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Gordano School

Exam Access Arrangements

Statement

2024 - 2025

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current JCQ regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	
Lucie Broad	
Date of next review	Sept 2025

Headteacher: Ms L Blundell BMus(Hons) MA

Gordano School, St Mary's Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 7QR

Tel: 01275 842606

e-mail: mailbox@gordanoschool.org.uk www.gordanoschool.org.uk

Lighthouse Schools Partnership, Registered address: St Mary's Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 7QR

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Rationale:

This Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) is a guide for teachers, parents and students to understand the procedure for the identification and support of students who may require EAA.

This document should be read in conjunction with Gordano School's SEND Information Report, SEND Policy, Gordano School's Teaching and Learning Policy and Gordano School's Dyslexia Statement.

What is the definition of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)?

'Children are identified as having SEND when they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children the same age, or have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of education facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the Local Authority' (SEND Code of Practice 2014).

What are EAA?

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 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'. (JCQ, 2023, p7)

Who is the JCQ?

The Joint Council for Qualifications, (JCQ) is a council acting as a single voice for the six largest qualification providers in the UK offering GCSE, GCE, and vocationally related qualifications. JCQ annually publish strict regulations, which schools have to abide by when deciding if a student is eligible for EAA.

Who is eligible for EAA?

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 several 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'. (JCQ, 2023, p7)

Identifying the need for EAA at Gordano School.

Students who may qualify for formal EAA during KS4/KS5, ideally are identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage, needs are screened and identified rather than formally tested. In the classroom, teachers use the "Universal Provision" approach when delivering lessons. Universal provision is based on inclusive approaches to teaching and learning which benefit ALL children but are essential for those with SEND. Teachers can also refer students who they feel are struggling with their learning in subsequent year groups.

Students who continue to have 'significant and persistent' difficulties and for whom this is affecting their 'normal day to day activities' will undertake formal assessment from Year 9. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. Assessments are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ guidelines.

A picture of current need from teachers and a normal way of working in lessons and exams, is also required as evidence in order to apply formally with JCQ for EAA. On approval, most EAA are valid for 26 months. After this period, a candidate may need to be re-assessed. The most recent testing is binding and determines any subsequent EAA arrangements. Parents are informed in writing of any assessment & agreed EAA.

Using EAA at Key Stage 4 & Key Stage 5

Where EAA have been applied for and approved by JCQ, these continue to be a candidates 'normal way of working' in a classroom setting and in any exams/coursework or controlled assessments. Student will be supported in how to use arrangements by the Student Support Team. If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed EAA in an exam type setting, then the EAA may be withdrawn. Parents are informed in writing of any assessment & agreed EAA.

EAA of Reader – Claro computer reader software

There are a range of reasons why a student may benefit from having text read out to them in exams. This may be because of a slow speed of reading, difficulty with memory or a difficulty with organisation of thoughts. (Not an exhaustive list!) At Gordano School, we currently use the Claro computer reader software to support students in exams and in the classroom with reading. In order to be able to ensure that we have enough computers to be able to provide Claro in exams, the following reasons are examples of evidence we currently look at when making decisions about allocating and applying for a reader for students in exams.

- Teacher evidence of text being read out in lessons (This has to be in place to show evidence of a normal way of working.)
- Students who have a speed of reading score in the Low Average range (a standardised score of below 85) N.B. A reader cannot be awarded if the slow rate of reading score is being used to apply for 25% additional time.

- Students who have difficulties with memory and/or processing speed – scores in the Low Average range (a standardised score of below 85) and who have said that they need to reread text several times to process or remember what has been read.

This is not an exhaustive list of criteria, but the most common reasons we may base the decision to apply for a reader.

Listening to music in exams

For candidates with a diagnosed SEMH or sensory impairment such as tinnitus or misophonia for whom listening to music is a normal way of working in school, we may apply for permission for the candidate to listen to music in exams. The candidate will be given a small selection of pre-approved music playlists to listen to. School will provide either an MP3 player or a memory stick and school laptop/PC, where the pre-approved playlists are already stored. School will also provide headphones for the candidate to listen through. Candidates own headphones, MP3 type players or playlists are not permitted to be used in exams. This is not a common arrangement.