

EST. 1914  
THE CARDINAL VAUGHAN  
MEMORIAL SCHOOL



*Amare et Servire*

## **Access Arrangements – Examinations & Assessment Policy**

## Definitions

In this Access Arrangements Policy and Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- 'CVMS' means Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School.
- 'JCQ' means Joint Council for Qualifications.
- 'SEnCo' means the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator.
- 'AARA' means the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments publication.

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that CVMS has a written record which clearly shows it is leading on and complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements in public examinations. [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4 c]

This policy is maintained and held by the SEnCo alongside the individual electronic files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains the necessary information required according to the regulations. The policy is reviewed annually 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 AARA.

## What are Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments?

"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'." [AARA Definitions, page 13]

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'." [AARA Definitions, page 13]

CVMS works in accordance with the JCQ regulations.

In accordance with those regulations, it is important to note that the School, and not parents, are responsible for access arrangement requests.

The School recognises that parents, guardians and pupils may legitimately contact the Learning Support Unit (LSU) over concerns about learning difficulties. But, as far as access arrangements are concerned, any necessary actions must follow from the School's processes an internal referral system, as detailed in this policy, rather than in response to parental or pupil application.

Parents and guardians should be aware that paragraph 7.3.6 on page 103 of the JCQ regulations state that, "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 liaised with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received a completed Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENCo...." In accordance with this regulation, the School cannot use a privately commissioned assessment. Having a diagnosis for example, of dyslexia/dyspraxia or anything else, is not sufficient for applying for examination access arrangements. Rather it depends on a combination of the practical everyday effects of the difficulties on the student's academic work, the 'history of need', the student's 'normal way of working' in class and evidence of qualifying scores for standardised tests which have been conducted by a qualified and registered specialist assessor known to CVMS. The SENCo and assessors will carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment as part of this process, to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of

working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves, should be investigated. See Appendix II.

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by CVMS. At the point an assessor is engaged/employed, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any formal assessment of a candidate. This specialist assessor will hold a practising certificate and a Patoss or RQTU (Register of Qualifications in Test Use) membership number and this evidence is held on file by the SENCo for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector when required.

### **Referrals to the LSU and the AA Process**

Exam Access Assessment processes are administered with regard to the Equality Act 2010 regulations and SEN code of Practice (2014). The school makes every attempt to identify students needing exam access as early as possible. Documentation is collected from previous schools and as evidence for a history of need. Teachers also refer pupils to the LSU in Year 8 if difficulties are identified. See Appendix I for summary of this process:

1. Teachers have a professional responsibility to raise any concerns regarding the learning and progress of any pupil that they teach with the LSU. Staff will be asked to identify any pupils presenting with difficulties by the end of Year 9 in order that applications for Access Arrangements can be completed and approved by JCQ in Year 10.
2. Teachers should refer all parental queries related to AA to the LSU. (Please refer to See Appendix II for Medical and diagnosed SpLD.) Teaching staff should use the following email addresses in the first instance [OpeniboP@cvms.sjscat.co.uk](mailto:OpeniboP@cvms.sjscat.co.uk) and cc [Malhames@cvms.sjscat.co.uk](mailto:Malhames@cvms.sjscat.co.uk) providing as much detail about their concerns as possible using the referral form [SEND Internal Referral Form.docx](#)
3. Teachers should note that the JCQ regulations specify that the difficulty must be long-term ie to have existed for at least twelve months prior to the examination. Hence the importance of building up a clear picture of need and the pupils' normal way of working early on.
4. LSU will then follow its procedures and begin the information requests to other subject teachers as well as gathering documentary evidence. Any pupil paperwork which can be used as evidence of their normal way of working, should be scanned by teachers and emailed, especially any green pen /extra time usage. Teachers and the SENCo identify students needing exam access through, for example:

- Screening tests
  - Information from feeder schools
  - Termly assessments and tracking information
  - Subject teacher feedback forms
  - Scanned exam / test papers identifying any extra time taken
5. Different procedures apply in relation to short-term illness or injury as well as when supporting evidence is available from CAMHS, counselling, police reports, inclusion notes, EP and other reports and these are addressed by the Examinations Officer.
6. Pupils with an Education Health Care Plan are put forward for Access Arrangements by the SENCo in Year 9, to reflect their normal way of working within the centre.
7. All concerns for GCSEs must be raised before the Year 10 Summer internal exams and for GCEs, the Year 12 November/December exams. This is so that the assessor can be commissioned to screen these potential candidates and arrangements can be trialled in the next set of exams.
8. If teachers have concerns regarding a pupil's learning in Year 11/13 which have not previously been identified, the same procedure will have to be followed but in a shorter timeframe, prior to the annual JCQ application deadline in March if possible. Again, teacher evidence and proof of a long-term difficulty is still required to support this. Access arrangements will only be considered with this evidence, eg a late diagnosis or manifestation of a pre-existing difficulty.
9. **The Examinations Officer will process the access arrangements online in May for Year 10, in time for the summer examinations and by the summer exams for Year 12. Once the access arrangements have been approved by JCQ, parents, teachers and pupils will be informed by the SENCo or Assessor.** This is to ensure eligible candidates learn to use the arrangements in exam conditions prior to Year 11.
10. In more unusual cases, where needs are more complex, an access arrangement request may be referred to the specific awarding body by JCQ Access Arrangements Online. Applications of this nature are considered on a case by case basis to ensure an even playing field by the individual examination board. The final decision remains with that awarding body and cannot be overruled by the school.

### **Processing access arrangements**

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 by JCQ.

This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers. AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The Examinations Officer makes the online applications **by end of Year 10 / Year 12 for the majority of candidates**. This is in advance of the annually published deadlines, which are for exceptional cases. The Examinations Officer will save a record of the printed online application in the candidate's AA electronic file, ready for inspection.

### **Centre-delegated access arrangements**

The school follows JCQ guidance when providing centre delegated access arrangements: AARA pg 81.

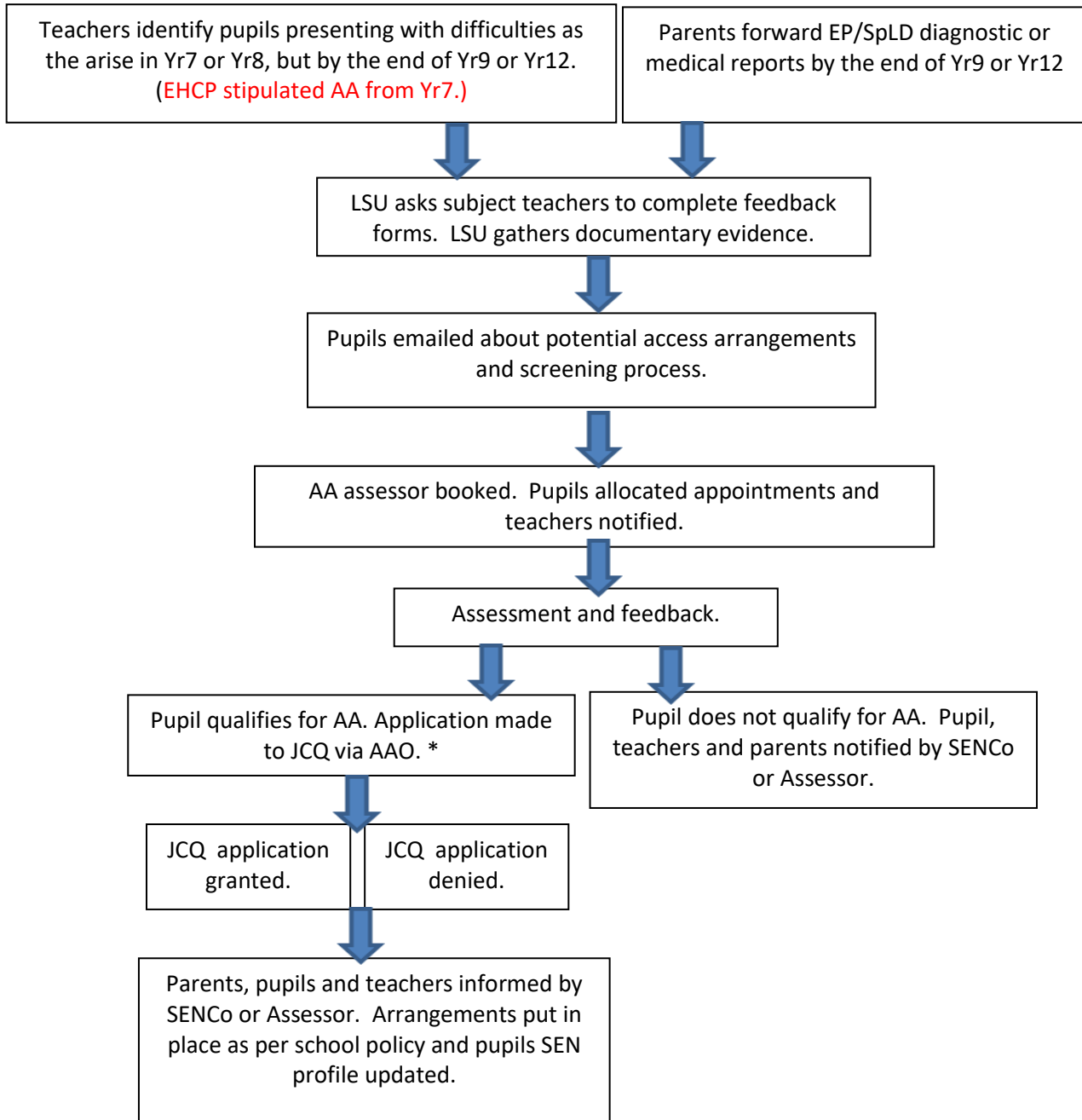
- The need is a result of substantial and long term impairment and it is their normal way of working
- There is medical evidence to substantiate this arrangement and it is their normal way of working.

