



# BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL

LEADING LEARNING TOGETHER



## Name of Policy: Access Arrangements Policy

Date Ratified:	November 2025
Monitoring Responsibility	Full: Yes Finance, Personnel and Premises: Standards & Outcomes :
Review Date:	November 2026
Headteacher:	Mr A Fulbrook
Chair of Governors:	Mrs L Smith
Draftee (Academy Lead):	Mrs K Osborn

Signed ..... Date .....

Mrs L Smith – Chair of Governors

# Boston High School

# Access arrangements policy

## 2025-2026

Written by Kate Osborn

This policy is reviewed **annually** to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	September 2026

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Kate Osborn
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Anne-Marie Franks
Head of centre	Andrew Fulbrook
Assessor	Specialist Teaching Team
Examinations Officer	Gill Warner

## Contents

Key staff involved in the policy .....	3
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments? .....	5
Access arrangements .....	5
Reasonable adjustments.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Purpose of the policy.....	5
Special Educational Needs and Disability policy .....	6
The assessment process.....	6
The qualification(s) of the current assessor .....	6
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties .....	6
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor .....	7
Painting a <i>picture of need</i> and gathering evidence to demonstrate <i>normal way of working</i> .....	7
Processing access arrangements .....	8
Arrangements requiring awarding body approval.....	8
Centre-delegated access arrangements .....	9
Centre-specific criteria for access arrangements .....	9
Word processor policy (exams) .....	9-11
Separate invigilation within the centre.....	12
Evidence from medical professionals.....	12
Appendix 1.....	13
The criteria Boston High School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.....	<b>13</b>

## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### 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 3]

It is important that SENCOs consider and, where appropriate, implement access arrangements that will prepare candidates for the workplace. Extra time may not always be the most appropriate arrangement. (AA p8). Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty the SENCO **must have trialled and exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks** through timed internal tests and/or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time (AA5.2)

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'. 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 11]

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Boston High School 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, 4.2]

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

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCO alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

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](#)

Where this policy refers to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) 'Instructions for conducting examinations' within this document this will be referred to as [ICE](#).

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability policy**

Part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Boston High School Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy. This policy includes staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements. This policy is available on the Boston High School website.

The Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

### **The assessment process**

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3. The Head of Centre also ensures that the SENCo and the centre's appointed assessor undertake regular CPD such as attending an annual update course on these regulations, as required by the JCQ regulations

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

We appoint the services of a Specialist Assessor, who holds the current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, from the Lincolnshire County Council Specialist Teacher Team.

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

At the point an assessor is engaged 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.

### **Checking the qualification of the assessor**

We hold a copy of the assessor's qualification on file so that it is available for inspector purposes by a JCQ Inspector [AA](#) 7.3 *Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties*.

The Head of Centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

The assessor should be employed or contracted by the centre, the local authority or an external assessor who has contacted the centre, establishes a working relationship with the centre and is approved by the centre. Before assessing the candidate the assessor will receive as a minimum Part 1 of Form 8, working with the SENCo. (7.3.5)

A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, **cannot** be used to award access arrangements and **cannot** be used to process an application using *Access arrangements online*. This would be where the assessor has not contacted the centre, has not established a working relationship with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received as a minimum a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENCo.

The SENCO will however consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need should be instigated.

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

As outlined in the Boston High School Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy students are referred to the SEND team via a variety of sources. Once they are referred and identified as having learning differences then the SENCO starts to create a picture of need. A candidate will not be assessed until this picture of need is built, access arrangements are trialled and the impact of them is evaluated. Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* the SENCo must paint this picture of need and complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Boston High School follows the requirements of [AA 7.52 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor](#) and [7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties](#)

Evidence of need and Part 1 of the Form 8 is provided to the assessor before the candidate is assessed.

Part 1 of Form 8 must include teacher feedback and evidence of normal way of working. The candidate's current difficulties in the classroom, timed internal tests and/or mock examinations, teacher feedback and their normal way of working must be recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the assessment. ([AA 5.2](#) and [7.6.1](#))

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

Diagnosis from an approved assessor alone does not establish the history of need required by the Joint Council of Qualifications for the school to be able to apply for Access Arrangements. Evidence of the provision being the student's normal way of working at school will also be required. The SENCO builds and holds evidence of need in order to demonstrate that it is the candidate's normal way of working.

The picture and evidence of need is provided to the assessor before the candidate's assessment. [AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor](#). *The picture of need is painted as per Part 1 of the Form 8 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties.*

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO must provide the assessor with background information, ie a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8.

