.

Details of the current Access Arrangements for special needs candidates in SATs test is available at:

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2/ks2tests](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2/ks2tests)

Full information of Access Arrangements at GCSE and GCE is available at:

[www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration)

You can contact us

**Wolverhampton Information, Advice & Support Service**

**'for special educational needs and disability'**

Impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to a child and young person's special educational needs or disability from birth to 25 years.

**Contact: 01902 556945**

**Email: [ias.service@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:ias.service@wolverhampton.gov.uk)**

**Website: [www.wolvesiass.org](http://www.wolvesiass.org)**