

Bolton School Girls' Division

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy & Procedures

These policies were drawn up by Mrs Alison Elkin, Learning Support Coordinator and by the Assistant Head (i/c Curricular & Extra Curricular Head Achievement) & Head. They were reviewed in Autumn 2021

& Senior School Learning Support Policy, including Policy for Examination Access Arrangements

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1. Guiding Principles

These procedures and associated Learning Support policies have been formulated with regard to the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (amended) 2015, The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2015, The Children and Families Act 2014 and The Equality Act 2010.

2. Access

The school is committed to providing equal access for all its pupils to the broad and balanced curriculum to which they are entitled, in line with the Equality Act of 2010. The school ensures that its admissions, discipline and other procedures (including arrangements for trips and examinations) take account of pupils' needs. An Accessibility Plan is drawn up in consultation with other parts of the Foundation.

Bolton School is an academically selective school to which entry is achieved through a competitive process and/ or examination. There are within the school a small number of pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as moderate dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, hearing disability and limited sight. In the Junior and Senior Schools, we may withdraw pupils with a specific learning difficulty from KS2/ KS3/ KS4 lessons for specialist teaching as well as endeavouring to cater for such pupils alongside their peers by adopting appropriate classroom practice. At KS5, specialist teaching takes place during a girl's non-contact time.

3. Entrance Examinations for the Junior and Senior Schools

As some pupils who apply to enter Bolton School through our selection procedure "may be considered to be at a disadvantage due to the testing arrangements that would normally apply", we will seek to comply with the relevant exam board's guidelines (where appropriate), and in doing so, acknowledge the procedures that are applied by JCQ regulations. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2015 require us to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

On our application forms for both the Junior and Senior Schools, we ask parents to make us aware of any specific learning difficulties and special educational needs or disabilities which a child may have so that we can make any reasonable adjustments necessary. The provision of our special arrangements will be based on the ongoing support individual pupils normally receive. To this end, students will have access to equipment and materials that are part of their normal working practice but do not give them an unfair advantage over other candidates.

Examples may include: use of a laptop (corrective features disabled) for any extended writing which may be required (if this is their normal working practice); coloured paper and/or use of an overlay for those with a statement of visual stress; large print or embossed tests for visually-impaired candidates; an amanuensis for candidates with writing difficulty (if any extended writing is required); extra time for pupils with special educational needs who have a qualifying score as defined by JCQ (in this case, extra time will not exceed 25%).

As it may not be possible to establish for certain that special arrangements perfectly compensate for the nature and extent of the disadvantage, the special testing arrangement will be noted alongside the score and taken into account in any borderline decision.

In certain circumstances, it may be decided that a test is wholly inappropriate for a particular pupil and this will also need to be taken into account in the decision process.

Where a girl who passes the Entrance Exam has an EHC plan and her parents decide that they would like her to attend Bolton School, we work with the authority maintaining the plan to ensure that the latter is satisfied that the arrangements are suitable and that we are able to provide effective education. Such plans are reviewed annually by the local authority to ensure that the required curriculum and support are being provided.

4. Identification and Assessment of Need

The School endeavours to identify at the earliest opportunity any pupil who may have SEND and to provide a graduated response to match the pupil's level of need. Where a teacher, parent or outside agency (including feeder school) expresses concern about a pupil which may indicate SEND, the Form Teacher (BH and HH) or the Head of School (Senior Girls) and the Learning Support Coordinator will liaise with the pupil, her parent(s) and teachers in order to agree methods for dealing with the pupil's needs. These strategies may well be outlined and monitored by pastoral staff as part of the process of Tracking, Intervention and Monitoring.

The process by which we identify and assess need is dealt with in detail in the separate Learning Support Policy for each part of the Girls' Division (below).