The SENCO and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

Part 1 of Form 8 must include teacher feedback and evidence of normal way of working. The candidate's current difficulties in the classroom, timed internal tests and/or mock examinations, teacher feedback and their normal way of working must be recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the assessment. (AA5.2 and 7.6.1)

Comments from parents cannot be recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 or Part 1 of Form 9. (AA5.2 and 7.6.1)

**Candidates may not require the same access arrangements for every examination/assessment and every subject.** As subjects and the methods of assessment vary, so the demands on the candidate will vary. Consideration is therefore made on a subject by subject basis as per the regulations [AA](#)

## Processing access arrangements

### 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 in [AA](#) 8.5 This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 92 (AA).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications are only processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AA0)

In addition to the completed form there must be: • a sample of internal school tests/mock exam papers across relevant subjects showing the application of 25% extra time; • comments and observations from teaching staff in relevant subjects as to why the candidate needs 25% extra time and how they use the 25% extra time awarded. (AA5.2)

The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCO – the person appointed by the Head of Centre to co-ordinate the access arrangements process. The examination officer applies for arrangements requiring approval using AAO. The Examination Officer processes these on instruction from the SENCO and using the information provided within the Form 8. Applications are made before the published JCQ deadlines.

Form 8s are made up of 3 parts. Part 1 is completed prior to assessment by the Specialist Assessor. The Specialist Assessor completes Part 2. Part 3 completed once the assessor has completed their testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. Part 3 will make recommendations for access arrangements/adjustments taking into account: the information from the assessment (part 2), the requirements of the specification and the candidate's normal way of working in school (part 1).

The centre (Boston High School) **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 SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.(AAO)

A copy of the completed Form 8 (parts 1,2,3) is held by both the Examinations Officer and SENCO. Further appropriate evidence of need is held within the SEND office. These records are available for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. This process has been put into place to meet the requirements of [[AA](#) 7.6.4]

Candidates are informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access Arrangements Online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 . ([AA](#) 8.6)

Some applications may not gain automatic approval and require further information and evidence to be submitted; this information is collated by the SENCO and forwarded by the Examinations Officer. Arrangements for the candidate may then be approved/refused on an individual basis by the different awarding bodies. If an application is refused then this access arrangement will not be in place for the candidate for future examinations.

### Centre-delegated access arrangements

JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* sets out which access arrangements may be centre delegated. Approval for these are only made by the SENCO. The process for identifying the need and creating a picture of need remains the same as for those which require external approval. A Form 9 will be completed, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working.

### The use of a word Centre-specific criteria for access arrangements

#### Word processor (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. There is a separate Word processor policy which outlines the requirements for this.

This policy includes the statement of the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams. This statement is also available at the end of this document, see appendix 1.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) **with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled** to a candidate **where it is their normal way of working within the centre**, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.  
[ICE 14.20]

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

A member of Boston High School's Senior Leadership Team has produced a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. A copy of this is attached to the school's Word Processor policy.

[AA 5.8.4]

### Separate invigilation/alternative rooming within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation/alternative rooming within the centre must be made by the SENCo (AA5.16), who will make their decision based on:

- whether the candidate has a **substantial and long term impairment** which has an adverse effect, such as a serious medical condition; and
- that alternative rooming reflects the candidate's **normal way of working within the centre** in internal schools tests and mock examinations
- The candidate's difficulties are therefore established within Boston High School and known to the SENCO, the Director of Key Stage or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.
- Evidence will be requested. Where this is medical evidence, this must be from a medical specialist such as a consultant rather than a candidate's own GP.
- Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

### Evidence from medical professionals relating to a candidate's disability

Evidence of disability may be required in addition to the SENCo's detailed information and picture of need. This would need to be supported by confirmation of the candidate's disability:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) **or**
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service **or**
- a **current** Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.

-For example, an Occupational Therapist specialising in Children and Young People Services, learning disability, mental health.

**NB A letter from the candidate's GP is not acceptable.**

The SENCo may accept a medical diagnosis from an appropriate specialist working within either the NHS or a private practice. 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. (AA 5.2.3)

JCQ AA notes that supervised rest breaks are often more effective and appropriate than 25% extra time for candidates who experience anxiety or attention difficulties. They may better address the needs of neurodivergent candidates, such as those with ADHD or ASD, as well as those with a medical condition or mental health needs.(AA.5.1)

Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty the SENCo must have trialled and exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and/or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time. (AA5.2)

The SENCo will consult a specialist teacher when considering arrangements for candidates with a sensory impairment, for example a Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People from the county SEST team. (AA 5.12.2)

In line with the aim of preparing candidates for the workplace (AA p8) and "reasonable time frames", photocopying onto coloured paper is not considered an appropriate reasonable adjustment. As per the regulations, "alternative ways of working should be explored, such as the use of a coloured overlay or the candidate wearing coloured glasses" (AA6.5.3).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools' SEND policy and Word processor (Exams) policy