The Examinations Officer and SENCo keep a record of all centre delegated access arrangements and evidence of need on file. A record of arrangements are maintained and held electronically by the LSU. SENCo approval must be kept as part of these records.

The School adheres to the "Use of Word Processor in Public Exams policy for CVMS" when approving the use of a word processor. See Appendix III.

## APPENDIX I

### AA referral process for teachers and parents

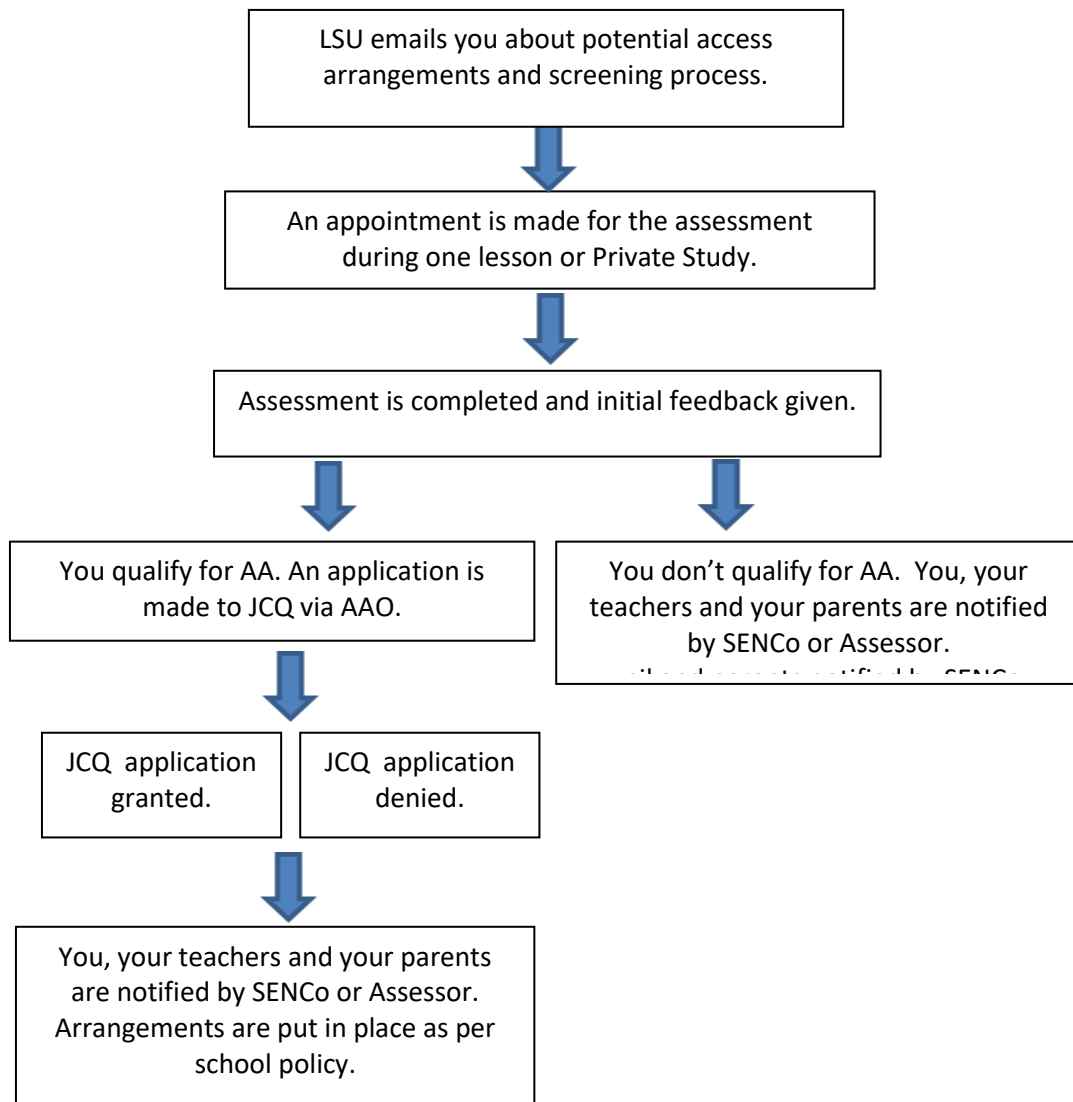


\*By exception, complex cases are then referred directly to the awarding body for approval.



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## AA referral process for pupils



## APPENDIX II

### **Evidence of Need and demonstrating normal way of working for Medical / SpLD pupils.**

1. If a candidate has a long-term medical condition (eg hearing or visual impairment, long-term use of medication), or physical disability which would represent a substantial disadvantage if reasonable adjustments were not made, the candidate's parent or guardian must send the School current medical evidence, (eg Hospital consultant's letter) before joining the School, or as soon as possible after diagnosis, if after Yr 7.
2. The letter must indicate the nature of the condition or disability, confirming that it is ongoing (more than 12 months.) In accordance with JCQ regulations, applications can only be made if, in addition, the School is able to collect substantial evidence of need and demonstrate this in the pupil's normal way of working within the School. Following receipt of this letter, the School will make every effort to collect evidence and to make the strongest possible case to the examination authorities when the time comes.
3. If a candidate has been diagnosed with a Specific Learning Difficulty, their parent or guardian must contact the LSU who will consider the appropriate support. The regulations governing AA for a specific learning difficulty require significant amounts of documentation, such as an AA Assessor's report and evidence of a substantial and long-term history of need. This will be undertaken by the LSU from the end of Year 9 onwards, as outlined above. They will also oversee the collection of evidence and the dissemination of appropriate information using the established departmental and School procedures.