5. Provision

The School provides individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with an Educational Healthcare Plan or with significant learning difficulties or disabilities, and ensures that the admissions, discipline and other procedures (such as arrangements for school trips or examinations) take account of pupils' needs. In accordance with the The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2015, where a local authority maintains an EHC plan or is securing the preparation of an EHC plan for a child or young person, it must make arrangements for the provision to the child's parent or young person of the following information –

- (a) the provision for which a personal budget may be available;
- (b) details of organisations that provide advice and assistance in connection with personal budgets; and
- (c) the conditions which must be met before direct payments may be made

The Learning Support Coordinator maintains a register of those girls who have been identified as requiring monitoring or support. Students with an EHCP will be the subject of an annual multiagency review meeting usually held in school and to which parents/guardians and, if appropriate, the student, are invited. The School nurses may be involved with the drawing up of Individual Health Care Plans where appropriate.

Teaching staff and, where appropriate, support staff are made aware of each pupil's needs so that they may be met in all school settings. All teachers have a responsibility to ensure that each pupil, including those with SEND, is given every opportunity to fulfil his or her potential within the classroom and therefore to adhere to any recommendations set out in the IEP. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department (Senior School) to ensure that schemes of work and associated resources are appropriate for the needs of those with SEND.

The School also makes provision for pupils with EAL, both through support in the normal curriculum and by arranging extra tuition when appropriate, for which a supplementary fee may be charged.

6. Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability

According to the 2015 SEND Code of Practice, "Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them". Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority.

The Equality Act 2010 retains the previous definition of disability: 'A physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. Schools must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and must take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Whilst the duty to make reasonable adjustments does not include a duty to change physical features, it does (as of September 2012) include a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services when appropriate in order to ensure that a person with a disability is not put at a disadvantage in comparison with someone without a disability.

7. Definition of Learning Support

Learning Support involves interventions which are additional to, or different from, those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies. Strategies employed to enable the pupil to progress may be recorded within an Individual Education Plan.

8. Core Objectives for Learning Support

Throughout the Girls' Division, we aim:

- i. To apply a whole school policy to meeting each pupil's individual needs following the 2015 SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (amended) 2015, The Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014
- ii. To identify, at the earliest opportunity, any pupil who may have SEND
- iii. To provide different levels of intervention to match the pupil's level of need, where reasonable adjustments can be made, compatible with the school's resources.
- iv. To ensure that all teaching staff and, where appropriate, support staff, are aware of each pupil's needs so that such needs may be met in all school settings.
- v. To provide INSET for staff, as appropriate.
- vi. To ensure that no pupil is discriminated against, in any area of school life, on the basis of a special educational need or disability.
- vii. To provide pastoral care and support for all pupils so that they may develop in all areas and build a strong sense of self-esteem.
- viii. To ensure that pupils' records include information relating to their individual needs and the interventions that have been provided and their outcomes.
- ix. To conduct regular reviews of the pupil's progress.
- x. To work in partnership with the pupil's parents at all stages.
- xi. To include, when age-appropriate, the pupils themselves in decision-making about the type of intervention and the targets to be included in an individual education plan.
- xii. To endeavour to ensure that a pupil's current needs are communicated, and will be met, on transferring to and from each section of the school, including from Beech House in to the Boys' Division.

9. Learning Support Policy, Girls' Senior School

9.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All teachers have day-to-day responsibilities with regard to pupils with special needs, and the care of such pupils is seen as a whole school responsibility. The Learning Support Co-ordinator is responsible for the co-ordination of provision and is responsible to the AH Curricular and Extra-Curricular Achievement in the first instance.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator's personal responsibilities are:

- overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's Learning Support policy;
- co-ordinating provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- providing specialist teaching for pupils with special educational needs
- liaising with Heads of School and teaching staff;
- overseeing the records of all pupils with special educational needs, and keeping an up to date Learning Support register;
- where appropriate, liaising with parents of pupils with special educational needs;
- contributing to the in-service training of staff;
- where appropriate, liaising with external agencies;

liaising with the Learning Support Co-ordinators in the school's Infant and Junior Departments, and in the Boys' Division.

The responsibilities of the Learning Support Co-ordinator, working with the Deputy and Assistant Heads, the Heads of School, Subject Departments, School Nurses and the Examinations Officer, as appropriate, are:

- to help classroom teachers to identify and make provision, through normal classroom differentiation and support, and through Learning Support, for pupils with special educational needs;
- to provide information on all pupils with special educational needs to all members of staff who may be involved with them;
- to seek and respond to the views of the pupils themselves at all stages;
- to liaise with parents and involve them in decision making;
- to ensure that suitable internal and external examination and assessment arrangements are made for pupils as necessary.
 - to maintain learning support records and Individual Education Plans where appropriate;
 - to review regularly the progress of pupils receiving learning support, and to
 - evaluate the effectiveness of such support.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator has a PGCert SpLD and AMBDA, as well as being a fully qualified English teacher and former Head of English.

9.2 Teaching Staff Responsibilities

All members of the teaching staff have a responsibility to ensure that each pupil is given every opportunity to fulfil her potential within the normal classroom situation. All staff should be aware of the learning support needs of all pupils they teach, and should ensure that the needs of each pupil are addressed in accordance with the Teaching and Learning policy. High quality teaching, personalised for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN.

9.3 Process for Identification of SEND: Concern - Assess - Provide

- **Screening**

All Yr 7 pupils complete the GL online dyslexia screener early in the Spring term. (this timing allows for evidence of need to be placed alongside the screening results). Pupils may proceed to the referral stage if the screener indicates a potential learning need. The screeners do not give a diagnosis.

Some students may be placed on "watch" which informs teachers to monitor their progress carefully. Some students may, as a result of monitoring, be moved from "watch" to having a school identified need, and will be screened again at

the end of Year 9. If teachers have concerns about any girl being monitored, they should submit a referral to the Learning Support Coordinator.

In addition, after end of year examinations, teachers are asked to complete a pro-forma on any girl identified as under-performing in the examinations against expectations and this information is collated by the Learning Support Coordinator.

Yr 9 pupils who have been identified as having a potential learning need or who have been placed on a “watch list” as a result of the procedures described below are also screened using the Lucid Exact screener. Pupils in the lower Maths sets may be screened for Dyscalculia in Years 8 and 9.

- **Classroom**

If a pupil’s rate of progress has been identified as a cause for concern, despite having appropriate learning experiences, further concerns should be raised by members of the teaching staff and discussed at department level. Action should be taken at department level before pupils proceed to the referral stage.

- **Referral**

Once a pupil is referred, information about learning needs will be gathered from all class teachers, form tutor and Head of School. If Learning Support is recommended i.e. if the provision is likely to be different from and in addition to that which is normally provided, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue.

- **Parent referral**

If a parent/guardian suspects their daughter may have a Specific Learning Difficulty they should contact the Head of School in the first instance. Where concerns over learning needs are raised by a parent/guardian, the referral will be passed to the Learning Support Coordinator who, in conjunction with the Assistant Head (Curricular and Extra Curricular Achievement) and the Head of School, will investigate the referral and establish whether Learning Support is needed i.e. if the provision is likely to be different from and in addition to that which is normally provided, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue.

Please note that parents are requested *not* to seek a consultation with an external assessor at this stage, but to wait until the Learning Support Coordinator has advised on the appropriate course of action. Where parents seek an external opinion from a source which the School does not endorse, the School cannot guarantee to put in to action any recommended advice. In particular, any access arrangements suggested for implementation in public examinations will have no validity unless the appropriate procedure is followed, in line with JCQ regulations. Parents who seek an assessment from a non-authorised source will generally find that they are required to pay for a further assessment in order for us to complete the documentation required by JCQ (namely a Form 8). Similarly, any assessment which occurs before Year 9 will

have no validity in the implementation of access arrangements. (See below under 'SEND- diagnostic assessment' and Policy for Access Arrangements.)

- **Learning Support**

The Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) will consult with all appropriate parties and may conduct further tests with the pupil to assess the level of need. This may include the use of a Dyslexia Portfolio: such reports allow a trained member of staff to identify quickly and provide evidence in areas of difficulty in word-level literacy, phonics and processing.

