

Guidance for parents, carers and students about Exam Access Arrangements

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

Exam Access Arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to access an exam.

They allow students to show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the exam, placing them on an even playing field to their peers, without disadvantage/advantage.

Students can only be awarded Access Arrangements if it is deemed by the SENDCo that they are at a significant disadvantage without them.

How will the process start?

Parents and carers should let the SENDCo, Mrs Hall, know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs and share any diagnostic reports. Good and open communication is important.

The SENDCo will work with teachers to gain feedback and identify a need in the classroom as well as with the students to identify any possible Access Arrangements required.

Various Access Arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working and concentration.

Not all students with additional needs will require Access Arrangements. It depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs alone do not entitle a student to Access Arrangements.

Who will make the assessment?

All year 9 students will be digitally screened using GL Exact in the second half of the summer term, this is to help identify students who may be entitled to an Exam Access Arrangement.

If students are identified with low scores by the screening, then a round robin will be sent to teaching staff. Teaching staff will also provide copies of timed assessments completed by students throughout the year. This helps to build an accurate picture of learning in the classroom and whether there are any concerns with access to learning.

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If concerns are shared by teaching staff, through the round robin, then the student will be put forward for assessment by Roundwood Park's appointed assessor. They alone must conduct the assessment to determine the need for Access Arrangements such as 25% extra time.

If concerns are not raised by teaching staff, we will monitor the student going forward.

Students already known to the Learning Support Department, through intervention and support, or who have a diagnosis, will automatically have a round robin sent to teachers, with the large majority progressing through to access testing, as long as their difficulties in the classroom are evident from the information collected from teachers. Please note students with an EHCP do not require testing. Students that are on the NHS pathway for a diagnosis will need to provide a signed letter from the NHS clearly stating there is an agreement to formally assess.

If a parent employs an external assessor to diagnose a learning difficulty (for example, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for Access Arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school prior to the assessment taking place. The external assessor must hold a recognised qualification that must be shared with Roundwood Park and approved by the Head. They must also have received and completed the necessary Access Arrangements paperwork before any work or assessment is undertaken.

Specialists (for example, a Medical Consultant, or a Psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are not responsible for decisions about Access Arrangements. Any recommendations will be considered but are subject to teacher feedback and agreement of an identified need in exams. The final decision on Exam Access Arrangements can only be made by the SENDCo alone.

Teachers must give evidence to show that an Access Arrangement is needed. Roundwood Park will keep records of how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests and in mock exams and whether the approved Access Arrangements are being used.

Please note, Exam Access Arrangements that are not used consistently, will be withdrawn.

What else needs to be completed?

The SENDCo will have to apply for most Exam Access Arrangements using the Centre Admin Portal and student data may need to be shared.

If a student has complex needs, Roundwood Park can discuss their needs with the exam board and the application may be referred, awaiting a decision based on further evidence supplied. In order to gather all the required supporting evidence ready for inspection, the process of applying for Access Arrangements can take several weeks.

Access Arrangements will be awarded and formalised before the end of the first year of the GCSE course's in year 10 or GCE/BTEC course's in Year 12. Students must have time to practise using approved Exam Access Arrangements in internal tests/assessments in accordance with the JCQ Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment yearly regulations.

Therefore, no further arrangements can be awarded following the final full set of internal assessments/mocks, of the year the student is due to take Public Examinations.

What about Year 11 into Year 12 students, with Exam Access Arrangements?

Any Access Arrangements awarded at GCSE are not automatically carried forward for GCE and BTEC courses. Roundwood Park must re-apply for Access Arrangements and new, current evidence is required that demonstrates that the arrangement is a normal way of working in year 12. This is obtained via a round robin and collection of internal tests from subject teachers.

Any Access Arrangements awarded, are only valid for Roundwood Park. If students attend another setting or move to or from another setting a brand new application must be made by the centre.

External joiners into Roundwood Park Sixth Form, must ensure that they share any diagnostic reports/Medical letters/previous Exam Access Arrangements documentation, with the Learning Support Department early into year 12, so as not to delay the process.

Finally

All schools must follow the JCQ Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment regulations, which are updated at the start of every academic year. Every school is inspected annually and if they are found to be breaking the regulations, this will be deemed malpractice and the school and student will be penalised.

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf