

## Rugby High School

### Disability Policy (in relation to Public Examinations)

#### Purpose of the Policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide accessibility policy/plan which details how the centre:

“recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. †or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”

[JCQ *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2018-2019* p15]

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

**The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability** (taken from JCQ *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2018-2019* p4)

Generally, impairments have to meet the statutory requirements set out in section 6 and Schedule 1 to the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions) to help better understand and apply this definition - <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea-guide.pdf>.

The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means ‘limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people’.

‘Substantial’ means ‘more than minor or trivial’. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.

‘Long term’ means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.

'Normal day to day activities' could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors in pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010. (Study and education related activities are included in the meaning of 'day to day' activities.)

The guidance from the Office for Disability Issues referred to above illustrates the factors which might reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities. Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect are also provided.

Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person's native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions;
- physical impairment – for example, difficulty operating a computer because of physical restrictions in using a keyboard. Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:
  - minor problems with writing or spelling;
  - inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
  - inability to converse orally in a language which is not the speaker's native spoken language.

### **Duty to make a Reasonable Adjustment**

Examination boards have a duty to make reasonable adjustments where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the examination board is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage. Examination boards are not required to make adjustments to the academic or other standard being applied when conducting an examination/assessment. Examples of reasonable adjustments can be found on page 7 of *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2018-2019*.

Some types of disability may affect the candidate's ability to demonstrate one or more of the assessment objectives of a qualification. Alternative routes will be explored with the examination board. Sometimes, however, alternatives cannot be found because the impairment relates to a fundamental part of the assessment. As a result, the candidate may not score enough marks to justify entering for the assessment.

The school may include a candidate on a course in the full knowledge that they may not be able to fulfil all the assessment requirements. The candidate and his/her parents/carers will be made fully aware of the extent to which it is advisable to enter the candidate for the qualification. It is not always possible to arrange equal access for a candidate whose impairment affects a competence which is being tested and who may be unable to demonstrate the assessment objectives.

### **Access Arrangements**

The school is required to process requests for access arrangements at the start of a course i.e. at the beginning of Year 10 for GCSEs and at the beginning of Year 12 for A levels. **Access arrangements cannot be put in place at the last minute** (except in exceptional circumstances e.g. a student suddenly loses their sight or sustains a fracture which prevents them from being able to write). The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate i.e. reflect the

candidate's normal way of working. They must be in place for internal school tests and for mock examinations. The school is required to keep evidence to demonstrate the need for access arrangements and candidates' use of them and show it to inspectors. If a candidate consistently doesn't use an access arrangement although it has been granted, it may be withdrawn. **Requests for assessment for access arrangements will not normally be considered in the second year of a two year course.**

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The SENCo will consider the need for access arrangements on a subject by-subject basis.

## **Identifying the need for Access Arrangements**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Head of Centre**

The Head of Centre is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including *General Regulations for Approved Centres* and *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

#### **Senior Leaders**

Senior leaders are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including *General Regulations for Approved Centres* and *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

#### **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)**

The SENCo has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. She also:

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre

#### **Teaching staff**

Teaching Staff inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate.

#### **Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties**

The assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor appointed by the centre. The regulations do not permit the school to accept assessments commissioned by third parties. The school is required to hold evidence of the assessor's qualification to conduct the assessment prior to it taking place.

The assessor has a detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

## Requesting Access Arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre delegated
- Follows guidance in *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in Access Arrangements Online including the completion of JCQ Form 8, where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:
  - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
  - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
  - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the Access Arrangements Online approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector

#### Examinations Officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication *General Regulations for Approved Centres* and is aware of information contained in and *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* where this may be relevant to the Examinations Officer role
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure a list of Access Arrangements is compiled prior to exams being seated and that Access Arrangements Online approval is in place where appropriate.

## Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

### Roles and responsibilities

#### External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* (ICE).

#### Head of Centre

The Head of Centre supports the SENCo, the Exams Officer and other relevant school staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

#### Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The SENCo:

- ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Liaises with the exams officer regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams.

### **Exams Officer**

The Exams Officer;

- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets) that may be required and, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam

### **Other Relevant Staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.

### **Internal Assessments (Non-Examination Assessments (NEAs))**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a school/examination board, marked and internally verified by the school and moderated by the examination board.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)**

The SENCo:

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments

#### **Teaching staff**

Teaching staff:

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Internal exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)**

The SENCo liaises with teaching staff and the Exams Officer to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

#### **Teaching Staff**

Teaching staff support the SENCo and Exams Officer in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Exams Officer**

The Exams Officer:

- Provides the SENCo / Inclusions Manager with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Provides exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

**Facilitating Access**

The following information confirms the school's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations. On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

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