The LSC will provide any student with a diagnosis of an SEND with an Individual Education Plan which sets out the intended provision. This will include information for teachers about how to support the pupil in class and will detail additional support provided by the LSC or other agencies if required. IEPs (pre 2022) will include targets (including one personal target) and intended outcomes whilst from January 2022 they will identify the impact of the \SEN on a student's learning and needs and the necessary strategies for meeting these. IEPs are shared with staff, parents and pupils during the course of the year.

All pupils in Years 7-11 with IEPs will receive a written comment detailing progress on their full report. The LSC will also be available at consultation evenings to speak to parents of pupils in all years.

IEPs are reviewed throughout the year and amendments are made where appropriate.

- **SEND- diagnostic assessment, including for access arrangements for public examinations**

A recommendation may be made at this stage for a full diagnostic assessment to be carried out by an external specialist assessor who has been appointed by the school.

In order for a student, with a learning difficulty, to qualify for specific examination access arrangements, including the provision of extra time, the student needs either an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or an assessment carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9. For this reason, the School rarely refers students to an assessor before the start of Year 9. Where evidence of need compiled by the LSC suggests that an application for specific examination access arrangements will be made and accepted, these arrangements will be put in place for internal tests and examinations as appropriate. (See Policy on Access Arrangements for further details.) The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate. When a school puts forward a candidate for access arrangements, there

is a requirement for evidence of need so as to maintain the rigour and standard of the examination system.

9.4 Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions

Individual Health Care Plans will be drawn up by the members of the Medical Centre in conjunction with relevant pastoral staff.

IHCPs include information about:

- the medical or physical condition;
- daily care requirements;
- the extent of staff and parental involvement;
- emergency procedures.

9.5 Supporting pupils with Irlen Syndrome / Visual Stress

Pupils may attend the Learning Centre for a preliminary assessment if they report symptoms of visual stress. Coloured overlays may be issued for a trial period. Pupils will be referred to an Irlen specialist for professional assessment as required.

It is BSGD policy that girls are personally responsible for bringing and using their overlays when required as normal equipment for the lesson and in examinations as necessary (like a pair of spectacles.) No special access arrangements are required from the examination boards, but the use of overlays in external examinations must be cleared first with the Learning Centre and the examinations office. In all cases, use of overlays in exams should reflect the normal working practice of the candidate.

Photocopying onto coloured paper may also alleviate visual stress when close reading is required. It is BSGD policy that only those girls with a professional Irlen Syndrome Assessment have specific coloured paper provision. Other girls will use overlays as required. Again it is more effective when independent, extended, close reading is required and when the text is dense. All examinations and worksheets/ class notes which require this kind of reading should be printed onto coloured paper for these girls.

External examinations will also be copied onto coloured paper for these girls.

Provision is made for those girls with a professional diagnosis of Irlen Syndrome to have coloured paper for writing. This is allocated by the Learning Centre as requested. It is the personal responsibility of the individual girl to collect paper/ books as required.

9.6 Special arrangements for Examinations (Internal)

School can provide special arrangements for a candidate in the following circumstances:

- The candidate has a physical disability/medical condition/learning difficulty which has a significant impact on her ability to access the examination;
- The candidate has a proven and substantiated need for the arrangement;
- The candidate has a medical report substantiating the need for special arrangements.

All access arrangements for external examinations are put into place in line with JCQ regulations. Further details are outlined in the Policy on Examination Access Arrangements (Section 10 below).

Where a need has been identified according to the regulations, pupils will receive the same arrangements for school examinations as for external examinations. In the case of extra time, use of word processors and coloured paper provision, these arrangements must reflect the normal way of working for the student.

9.7 Arrangements for Effective Pupil Transfer

- **Hesketh House**
The LSC will meet with the Head of Hesketh House and the HH Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) twice a year:
 - In the Autumn Term to discuss Yr 6 entrance examination arrangements
 - In the Summer Term to discuss individual needs and plan for effective transfer
- **Other Schools**
The LSC will advise on entrance examination arrangements for applicants with specific learning needs and liaise with the Head of School as appropriate to ensure effective transfer of pupils with SEND.

9.10 Storing and Managing Information

Information is stored and managed in line with Schedule 1 - The school's data protection policy which is part of the terms and conditions of the parent contract.

10. Girls' Division Senior School Policy on Access Arrangements for Examinations, Summer 2020

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on institutions not to discriminate against students with learning difficulties/disabilities in terms of either admission to courses or provision of education and support services. Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of access arrangements are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification. JCQ regulations can be found at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/general-regulations-for-approved-centres-2019-2020>

A candidate with a disability or difficulty which has a *substantial and long term effect* on performance in examinations may qualify for Access Arrangements (AA). Access Arrangements should allow students with substantial long term special educational

needs or short term illnesses or injuries to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without affecting the integrity of an assessment or examination. Access Arrangements are not intended to disproportionately help certain candidates, or give them an advantage, but to give them a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Students with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for Access Arrangements in public exams. For example, a student with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an examination may not meet the criteria for Access Arrangements.

This policy explains the actions taken by the Bolton School Girls' Division to ensure inclusion for all students who are eligible for examination access arrangements. Access arrangements are a form of additional learning support which ensure that a learner is not significantly disadvantaged during assessments due to a special educational need or disability.

Access arrangements are normally agreed and planned for before an assessment (Part 1) and JCQ sets a deadline (usually in February) by which submissions should be made and after which it is not possible to apply for access arrangements in the normal way. In some circumstances, access arrangements can also be provided in an emergency (Part 2).

Part 1: Planned Access Arrangements for Bolton School students

Access arrangements for examinations and controlled assessments will be planned and implemented where there is sufficient evidence that an individual learner has a disability, defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

The provision of access arrangements would normally follow a long history of learning difficulties. Late identification of learning difficulties can occur in very exceptional circumstances, but concerns should normally be raised during the early months of a course leading towards an examination. We recognise that, in a selective environment, high attaining girls may have adopted strategies which allow them to cope with their disability and mean that this does not become apparent until their work becomes progressively harder. However, every effort will be made to gather appropriate evidence from staff, parents and pupils to ensure that identification of need is made in a timely fashion so that a girl's normal way of working is well established prior to any access arrangements being in place.

At Bolton School Girls' Division, students are identified as having a possible need using a combination of one or more of the following:

- Baseline testing completed at the start of Year 7 and/or at the start of Year 10 and/or at the start of Year 12
- Information from Primary schools for pupils joining us at Year 7 and from Secondary schools for pupils joining later on during their school career, including at Year 12, which indicates a history of need and/or provision
- Information from parents sourced at the time of a pupil joining the School or during the pupil's time at the School (about which information is given in annual Information Evenings)
- Subject Teacher Referral during the course of KS3, 4 (and/or 5), demonstrating a history of need throughout the Senior School, with concerns passed on to the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
- Subject Teacher Referral and/or Referral by a Head of Department following end of year examinations and/or regular whole-year assessments
- WRAP meetings, involving pastoral staff and the AH Achievement and Headmistress, which look for underperformance against expected targets
- Pupil, Parental concerns expressed to teaching or pastoral staff and/or the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
- Specialist diagnostic testing which indicates a significant learning need and indicates that modification may be required to ensure equal access
- Medical diagnosis suggesting modifications may be required to ensure equal access

In order to be eligible for Examination Access Arrangements, the Centre must demonstrate that the arrangements made reflect **the candidate's normal way of working, including during internal tests.** Where a late diagnosis is made, "normal way of working" may be evidenced by ensuring that the candidate **has** had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination. The LSC, as SENCo, would need to establish that any arrangement *would* have been the normal way of working had an earlier diagnosis been made.

