

Access Arrangements Policy

March 2016

## 1. Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with Kimbolton School SEN(D) policy and DDA policy, which sets out the school's procedures for identifying SEND, making and evaluating provision for pupils with SEND, and monitoring the pupils' needs for access arrangements for examinations.

Kimbolton School recognises that some pupils will meet the criteria for access arrangements in exams, due to specific difficulties which result in having below average processing speed or working memory, slow or poor handwriting, below average literacy skills or difficulties in attention. In putting access arrangements in place, Kimbolton School is bound to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and with JCQ Regulations. Kimbolton School also uses information and data from 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Form literacy skills assessments, as well as documentation from other educational institutions, correspondence and records from medical and other health practitioners as well as internal assessments. Liaison and information from teachers is crucial. Without evidence that this is a "perceived and significant difficulty", and that interventions, support or alternative strategies have been put in place for the pupil, then the access arrangement cannot be agreed (in line with JCQ guidelines).

Kimbolton School is only able to put access arrangements in place within the time frames stipulated by JCQ. Assessments must demonstrate in quantitative and qualitative measures, that the pupil meets JCQ criteria for access arrangements as set out by JCQ. JCQ adjusts its regulations periodically and the school is bound to comply with the current regulations. The Examination Officer is responsible for all procedures relating to the conduct of Public Examinations at Kimbolton School.

In accordance with JCQ regulations, the school will exercise its judgement regarding a pupil's eligibility for access arrangements. Privately commissioned reports will only be accepted by JCQ -and therefore by school -if they are written to the required standard and demonstrate the pupil's need in quantifiable terms. In addition, the School is also required to gather qualitative evidence that the access arrangements reflect the candidate's needs and their normal way of working within an educational environment. To this end, the school will permit access arrangements as above, for pupils in 3<sup>rd</sup> Form and above. Following internal progress test and mock examinations the school will review with each pupil who has access arrangements, in order to gather the evidence that the arrangement was needed and used. A selection of the pupil's work will be kept as evidence should JCQ inspectors request this. If a pupil does not use the allocated extra time during a mock exam or test it may be taken away as this demonstrates the pupil does not need or use it as part of their normal way of working. This is in line with JCQ recommendations.

Please note that the school must be informed about such special requirements on enrolment. See point 6 page 4.

## 2. Use of extra time

In compliance with JCQ Guidelines: The School will permit the use of up to 25% extra time under the following conditions:

There must be evidence of a "substantial and long-term disability" (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), which places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage when working under timed conditions.

Examples of this would include an identified specific learning difficulty resulting in below average scores for speed of writing, speed of reading, processing speed, working memory or spelling. JCQ defines 'below average' as a standard score of 84 or below, or two standard scores between 85 -89.

There must be evidence of this need in the form of an up to date medical or educational psychologist's report, or a report by an appropriately qualified professional holding a current practising certificate (Head of Academic Support) and using JCQ approved standardised tests. In compliance with JCQ regulations, reports that are out of date will not be accepted as evidence of need. The school will comply with JCQ regulations in reviewing the need for, and use of, extra time at GCSE AS levels and A-levels. The school will agree to apply for extra time for public examinations on the basis of the evidence above, and provided there is also evidence that this is the candidate's normal way of working in exams and timed tests. To this end, the school must collect evidence of the need for, and use of, extra time in internal exams.

### 3. Use of a word processor

In compliance with JCQ guidelines, the school will permit the use of a word processor in examinations, where this is the candidate's normal mode of working within the school. The spellcheck facility must be disabled and the arrangement can only be put in place if a student has:

- Difficulty in writing legibly even after support and intervention strategies have been exhausted
- Poor handwriting as a result of Identified specific learning difficulties resulting in planning and organisational difficulties when writing
- Any medical condition or physical disability that affects handwriting
- Sensory impairment

In all of the instances there will need to be evidence of need in the form of a medical or educational psychologist's report, or a report by an appropriately qualified professional. The school will collect evidence of the candidate's need for, and use of, word processing in lessons and in exams. Candidates will not be permitted to word process their exams simply because they prefer to type or can work faster on a word processor. The school will consider the need and eligibility for other access arrangements on a case-by case basis, according to the need for and appropriateness of the arrangement.

