



TOWNLEY
— EST 1937 —
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

Our Exam Access Arrangements Policy reflects commitment to inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments. It ensures that all students, including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), temporary illnesses or injuries, or English as an Additional Language (EAL), are included in public examinations. This policy is a foundation of our school's aim to create a fair and level playing field for all students to achieve their full potential. We want our students who are experiencing barriers to learning and/or social, emotional mental health problems and/or behaviour difficulties feel reassured that they have our full support. It is important that any decision and exam practices have to adhere to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations 2025/26.

2. Exam Access Arrangements

These provisions, known as Exam Access Arrangements, are agreed upon before an assessment/examination to ensure students can access and complete exams without disadvantage. They reflect a student's 'normal way of working' within the school environment and are designed to maintain the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements should be discussed with the Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo and/or Exams Officer to ensure a fair and just system for all. Self-reported difficulties can support the investigation for the need for access arrangements; however, student voice alone cannot determine the need for any adjustments for tests or examinations.

3. Reasonable Adjustments under the Equality Act 2010

'The Equality Act 2010' requires awarding bodies to make 'reasonable adjustments' to remove substantial disadvantages faced by disabled candidates compared to those without disabilities. Adjustments might include those listed below or others deemed suitable by the school and JCQ.

This duty covers three key requirements:

1. **Adjusting Provisions or Practices:** Changing standard rules that put a disabled student at a disadvantage (e.g., allowing Supervised Rest Breaks).
2. **Physical Features:** Ensuring physical access to exam venues is not a barrier.
3. **Auxiliary Aids:** Providing necessary support or equipment (e.g., a Word Processor or Reader) to ensure equal access.

3.1 If there is a recognised need, the following Exam Access Arrangements can be investigated:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time (subject to JCQ approval)
- Reader/computer reader (subject to JCQ approval)
- Scribe
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for exams (subject to JCQ approval)
- Bilingual translation dictionaries (subject to JCQ approval)
- Modified papers (e.g., enlarged print, Braille)

- Visual aid (e.g., coloured papers). Evidence from a medical or appropriately qualified professional should be shared with the Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo in advance.
- Language modifier (subject to JCQ approval)

3.2 Coloured papers

Students are expected to use their colour overlay when sitting an exam as part of their normal way of working. The Exams Office will not photocopy exam booklets and papers in a different colour, if there is no evidence that the student used the colour paper for at least 12 months prior to the date of the first GCSE or A-level exam series.

4. Evidence for Access Arrangements

Applications for access arrangements require evidence of need as outlined by JCQ. This may include:

- JCQ Form 8 completed by a qualified assessor or Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo and Access Arrangement Administrator within the school.
- Previous access arrangements from other schools (if applicable).
- Subject teacher reports demonstrating difficulties impacting exam performance.
- Baseline test results (e.g., spelling, writing, reading comprehension).
- Reports from outside agencies (e.g., hospitals, doctors).
- Statement of Educational Need (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

5. Professional Reports (including medical letters)

The school may consider recommendations for access arrangements made by specialist medical and education professionals; however, **a diagnosis of need or a private assessment does not automatically justify the need for access arrangements.**

- **Sole Discretion:** In line with JCQ regulations, the decision on appropriate access arrangements rests solely with the school's Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo. Private assessors and medical professionals are responsible for diagnosis, but not for decisions regarding access arrangements.
- **Evidence Requirements:** Private assessments and diagnoses cannot be solely used as evidence for access arrangements. The decision must be based on a "picture of need" and the student's "normal way of working" within the school environment.
- **Internal Observation:** Evidence must demonstrate that the difficulty is "long-term" and has a "substantial" impact on the student's ability to engage with learning and assessments. This must be supported by internal observations collected over a period of at least 12 months.
- **Personalised approach:** the process for initiating an investigation for access arrangements would be conducted on a case by case basis. There needs to be evidence that any adjustment(s) for exams aligns with the long-term barriers to learning and/or wellbeing on the school's records.

6. Identifying Students for Access Arrangements

Students might be identified for exam access arrangements from one or combination of sources:

- Previous access arrangements in 11+ tests or when the student completed their GCSEs (subject to verification).
- Baseline testing in Year 7 and across subject areas throughout an academic year.
- Teacher referral.

- Information from previous schools.
- Support from Pastoral and Inclusion teams.

7. Testing and Applying

The Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo is the school's Appointed Assessor and plays a role in identifying students for exam access arrangements. Upon identification, he will investigate the need for access arrangements, which may involve further assessments with parental consent. An assessment of the student's learning profile cannot be administered without written parental consent. No access arrangement(s) can be agreed upon or promised before all the necessary information has been collected, analysed and reviewed against the JCQ Regulations. JCQ's Form 8 will be completed when internal evidence, and the standardised scores from the subtests, show a need for access arrangements. The information from the different source points will be used to complete the online application through the JCQ platform. Parents will be informed when the process has been completed and the application has been approved by JCQ.

8. Monitoring and Deadlines

Approved access arrangements become part of a student's normal way of working within the school (for at least 12 months), and the Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo monitors their use.

If a student does not use their access arrangements during mock exams or End of Year Exams, the school needs to reconsider the need for the access arrangement(s). This will be done through teachers' observations, observations from exam invigilators and conversation with the student. This review process will also be initiated if there is inappropriate use of an access arrangement during an exam sitting*.

8.1 Deadlines for Referral Strict deadlines are in place to ensure sufficient time for evidence gathering and monitoring. Concerns related to exam access arrangements must be raised by:

- **Internal Students (Pre-GCSE):** Summer Term of Year 9.
- **Sixth Form (Year 12 cohort):** Spring Term of Year 12.

8.2 Restrictions on Exam Years (Year 11 and 13)

- No new access arrangements will be added, reviewed, or investigated for students currently in exam years (Year 11 and Year 13).
- Students in these year groups are required to have already evidenced that the need for access arrangements has been their normal way of working for at least 12 months prior to the exams.
- This timeframe ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010, which defines 'long-term' or 'substantial' as the legal threshold for adjustments.

9. Further Information

- **Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:** <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>
- **Assistant Headteacher: Assistant Headteacher: SENDCo and Appointed Assessor contact:** senco@townleygrammar.org.uk
- **Exams Officer contact:** examinations@townleygrammar.org.uk

10. 'Removing' 25% extra time

*This list of examples is not exhaustive and is subject to change to any changes made by JCQ:

- A student finishes the paper within the standard time limit, closes their answer booklet, and immediately puts their head on the desk to sleep for the remaining duration.
- The student stops writing significantly before the end of standard time. During the extra time period, they sit with their arms folded, staring at the clock or the wall, making no attempt to read through their answers or make corrections.
- Instead of reviewing their written work or planning a final answer, the student spends the extra time drawing unrelated images (doodles) on the exam script or insert materials
- Upon finishing the standard time, the student begins to look around the room, attempting to make eye contact with other students, tapping their pen audibly, or sighing loudly, disturbing those who are still working.
- At the end of the standard exam duration, the student attempts to hand in their paper and leave the room, stating, "I'm finished," despite the invigilator reminding them of their remaining allowance.
- On a designated 'Use of Extra Time' log sheet, the student consistently ticks "Did not use" or signs out of the exam room exactly at the standard finish time across multiple subjects.
- The student asks for a break but refuses to turn their paper over or close the booklet. They spend the break time reading through previous answers to check for errors while the clock is paused.