Where a disability is suspected, as a result of one or more of the criteria above, the LSC will compile the available evidence "painting the picture of need" on what is known as a Form 8. This must not be done any earlier than the summer term of Year 9. The Form 8 is shared with our appointed Specialist Assessor (currently Ms Nichola Turner BA (Hons) PG Dip in SpLD, AMBDA, who will conduct further standardised assessments based on the evidence of learning needs supplied by the school and complete Section C of the Form 8. While JCQ insist on a qualifying score from a range of tests in order for the student to qualify, these scores should not provide exclusive evidence of need.

In cases where there is evidence of need, the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) applies online and informs the examinations officer and teaching staff. Thereafter, access arrangements will be applied to all appropriate tests, exams and coursework. If students do not use their access arrangements, including in the Year 11 mock examinations, they may not continue.

Year 12 students joining the Girls' Division must declare if they have had an access arrangements prior to arriving. The Head of Sixth Form will then contact feeder schools to confirm these. Where a candidate has been allowed extra time for GCSEs at another centre, the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) must have available evidence which clearly shows that extra time is still needed for AS and A2 examinations, and that the candidate continues to have an impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his/her speed of working.

When a student has come up through GD in to the Sixth Form, a resubmission of the application for access arrangements must be processed on line. In order for this to be done, the students will need an assessment conducted no earlier than the start of Year 9; a fully completed Form 8, signed and dated, may roll forward from GCSE to A-level qualifications. The Learning Support Coordinator will need to have available evidence, which clearly shows that arrangements are still needed for A level examinations. Teachers will monitor Sixth Form students closely, gather evidence from assessments and feedback evidence to the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC). The LSC is required to confirm that the student continues to have persistent and significant needs. Updated evidence will be produced on centre headed paper and be signed/dated by the SENCO. This will include evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning; show the involvement of teaching staff in determining need; confirm that access arrangements reflect a candidate's normal way of working.

The mock examinations will also provide a final chance to identify any other students who have not hitherto been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.

It is the role of the Head of the Learning Centre (Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) to:

- Ensure specialist diagnostic testing is implemented by the school's appointed assessor to identify and support need and/or that a medical diagnosis has been obtained (ie that a letter from a consultant has been obtained in cases of medical or physical difficulties);
- Provide and maintain appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement
- Complete and submit applications for access arrangements
- Inform students and parents of student need and access arrangements in place
- Ensure that, if access arrangements are put in place and then not used by a candidate, they are reviewed.
- Inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams
- Oversee support for access arrangement candidates as defined in the JCQ access arrangement regulations

It is the role of the Examinations Officer to:

- Oversee all examination procedures

- Organise rooming and/or equipment for access arrangement candidates including the provision of laptops and the printing of candidate's papers
- Organise and train invigilators and support personnel

It is the role of all teaching staff and invigilators to:

- Support rooming and/or equipment arrangements made to grant access for disabled candidates, including for controlled assessments where appropriate
- Provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's **persistent and significant difficulties**
- Show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and provide evidence of this for the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
- Detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement, eg teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom

It is the role of the designated Specialist Assessor to:

- Work with students to do basic assessments, alongside the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
- Administer recognised psychometric testing after gathering evidence from teachers and student interviews
- Assist the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) in the decision-making process about Access Arrangements

Parents are reminded that, in order to support a request for access arrangements for GCSE or AS/ A Level, they should not seek their own Specialist Assessor but should use the school's appointed assessor. Referral to a specialist assessor should come from the school (namely the Learning Support Coordinator) and must be accompanied by background information as detailed on a specific document referred to as a Form 8. The school's appointed assessor will have details of the candidate's normal way of working and this evidence must have been gathered before the candidate is assessed. The assessor will carry out only the tests appropriate to supporting the school's Form 8 application. The tests used must comply with the criteria required by JCQ. Where parents seek a private assessment, this may not be accepted by the school (see below) and the school may insist that its own appointed assessor is used, at additional cost to the parent.

What reasonable adjustments may be made?

