

# Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24



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CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
**Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24**

**Linked policies**

This document should be read in conjunction with the following Camden School for Girls policies:

Special Educational Needs Policy

Equalities Policy

**Introduction**

Camden School for Girls is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students in line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, the Equalities Act 2010, and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations. Where students have a need which prevents them from accessing examinations, appropriate provision will be made.

What are Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements are actions taken to remove the disadvantages to a student accessing an examination caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties, without creating any unfair advantage or compromising the integrity of an assessment. These arrangements are agreed before an assessment, and must reflect a student's normal way of working within the school.

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. A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a substantial and long term effect on performance in examinations may qualify for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

**Available Exam Access Arrangements include:**

Supervised rest breaks

Extra time

Reader/Computer reader

Scribe

Word processor

Prompter

CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
**Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24**

Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components

Alternative site for exams

Bilingual translation dictionaries

Modified papers (e.g. enlarged or modified papers)

Language modifier

### **Extra time/Rest breaks**

**Supervised rest breaks are now considered before permission to allocate extra time is requested from JCQ.** Rest breaks may be more appropriate than allowing extra time for pupils with certain conditions. Formal assessment by the Learning Support Department and relevant evidence as outlined by JCQ are required before rest breaks can be allowed.

In order for an application for extra time to be approved and so as not to give an unfair advantage to any student, the school must:

- confirm that the candidate has **persistent and significant difficulties** when accessing and processing information and **is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010**;
- include evidence of the candidate's **current difficulties** and how they **substantially impact** on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- show the **involvement of teaching staff in determining the need** for 25% extra time;
- confirm that without the application of 25% extra time the candidate would be at a **substantial disadvantage**; (The candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.)
- confirm that 25% extra time is the candidate's **normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability**.

**Extra time for a Learning Difficulty** must be supported by an approved assessment showing below average scores in speed of reading or handwriting or cognitive processing.

**Extra time related to other impairments or disabilities** (including social, emotional or mental health) must be supported supported by:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist (**a GP letter is not sufficient evidence**); or
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.

CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
**Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24**

If a candidate never makes use of the arrangement granted to them – then it is not his or her normal way of working and the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations or indeed it should be removed.

### **Word Processors**

The use of a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor **must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs**. It is important to highlight that spelling and grammar check must be disabled on a word processor used in public examinations. Formal assessment by the Learning Support Department and relevant evidence as outlined by JCQ are required before a word processor can be allowed.

### **Scribe**

If a word processor (**with the spelling and grammar check disabled**) is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, then it should be used in examinations in order to encourage independent working and access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A scribe should **only** be used where a candidate cannot use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled or the candidate is not competent in using a word processor.

### **Reader**

In rare and exceptional circumstances a candidate may qualify to have a reader in examinations. The reader is not permitted to read text that students will be examined on (extracts, poems, texts in an English Language or Literature paper etc.), and is only permitted to read the examination questions. The reader is not permitted to explain a question to a candidate; they may repeat the question. It may be appropriate for a candidate to be awarded 25% Extra Time when they have a reader as this Access Arrangement can slow down processing and response time.

CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
**Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24**

## **Timeline for Awarding Access Arrangements**

### **Years 7-11**

1. Year 6 Transition - A student's primary school or parent informs the SENDCo of any history of need or Access Arrangements implemented in KS2 examinations.
2. KS3 – Teachers monitor students closely and gather any evidence of need for Access Arrangements, passing it to the SENDCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator. Access Arrangements trialled in tests/exams.
3. Year 9 summer term/Y10 Autumn term – Part 1 of Form 8 is initiated as a working document (for students with learning difficulties) based on evidence collected by teachers throughout the previous two terms. A qualified Access Arrangements Assessor will then assess the student using standardised tests. SENDCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator applies online for indicated Access Arrangements and informs the Examinations Officer and parents.
4. Evidence for Form 9 (for students with a substantial impairment such as a physical disability, sensory impairment or medical condition) is gathered and Form 9 completed.
5. KS4 (Y10 and Y11) – Access Arrangements in place and being used as normal way of working for the student.
6. Emergency applications may still be made for medical/mental health emergencies.
7. Summer of Year 11 – Examinations completed with Access Arrangements in place.

### **Years 12-13**

1. It is the student's responsibility to declare any Access Arrangements they had at KS4 when they apply to sixth form. They **MUST** then submit relevant documentation during enrolment.
2. In rare circumstances when the above has not been possible – our access arrangements coordinator may contact previous schools for required documentation.
3. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12 and gather evidence to provide to the SENDCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator.
4. In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Access Arrangements Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the spring and summer terms and the SENCO applies/completes a roll over form for Access Arrangements if necessary.
5. Access arrangement will be in place by the end of Y12 examinations. These examinations also provide a **final** chance to recognise any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.
6. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENDCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator or Access Arrangements Assessor by July of Year 12. Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, Year 12 exams provide a **final** opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

CAMDEN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
**Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24**

## **Private Assessments and medical letters**

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation **but any request for an access arrangement must also be supported by evidence from within the school**. Likewise, private assessments or reports from private Educational Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement **if supported by school evidence**, which must be sent to the assessor in advance of the assessment. We may not be able to accept a private assessment report as evidence for an access arrangement if it conflicts with evidence gathered at school and by our Access Arrangements Assessor.

## **Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main rooms near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENDCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

## **Evidence Held and Malpractice**

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, letters from outside agencies, record of Access Arrangements used and any Statement of Special Needs or EHCP, together with a data protection notice signed by the student.

Examples of malpractice include:

Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working, Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence