

Access arrangements at HWS

Information for parents & students

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) 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'.

Access Arrangements at Highgate Wood School follow the following principles:

1. We do everything that we can reasonably do to help our students achieve their very best in their exams.
2. We follow exam board rules strictly for mock exams as well as for public exams as it is an important principle to mirror the experience of the public examinations as closely as possible.

There are three ways in which access arrangements can be granted. The information below details these and also the deadlines by which they must be applied for and granted.

- a) It is important to recognise that seating plans have to be completed for mock exams as well as public exams well in advance, changing one seat usually means changing the whole seating plan which can lead to other students being confused and therefore increasing stress and this can lead to underperformance, so these deadlines are followed strictly.
- b) If information comes into school later than the deadline then the assessment and access arrangements will only be assessed for the following exam session.
- c) Parents, teachers and students do not decide where a student sits, this is ultimately the professional decision of the Exams and SEND teams with the Exams Officer having the final decision based on exam board rules and the SEND department having the final decision regarding needs.
- d) Students with access arrangements will be given a card with their photo detailing their arrangements, which they must keep and bring to each exam.
- e) These guidelines are subject to change if the DfE/ JCQ rules change. Any changes or errors that lead to deadlines being missed can only be made at the instruction of the Headteacher (head of centre).

1 Educational needs	2 Diagnosed long term medical needs / disability	3 Emergency needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access Arrangements must be submitted to the SEND department for consideration no later than the last day in September (for Nov / Dec / Jan exams), January (for spring exams) and February (for summer / early autumn exams)• Access arrangements must follow the normal way of working for that student in lessons (e.g. for laptop use, the laptop must be used in all literacy-based lessons)• The SEND department cannot grant access arrangements themselves without formal assessment from a trained assessor (at specific times in the year) to decide whether this is in line with JCQ regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The medical evidence for this must be submitted to the SEND department with the same deadlines as for educational needs• The SEND department will make their professional judgement, they will make an application to the exam board for the access arrangement needed and inform the Exams Officer• It should be noted that we take seriously medical views but doctors are not educational professionals or exam board rules experts and therefore a medical recommendation for access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If an accident or medical / mental health emergency occurs in the weeks before or during the exam session then the request for access arrangements must be made directly to the Exams Officer• Ideally there must be a diagnosis from a medical professional• The Exams Officer (for public exams) will make the emergency request online to the exam board – we are not permitted to authorise emergency access arrangements ourselves• For mock exams the exams officer will make the decision

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SEND department then inform the Exams Officer (by mid-October, mid-February, mid-April respectively) • Special Arrangements are only fully approved when it is confirmed in writing (usually by email) to parents, from the SEND department and confirmed with the Exams Officer. This must be sent by the dates in the point above. 	<p>arrangements is not automatically accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All deadlines and confirmations are identical to the details for educational needs. • Any professional report or diagnosis that mentions access arrangements will be taken into account but does not guarantee that this access arrangement will be applied – this is at the discretion of the school 	<p>in line with experience of what the exam board would allow</p>
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Types of access arrangements and what they mean

Access arrangement	Meaning
Strategic seating	In the Main Exam Room but location specially chosen for the student's needs.
Rest breaks	Invigilators know that the purpose of a supervised rest break is for the candidate to have 'time out' from the examination and is not to allow for the candidate to have extra thinking time. During the break, the candidate cannot open the exam paper and, unless there are exceptional circumstances (as decided by SENDco), the break is taken at the desk and students are welcome to put their head down / close eyes etcetera. This is in line with common practice in centres and follows the exam board best practice. During this time, exam time is suspended, all rest break time is allocated at the end of the original finish time so no time is lost.
Extra time	Usually 25% but in unusual circumstances this can vary between 10%, and 100% of the time allocated for the examination.
Strategic Seating in Quiet Zone	In the Main Exam Room but in an area separated from the main student body.
Small Classroom	In a room separate from the Main Exam Room with a small number of other students (unless there are small numbers in the exam)
Reader needed	In a separate room shared by one other student with same access arrangement area that minimises distraction and where questions can be read to the student.
Scribe needed	As above. An adult who writes answers dictated by the student.
Prompt	An adult who gives prompts to answer each part as directed by SEND and the Exams Officer.
Bespoke	Less usual arrangements that might be needed for certain needs. Must be within the exam board rules and adjustments must be deemed 'reasonable' by the school.
Word processor (spell check and grammar check disabled)	Laptop use must be the 'normal way of working' in any subject where a laptop is used for exams. Usually (though not always) students use a laptop in literacy-based subjects and not in others. Some use it in all subjects.

Note: If an access arrangement has been applied that involves a change of seating / location this cannot be removed after the deadline for that exam session. Seating plans all rely on seating being allocated well in advance and so a student, medical or parental request to change seat cannot be facilitated.

Access arrangements for year 12 re-sit exams (English and maths) for students from other schools

Year 12 students who were at another provider in year 11 are a particular problem regarding access arrangements. This is because the first exam is in early November and there is very little time for information to be gathered.

The procedure for these students is as follows:

1. It is the responsibility of the parent and student to ensure that, on enrolment, information is provided as to what access arrangements were in place the previous year
2. Enrolment into 6th form is not affected by access arrangements however failure to report access arrangements (such as extra time and laptops etc) will result in these not being in place for year 12 exams
3. Where possible students / parents should bring in access arrangement evidence on enrolment – if HWS does not have the evidence for access arrangements (where needed) by September 20th we are unlikely to be able to provide these arrangements in November exams