



**THE NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL  
ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY**

Signed by Headmaster:

Signed by Co-Chair of Governors:

Reviewed by Behaviour, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee:

9 June 2022

Next review date:

June 2023

**Rationale:**

The Examination Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion for all pupils with recognised additional needs, including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual pupil may fulfil his or her full potential.

**Definitions:**

The term additional needs is used as an umbrella term to incorporate ALL pupils known to be receiving intervention through Learning Support, intervention, catch up or with a teaching assistant.

**Disability**

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a *'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'*.

**Special Educational Needs**

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which requires special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health.

**What are Access Arrangements?**

Access arrangements allow pupils with SEND or temporary injuries to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments.'

Access Arrangements allow every pupil equal opportunities within their examinations.

**Access Arrangements at Nelson Thomlinson School**

Nelson Thomlinson School aim to ensure that all pupils have equal access to examinations by where possible, removing barriers to the assessment which places them at a substantial disadvantage. At the same time, pupils will neither be at an advantage to their peers and the integrity of the assessment is always maintained. Access arrangements will not be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. Sometimes candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each subject.

Applications for access arrangements are submitted during the first year of a two year GCSE course, having firmly established a picture of need and a normal way of working during Years 7 to 9.

We apply for access arrangements by following the guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications: *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2021-22*.

Although access arrangements are always approved before an examination, in the event of a temporary, unexpected injury or impairment, access arrangements or special considerations will be applied for as soon as possible.

Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the pupil in the classroom (when appropriate), during internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.'

### **When might pupils need to be given Access Arrangements?**

An Access Arrangement is a provision or type of support given to a pupil (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided to ensure that the pupil has equal access to the exam. Some examples are:

- *Scribe*
- *Extra Time*
- *Reader*
- *Modified papers*
- *Rest breaks*
- *Prompt*

### **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.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

### **Special Consideration**

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment; such as a broken arm which does not allow the pupil to then write in their exam.

### **How are Exam Access Arrangements applied for?**

If pupils were entitled to access arrangements at KS2, it does not automatically entitle them to this provision at KS4. The SENCo will undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a candidate. This will include formally assessing pupils, between the end of Year 9 and in Year 10 to comply with JCQ guidance, using a variety of nationally recognised tests such as:

- Diagnostic Reading Analysis
- Gray Oral Reading Tests (GORT5)
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)

- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing – Second Edition (CTOPP2)
- Test of Memory and Learning – Second Edition (TOMAL2)

Testing resources are used if they have been recommended by JCQ and are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice. If assessment results and teacher evidence demonstrate a pupil has a significant need, an application is made to the Examinations Board for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s by the Examination Officer.

### **When will the use of word processors be granted to pupils for examinations?**

A word processor will be granted, with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled to the candidate, where it is the pupils' normal way of working within the school. A word processor cannot be granted to a pupil because he/she prefers 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 will be considered if the candidate has:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- Illegible handwriting

### **What support is given to students with Access Arrangements (AA)?**

Pupils with AA take part in small group sessions to show them how to effectively use AA. They are shown how to use AA appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do during the exam, and how much support the supporting adult is allowed to give. Pupils with extra time are given sessions with a teaching assistant on how to use the additional time allowance effectively.

In addition, pupils with AA have the opportunity to use their AA during internal assessments, exams and mock exams so that they gain practice using them effectively.

Support staff are also trained annually, on how to deliver AA support to ensure pupils are supported effectively whilst sustaining the integrity of the examination and the school.

All teaching and support staff are given access to the list of pupils with AA.

All pupils with AA are encouraged to use their full entitlement and to utilise the resources which they are entitled too. However, if a pupil rejects the AA then the appropriate paper work is filled in by the Examinations Officer and parents will be informed.

### **What are the procedures for processing an application?**

Once a pupil has been assessed by the SENCo and there is evidence to support an application for AA, the Examinations Officer will submit an application for AA to the examinations board. The feedback is instant and at this point the AA is added to the list of pupils and the parents are informed of the AA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- *A signed copy of the Form 8 report*
- *A data protection form signed by the pupil*
- *Recommendations by teachers*
- *Educational psychologist reports*
- *Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors*
- *Report from a Specialist Advisory Teacher*
- *Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP)*