

St Matthew Academy

EQUALITIES (EXAMS)

2026/2027
Policy



Date of approval	Autumn 2026
Date of review	Autumn 2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Ms S Williams
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Mr J Potter
Head of Centre	Mr J Potter
Assessor	Ms S Williams
Exams Officer	Ms G Williams
Access Arrangement facilitator(s)	Ms S Williams
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader with oversight of exams administration)	Ms V Dunne

Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide equalities and/or disability/accessibility policy/plan which details how the centre will:

- Recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid; [†]or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect

[JCQ's publication *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2022-2023* (section 5.4)]
This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- Identifying a physical or mental impairment; looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial; considering if substantial adverse effects are long term; judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.
- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements');
- requesting access arrangements;
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided in the JCQ publication 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties' *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024/2005*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (Access arrangements policy)
- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

SENCo

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct

procedures are followed as per [AA](#)

- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Teaching staff

- Where appropriate, inform the SENCo of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate

Support staff (Teaching Assistants and other academy support staff)

- Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working for a candidate
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication [AA](#)

Use of word processors

St Matthew Academy's Word Processor (Exams) Policy can be found on the Academy website

Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

SEnCo

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- Ensures that where approval is required the application is processed on time and no later than the awarding body's published deadline
- Ensures that the full supporting evidence is in place before an online application is processed
- Reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement
- Holds all supporting evidence and presents such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request
- Ensures that the agreed adjustment has been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal tests and mock examinations
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included
- Applies for approval where this is required, through Access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of relevant JCQ forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required

- Ensures where JCQ forms are required to be completed, the forms are signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version)
 - Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO, are entered into AAO to confirm their status
 - Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
 - Makes an awarding body referral through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will either be all in hard copy within the candidate's file or all in electronic format within the candidate's e-folder) that will include:
- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
 - in addition, for those qualifications covered by AAO approval, a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
 - Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo completed before an application is processed online (where applicable)
- Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
 - Following the appropriate process, orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate
 - Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates

Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) from WJEC, or download a PDF copy of the standard question paper where provide by AQA, OCR and Pearson question paper or to open a question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)

Senior Leaders

- If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

Roles and Responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* [[ICE](#)]

Head of centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

SEnCo

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Is familiar with the instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in [ICE 2024-2025](#)
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it

- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional)
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant has to be used, a separate invigilator is always present
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

Exams officer

- Understands and follows instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and access arrangements in [ICE 2023-2024](#)
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher but where the candidate's own subject teacher has to be used, ensures a separate invigilator is always present
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate.
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans and invigilators are made aware of the arrangements awarded and invigilators informed of those candidates with access arrangements and made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into

PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam

- Understands that where permitted/approved, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
 - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
 - the Communication Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
 - a Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening examination 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
 - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for a particular arrangement
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Liaises with the SENCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Staff responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
- Site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

However, 'NEA' is not limited to internal assessment as externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are also classified as 'NEA'.

SEnCo

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking their first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of their formal supervised assessment

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Exams Officer

- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

Internal Assessments & Mock Examinations

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

SENCo

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Exams Officer

- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

Facilitating access – examples of possible centre actions

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks	SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home and for SRB Director of learning (DOL) provides written statement for file to confirm the need Approval confirmed by SENCo approval for both arrangements not required DOL discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates DOL confirms with candidate the information is understood DOL agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
		collection of exam papers and materials Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition EO discusses with DOL if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged) EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results) DOL informs candidate that special consideration has been requested
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader 25% Extra time Small room provision Alternative Rooming Arrangements	Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 Papers checked for those testing reading Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded AAO application for approval processed Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Small room provision Alternative Rooming Arrangements	Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment AAO application for approval processed Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for alternative room)
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms	Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
	Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file Provides height adjustable desk in exam room Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access Seats candidate near exam room door Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment
Significant anxiety attack prior to or during an examination	Special seating allocation in main exam room Small room provision Separate invigilation Rest breaks Stress Ball	Where candidate is known to display significant anxiety prior to exams, centre will consider: • referral to pastoral team for mentoring • referral to CAMHS or other professional service for support and strategies • seating of candidate in main exam room (seating to side or rear of hall) • small room provision (with SENCo agreement) • issuing of stress ball/fidget toy • permitting supervised rest breaks Where candidate has an anxiety attack during an examination, invigilators will: • remove the candidate from the exam room • record the time and incident in the Exam Room Incident Log • attempt to calm the candidate • seek help from other school staff • keep the candidate under supervision • alert the EO • allow the candidate full time for their exam If the candidate is unable to return to the assigned exam room/seat, Exams Officer will: • consider moving candidate to another seat / room • apply the special considerations process <i>NB: Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation at St Matthew Academy (AA 5.16)</i>