### 3. What are exam access arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a "persistent and significant difficulty accessing and processing information" has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to sitting examinations. This ensures that the pupil is not "substantially disadvantaged" compared to their peers and reflects the pupil's "normal way of working" in class. These EAA can be in the form of:

- A scribe: a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write exactly what they say.
- A reader: a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves.
- ICT: access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled and a special exam account would be used with no internet access.
- Rest breaks: where pupils are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.

- Prompter: where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.
- Transcript: This arrangement must only be used where a student's handwriting or spelling is difficult to decipher for those not familiar with it. A transcript is a copy of a student's exam script made after the exam without the participation of the student.
- Read Aloud: A student may work more effectively if he/she can hear themselves read. This student must be accommodated separately.
- Bilingual translation dictionaries: These can be used in examinations by candidates whose first language is not English and this reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the school. see EAL policy
- Extra time: pupils may be entitled to an allowance of 25% depending on the history of evidence of need. For extra time -the most applied for EAA -pupils will have an assessment to determine their speed of processing. Evidence from external advisors or specialists and in class evidence from teachers must also be submitted for it to be approved. A standardised score of less than 85 (100 being average) can qualify for extra time. There are rare cases where pupils get a score of more than 84. In these cases more evidence is needed to prove that a student should receive extra time. This could be in the form of an extensive history of need, formal diagnosis of a significant learning difficulty, or evidence of a substantial long term adverse effect on the performance of a child's speed of a working. The amount of time that pupils should receive is decided by the Specialist Tester and based upon their processing speeds.  
The Examination Boards recommend that before extra time is awarded, rest breaks must be considered, since this may be more appropriate for a student with a medical or psychological condition. To receive more than 25% or more is very unusual, and applies to those pupils with a severe learning/physical difficulty and exam boards would recommend putting other EAA in place before this occurs.  
There is evidence to suggest that pupils who receive more extra time than they need, do not use it effectively, and may in fact damage their chances of achieving a good grade because they go back and undo the work that they have produced. Therefore giving extra time needs careful consideration.

#### 4. What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from Specialist Teacher (Head of Academic Support at Kimbolton School)
- Previous EAA from another school
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mocks
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests

#### 5. When might pupils need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?

- Scribe - Where a student has a physical disability; where her/his writing is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood ; speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time
- Reader - Where a student has a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by Specialist Teacher (100 is the average). A reader pen should be considered as an alternative to this in the first instance
- ICT - (word processor) Where a student has a physical disability; his/her writing would be illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood ; speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time
- Extra Time - Where a student's ability to process or access or read information is slower than average.

- Rest Breaks - Where a student has a physical or psychological disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time. This is now the recommended option from the exam boards before considering extra time.
- Prompter - For a student who loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time.
- Separate Room - For a student with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Pupils who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room

## 6. What are the procedures for processing an application?

Parents must declare at the time of enrolment and when completing the school application form if their child has any medical or psychological conditions, EHP, previous EEA at another educational institution or any other issues that may require EEA. Failure to disclose this information negates Kimbolton School from their responsibilities.

Once any diagnostic tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation for EAA, the Exams officer then applies to the exam boards. The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP) Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student
- A record of all occasions when a student has been supported by EAA
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time
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## 7. Applications, appeals and malpractice

Applications for EAA are made by the Head of Academic Support based on evidence drawn from teachers, tutors and external professionals.

JCQ deadlines are fully adhered to. The deadline is 21 March for all EAA applications and the school sets internal deadlines to comply with this. It also sets an internal deadline of the end of term one of the first year of the two year GCSE or A level course (i.e. end of term one in 4<sup>th</sup> Form or Lower Sixth) for word processor applications.

Appeals go initially to the Head of Academic Support and Examinations Officer and, if necessary, onto the Deputy Head Academic.

Malpractice ie false or inappropriate implementation of an EAA can result in the pupil's exam marks being modified. Therefore the school follow all the JCQ guidelines and regulations in order to ensure we fully comply.

Kimbolton School must adhere to all legislation set out by the JCQ and will maintain all records in accordance with the rules set by JCQ. The school will also comply with the monitoring visits with the JCQ inspectors.

