



# Exam Access Arrangements

## What are they?

Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments which allow students with specific needs to access examinations and assessments without the need to change the demands of the assessment itself. The purpose of an access arrangement 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. Access arrangements could include things like: use of a word processor; extra time; supervised rest breaks; a smaller room; modified papers.

## How are Access Arrangements managed at Caistor Grammar School?

Access Arrangements are based on the individual need of the student. We will always work to ensure that a fair and proportionate set of arrangements are in place for all students when they are sitting examinations. There has to be a substantial body of evidence in place that we can provide for JCQ (the Joint Council for Qualifications) from teaching staff to grant an access arrangement. This can be supplemented by parental evidence, but evidence from the classroom is the primary source of evidence for JCQ, to satisfy their requirements.

It is essential that students are familiar with their access arrangements as far in advance of their external exams as possible. Access arrangements should be the student's normal way of working. Therefore, it is likely that access arrangements will be in place for GCSE exams by the end of Year 10 and for A-level exams by the end of Year 12. Access Arrangements are granted on a subject-by-subject basis and are always co-ordinated by the SENCO.

The usual pathway is that no Access Arrangements are granted in Year 7. This is the year when the SENCO can gather evidence from teaching staff and parents to investigate if an Access Arrangement might be appropriate. Access Arrangements in place at Key Stage 2 do not automatically get replicated at Key Stage 3. Once granted, Access Arrangements are usually trialled in Years 8 and 9, when teaching staff are asked to confirm that they feel these are necessary to remove barriers for the students in a fair and proportionate way. These students are then tested in School by an external verifier (usually in Year 10), in order to solidify the arrangements. Students who are new in Year 10 will be assessed by teaching staff, and the process outlined above will be accelerated for them. Whilst it is possible for access arrangements to be granted by the SENCO in Years 11 and 13, this is highly unlikely.

Students who move from Year 11 to Year 12 do not automatically receive the same access arrangements at A-level that they did at GCSE. The SENCO will again need to consult staff during Year 12 to build up a bank of evidence for what might be an appropriate access arrangement, again primarily from the teaching staff in the classroom context. Where granted, these access arrangements are then confirmed by an external verifier.

Please note that letters and diagnoses from medical professionals, whilst helpful in building up a picture, are insufficient evidence to generate access arrangements in themselves. This is the case even where a medical professional has indicated in such documents that they give their support for access arrangements. Any letters submitted to the school should be from the medical professionals with whom the student has had appointments, tests and/or consultations. Access arrangements are always granted via the SENCO, based primarily on the evidence given by subject teachers and over a sustained period of time.

In exceptional circumstances (for example a broken arm) we might need to apply for special consideration for students at the point of the examinations. Please contact the Exams Officer in the first instance, if this affects your child.

**Useful information:**

JCQ guide to Special Considerations

JCQ Parental guidance sheet