



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This Exam Access Arrangements Policy outlines the provision and processes concerning access arrangements and reasonable adjustments at MTS. This provision helps to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those who have been identified as having a specific learning difficulty (SpLD). This policy supports the school's work in creating an inclusive learning environment.

At MTS, the provision of access arrangements for exams and tests strictly adheres to the regulations set out by the relevant awarding body. In most cases, this is the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). JCQ regulations can be found in *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties (JCQ)*¹. This document is updated annually with updates coming into effect from 1st September each year.

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access Arrangements allow exam candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access an assessment without changing the demands of the assessment and are the way that exam boards comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'. Access arrangements aim to remove the disadvantages a pupil may have when accessing assessment due to difficulties resulting from physical, cognitive/learning, sensory or psychological differences. Access arrangements are designed to level the playing field and must not create any unfair advantage or compromise the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements must be agreed upon before an assessment/exam and must reflect the pupil's normal way of working in the school. Access arrangements are put in place on a subject-by-subject basis. This means a candidate may have different access arrangements in different subjects depending on need and eligibility.

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.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, time frames or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. A student with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long-term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements.

¹ Available from <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

THE IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL PROCESS

Some pupils join the school with SEND that has already been identified and they may already have experience using access arrangements. Once at MTS, the provision of access arrangements for exams and tests strictly adheres to the JCQ regulations.

Other pupils may be recognised to have a support need while at MTS. Information on referral processes and the identification of support needs and SEND can be found in the School's Learning Support Policy.

The provision of access arrangements requires several stages:

Stage 1: Picture of need

Awarding bodies require the school to document a picture of need for a pupil. Initially, this is usually generated during referral, where teacher feedback may highlight a difficulty with work in class, a mismatch in performance in class compared to work under time pressure or other signs of difficulty. The picture of need is further developed through investigation, which may include observation in class and review of work samples. Where a picture of need is established, the next step is an assessment.

Stage 2: Assessment

There are two types of assessment. Which assessment is most appropriate depends on the individual pupil and their circumstances (e.g. the nature of the concerns and whether they have been assessed previously)

Route A Access arrangements assessment

This type of assessment seeks to generate results that can be used as evidence for access arrangements. While brief feedback can be provided from this assessment, it does not result in a full written report and does not draw any diagnostic conclusions. This route is best suited to a pupil who already has a full diagnostic assessment report and where no new concerns have arisen.

Route B Full diagnostic assessment

This type of assessment (usually by an educational psychologist) gives a much more detailed picture of a pupil's strengths and difficulties and if applicable, can formally identify specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dysgraphia. It explores underlying ability, educational attainment and cognitive processing (e.g. memory and information processing). As a result of the greater depth of this type of assessment, it can give personalised guidance which can be used in school to help support a pupil. This type of assessment can also be used in the future to secure exam arrangements and support at university. The school can offer guidance and support for arranging this assessment, including recommendations for assessors and the assessment can take place in school if parents wish. The financial arrangements for this assessment are made directly between parents and the assessor.

Please note that whilst assessment reports that have been commissioned privately may provide useful information to help with the support of your child, these cannot be used for access arrangements.

Only reports from assessments where the school has been involved and where the assessment has been arranged with an approved assessor who has an established relationship with the school can be used to support access arrangements. We are bound by the JCQ regulations which stipulate that any

specialist assessor / educational psychologist must have an established working relationship with the school. Likewise, medical reports will prompt an investigation of a pupil's needs, but there must be adequate evidence in school for an arrangement to take place and the nature of that arrangement is determined by the JCQ guidelines, rather than and specific suggestion by a medical professional. Assessments for a diagnosis should always be discussed with the Learning Support Department prior to being completed, so that the school is able to demonstrate its

**It is a requirement that where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty, the SENCo should have explored and trialled the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and/or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time (AA 5.1)*

All files will be maintained and stored in the school admin office by the Examinations Administrator.

CENTRE DELEGATED ARRANGEMENTS

Some access arrangements are 'Centre Delegated' and do not need to be applied for using AAO. Evidence of need and normal way of working are still required and a file similar to that described above will need to be maintained. Where required, JCQ Form 9 will need to be completed. In every case, the school must be able to demonstrate that the arrangement reflects the student's normal way of working within the centre and continues to be appropriate to the student's needs.

Centre delegated arrangements include the following:

- Word processor/laptop.

- Supervised rest breaks.

- Alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation)

- Read aloud.

- Prompter.

TIMELINE

It is expected that referrals to the learning support department will have been made in good time such that arrangements can be put in place for any mocks sat in preparation for the public exams.

Based on initial review (which may include informal feedback, samples of work or mock exam papers/tests, classroom observation and routine screening) a decision will be made as to whether a picture of need should be sought.

Where it is decided that a picture of need should be sought, the Learning Support Department will gather relevant information for part 1 of Form 8.

Once part 1 of Form 8 is completed, an appropriate assessment will be carried out.

Qualifying scores from the assessment will be added to part 2 of Form 8 by the assessor, after which the SENCo will complete part 3 of Form 8 to confirm access arrangements. On completion, the form 8 will be passed to the Examinations Administrator who will add it to the pupil's file and record the access arrangement/s granted.

A data protection notice signed by the pupil will be added to the file.

Once within the appropriate time frame, the SENCo and the Examinations Administrator will then process an application via access arrangements online and on filing the approval notice, the access arrangement will be formally recorded on the learning support register as an external exam arrangement.

Where a pupil is granted an access arrangement prior to year 10/before a formal application can be made

register so that teaching staff are aware and can support the arrangement as the pupil's normal way of working.

KEY ROLES

EXAMINATIONS ADMINISTRATOR