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Ethos Academy Trust

# **Access Arrangements 2024 - 2025**



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	<b>Summary</b>	This policy details the access arrangements for Ethos College and ensures that they are managed in accordance with current regulations and guidance.			
2	<b>Responsible person</b>	SENDCo			
3	<b>Accountable ELT member</b>	Mandeep Bains			
4	<b>Applies to</b>	Ethos College			
5	<b>Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy</b>	N/A			
6	<b>Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)</b>	Mandeep Bains			
8	<b>Ratifying committee(s) and date of final approval</b>	Head Teacher			
9	<b>Version Number</b>	1.5			
10	<b>Available on</b>	Every	Y/N	Trust Website	Y/N
				Academy Website	Y/N
				Staff Portal	Y/N
11	<b>Related documents (if applicable)</b>				
12	<b>Disseminated to</b>	Ethos College			
13	<b>Date of implementation (when shared)</b>				
14	<b>Date of next formal review</b>	November 2025			
15	<b>Consulted with Recognised Trade Unions</b>	N/A			

Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
07/10/23	1.4	JCQ update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates</li> <li>-Completion of Form 9 by SENCo</li> <li>-New Assessor's Details</li> </ul>
17/10/24	1.5	Minor Changes/JCQ Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates.</li> <li>-The SENCo must determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations and not a specialist.</li> </ul>

## Contents

Section	Description	Page
1	What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments? 1.1 Access arrangements 1.2 Reasonable adjustments	3
2	Purpose of the policy	4
3	General Principles	4
4	Equalities Policy (Exams)	5
5	The assessment process 5.1 The qualification(s) of the current assessor 5.2 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties 5.3 Checking the qualifications of the assessors 5.4 Process for assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor 5.5 Recording evidence of need 5.6 Painting a holistic <i>picture</i> of need and gathering <i>evidence</i> to demonstrate <i>normal way of working</i>	5 - 6
6	Process access arrangements 6.1 Arrangements requiring awarding body approval 6.2 Centre-delegated access arrangements	7

7	Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements 7.1 Word Processor Policy (Exams) 7.2 Separate Invigilation Policy	7
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This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Ethos College is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

## 1. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### 1.1 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 particular 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’.”*

[AA Definitions, page 7]

### 1.2 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 a number of 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’.*

[AA Definitions, page 7]

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates

## 2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Ethos College 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 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 the 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

[JCQ *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*, 4.2]

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#).

## 3. General Principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (section 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.
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

- 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.
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination.

## 4. Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. This policy is kept by the Exams Officer in the Exams Policies file.

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## 5. The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by the SENDCo who is appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3. The head of the centre **must** ensure the SENDCo has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and familiarise themselves with the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

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.

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

Kate Lyell

### 5.2 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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 [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### 5.3 Checking the qualifications of the assessors

The Head of Centre has checked the qualification certificates provided by the SENDCo. Copies of these certificates are kept in the Access Arrangements file which is made available to the JCQ inspector at each annual visit.

## 5.4 Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Ethos College is a KS4 referral service which means that some of pupils are dual registered with a mainstream school in the Local Authority. Some students are referred from out of area, and some are single registered.

In some instances, pupils will have been assessed in their mainstream setting for access arrangements. The SENDCo will liaise with the school for appropriate evidence and then re-apply for any necessary arrangements.

Where assessments are not available from the previous setting, the SENDCo will gather the necessary evidence and submit an application.

For those pupils who arrive without evidence the SENDCo will undertake appropriate diagnostic testing.

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* or *Statement of Special Educational Needs* the SENDCo gathers evidence that paints a holistic picture of need and demonstrates the candidate's normal way of working. The SENDCo will complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

The SENDCo complies with all procedures documented in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

All evidence is retained on file by the SENDCo.

## 5.5 Recording evidence of need

Many pupils referred to Ethos have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place which evidences any need for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments.

The SENDCo additionally uses teacher observations, internal assessments and data or supporting evidence provided during the referral process in order to document the evidence of need.

## 5.6 Painting a holistic *picture of need* and gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*

The SENDCo liaises with the mainstream school upon referral to ascertain whether any pre-existing access arrangements and documentation are in place, and then continues with these recommendations.

If no access arrangements are in place the SENDCo assesses candidates (over a period of a half term) using teacher observations and initial baseline data. All candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

The *normal way of working* is defined by JCQ as:

*"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre<sup>†</sup>, 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.*

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment

## 6. Processing access arrangements

### 6.1 Arrangements 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 listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74. AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. For non-GCSE qualifications offered by Pearson the application must also be made through their own Pearson Access Arrangements Online portal.

The SENDCo is responsible for submitting online applications via *Access arrangements online*. Candidates are asked to give consent (candidate personal data consent form) before an application is made.

All evidence and documentation is kept on file by the SENDCo.

The access arrangement is also recorded on the candidate's record on Schoolpod, the centre's Management Information System to ensure that all staff are aware.

Although a specialist, e.g. a medical consultant, may recommend specific access arrangements, it is the SENCo who must determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations. It is the SENCo's professional judgement which is based on their knowledge of the candidate's disability, the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments and comments and observations from teaching staff.

### 6.2 Centre-delegated access arrangements

All evidence and documentation is kept on file by the SENDCo.



The access arrangement is also recorded on the candidate's record on Schoolpod, the centre's Management Information System to ensure that all staff are aware.

There is not a requirement to process an application for supervised rest breaks using Access arrangements online. However, for GCSE and GCE AS and A-level qualifications the SENCo must complete the statement within Form 9, confirming the need for supervised rest breaks

## 7. Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

### 7.1 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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Ethos College's word processor policy and the statement which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams are kept by the Exams Officer in the Exams Policy file

### 7.2 Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENDCo on a case by case basis, following JCQ guidelines and regulations.

The SENDCO's decision will be based on

*"whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect (diagnosed at consultant level) and the candidate's normal way of working within the centre."*

[AA 5.16]