4. In accordance with regulations, irrespective of documented medical, physical or learning difficulties, in all cases, the SENCo must be satisfied that there is an extensive history of need.

### **Private Educational Psychologist Reports**

If under the schools testing system, a student does not qualify for Access Arrangements in Year 9, parents can obtain a Private Educational Psychologist (EP) Assessment as part of their request for the school to consider their child for Access Arrangements.

Even in this instance the report will only form part of the school's evidence when applying for Access Arrangements and may not guarantee that any concessions will be awarded.

Parents should be aware that the school will require to see a full copy of the report and original copies of all the tests completed.

This will enable the School (who under JCQ guidelines, can be the sole referrer for Access Arrangements) to have full confidence in the testing that has been undertaken. It will ensure that testing has been robust and valid and fits the testing interval criteria.

### **Alternative Rooming within the centre (AARA p82)**

In exceptional cases, an exam candidate may be approved for alternative rooming arrangements within the centre e.g. “a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs.” This decision will be made by the SENCo. The decision will be based on;

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect,
- whether that effect is disruptive to him/herself and/or others,
- and is the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre.

The need for alternative rooming arrangements must be substantiated by appropriate evidence of need. The evidence can take the form of a detailed letter from a:

- General Practitioner,
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services,
- Educational Health Care Plan,
- Educational Psychologist or
- SENCo instructions, confirming this need.

This must be received and confirmed by the SENCo prior to the mocks for that examination series.

As per JCQ, “Nervousness, low level of anxiety or being worried about examinations in not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.”

## APPENDIX III

# Use of Word Processor in Public Exams

[Word Processor Policy \(Exams\)](#)