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 JCQ regulations list a number of reasonable adjustments, all of which should be a student's normal way or working, as well as stating that the most appropriate reasonable adjustment may be something outside this list. JCQ considers access

arrangements other than extra time to be most appropriate, particularly rest breaks. In particular, the Regulations clearly state that: 'extra time between 26% and 50% is an exceptional arrangement'. Scores which contribute to the qualification for up to 50% extra time must be placed in the context of overall performance and approach to learning.

Access Arrangements must not affect the integrity of the assessment. They are intended to increase access to assessments, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment. They must not give unfair advantage and must not compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. They may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.

Failure to comply with the JCQ regulations has the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result(s).

What does 'normal practice' mean?

The JCQ regulations specify that a candidate's normal way of working is the priority consideration when deciding whether Access Arrangements should be awarded. The access arrangement should not 'suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations'. If the said student has shown no signs of requiring said support, and has successfully sat her exams independently in the past, it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement. JCQ regulations state that 'If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her..... then it is not his/her normal way of working. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.'

However, in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course, access arrangements should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Late applications on account of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the published deadline are permissible and School may process applications using Access Arrangements Online where required. In this case, any application processed after the published deadline may be subject to scrutiny. However, evidence of need will still be required to the same standard as if it was an application being processed by the published deadline. SENCos must ensure that the appropriate paperwork is on file and available for inspection.

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually every summer during the examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification for the student from one or more examinations, disqualification for a whole cohort of students, or even the centre being closed down for up to 5 years. Examples of malpractice include:

- putting in place access arrangements that are not approved; **or**

- • permitting access arrangements within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence.

The JCQ and the awarding bodies can only enter into discussions over access arrangements with the candidate's centre and not parents/carers.

Access Arrangements cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a private assessment/Ed Psych report. Any privately commissioned report can only be used as part of the evidence collection base and will not of itself lead to Access Arrangements being put in place. The school must follow the process stipulated by JCQ and will require further testing by the appointed assessor at the parent's expense. Therefore, a private report from an educational psychologist or medical practitioner will **not** automatically lead to Access Arrangements being awarded. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. A student's 'normal way of working' or history of need in school is paramount.

The 2018-19 JCQ regulations state with regard to assessors on p83 that "it is not their role to determine what is a reasonable adjustment, but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate."

Access Arrangements cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter. Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school; otherwise, it is considered malpractice.

NB A Form 8 is not required for medical conditions leading to Access Arrangements. Where a student has both a qualifying learning difficulty and a qualifying medical condition, Access Arrangements cannot be cumulative.

As per JCQ regulations certain applications may need to be supported with:

- a letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist
- a letter from a hospital or consultant
- a letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service
- a letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist

All Specialist Assessors must:

- have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;
- be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a "reasonable adjustment", but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate);
- hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties.

The Centre must be given evidence that all of the above hold true for any assessor used.

Please note that members of Bolton School may require additional assessment to access support once they leave school. Such assessments have a different purpose/rationale to those which are requested by the school LSC in support of regulations. The normal practice is for post-16 assessments to be done when a student is in the Sixth Form. In our letters about the DSA to pupils in Years 12 and 13, we make it clear that any post 16 assessment done for this purpose will **not** affect the Access Arrangements currently in place for their A levels.

Part 1b: Planned Access Arrangements for External Candidates (including former members of Bolton School)

Any external candidates taking exams at the Centre must provide the following:

- A Form 8 report from a Specialist Assessor
 - Copies of previous Exam Access Arrangements from schools or colleges
- The centre will make the application to the Exam Boards and the candidate must sign the Data Protection Sheet.

The Centre will charge an external candidate an additional fee for any extra support required in order to make reasonable adjustments for him/her to access the examination.

Part 2: Emergency Access Arrangements

Temporary arrangements may be required by candidates suffering from medical or psychological illness or injury. Candidates with an illness or injury which has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a 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 candidate 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 candidate with a painful back condition 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 Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) and/or Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time.

Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists, a letter from a consultant or other professional will be required for the next session.

