



Saint Joseph's
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Access Arrangements Policy (Examinations)

December 2025

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
CHURCH ROAD
LAVERSTOCK
SALISBURY
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Centre name	St Joseph's Catholic School
Centre number	66731
Date policy first created	27/11/2025
Current policy approved by	Mrs. Elaine Oakley – Examinations & Data Officer
Current policy reviewed by	
Date of review	27/11/2025
Date of next review	27/11/2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Mr. Matthew Higgins – Headmaster
Senior Leader(s)	Mr. Richard Rooney – Deputy Head Mr. Oliver Ford – Assistant Head
Exams Officer	Mrs. Elaine Oakley
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Mrs. Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo
Other staff (if applicable)	

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at St. Josephs Catholic School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AARA refer to the JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centre's, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.



Introduction

(AARA Definitions)

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 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'.

Reasonable adjustments

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 several 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'.

The Centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.



Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St. Josephs Catholic 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The head of Centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the Centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

A Centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisation's 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. (AA 4.2)

The principles for St. Josephs Catholic School to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate.
- The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2)





- Applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year the course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working (AARA 4.2)
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the Centre (AARA 4.2)
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AARA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in:

- The Equalities Policy & The Examinations Policy

2. The assessment process

At St. Josephs Catholic School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of Centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AARA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Helen Ross - SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate (APC) - Expiration date 4th May 2026

- Holds a certificate to Teach & Assess learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) up to 18 years. Expiration date 6th April 2026

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at St. Josephs Catholic School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post- graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC



registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified (AARA 7.3, 7.4)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AARA 7.4)
- When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by: Mrs Elaine Oakley - Examinations & Data Officer
- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate, who are directly employed within the Centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within *Access arrangements online*. (AARA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* document must be entered into *Access arrangements online* to confirm their status (AARA 7.4)

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

St. Josephs Catholic School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the Centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor **must** carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- 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* (AARA 7.3)
- Relevant staff working within the Centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment 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 instigated (AARA 7.3)





Picture of need/normal way of working

St. Josephs Catholic School confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the Centre **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The Centre and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5)

Additional information:

St Joseph's works closely with our assessor to undergo testing, to check scores and to continually check 'normal way of working'. Whilst it is expected that an access arrangement will be used it is at the candidate's discretion whether they use the arrangement that has been put in place.

Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to Centre's; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers.

In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'. JCQ [AA]

- Students identified as having additional needs in the classroom will have the opportunity to show this need during mock exams. This will help to gain additional evidence to support an application for AA.
- An application for AA can only be made if it is the students' normal way of working.
- Students with additional needs will be identified by the SENCO with the help of teaching staff.
- Observations/assessments for AA will be provided for all students highlighted as having an additional need.
- The EO will organise exam rooms based on the needs of the students. This will comply with JCQ regulations. The SENCO will be consulted to make sure the correct arrangement is in place for each student.
- Applications for AA will be completed by the SENCO and submitted in conjunction with the EO before the set deadline. This information will be shared with candidates, so they are aware of the provision they have in place. All applications are made on the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).





- Where an exam is not covered by JCQ arrangements access will be agreed directly with the Exam Board
- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the EO with the SENCo and will be a mixture of TA staff and Invigilators
- Student will receive cards on their exam desk to remind them of the AA they are entitled to
- The full JCQ document on Access Arrangements can be found here:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Online applications **must** only be 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.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by:

- Mrs Elaine Oakley – Examinations & Data Officer
- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo

Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by:

- Mrs Wendy Jones – SENCO



The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy details the criteria St. Josephs Catholic School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

Alternative rooming arrangements

The Examinations Policy details the criteria St. Josephs Catholic School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation.

Additional information

Pupils who cannot access the hall will be given alternative rooms for exams. This includes those who suffer injury during the exam season. Additional rooms will be set out using JCQ regulation.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore Centre's must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers **must not** be ordered for candidates unless the Centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AARA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)



It is the responsibility of:

- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo to inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCo to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Mrs Wendy Jones – Assistant SENCO to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

- To ensure that all student who have a medical need are highlighted to the exams officer
- Ensures where needed appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate from an exam room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate
- Ensures the candidate is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation
- To apply for AARA's in a timely manner

Changes 2025/2026

References to AA changed to AARA

(Added/Removed) Under heading **Roles and responsibilities:**

Added new bullet point to reference the requirement to comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Removed reference to a signed candidate personal data consent form and Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form which are no longer required.

Centre-specific changes

No Centre Specific Updates were needed for this policy for the academic year 2025/2026.