



# **Exam Access Arrangements**

## **Information for Parents**

## **Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)**

The JCQ represents the seven largest national awarding bodies in UK offering GCSEs, A Levels and vocational qualifications.

Applications for exam access arrangements have to be agreed by the JCQ and their regulations are updated annually every autumn.

### **Exam access arrangements**

Access arrangements are for candidates based on:

- evidence of need and
- normal way of working and
- must reflect the normal practice/support the candidate has had in the centre

Access arrangements allow access to examinations without changing the demands of the assessment and are available to candidates with physical difficulties, sensory difficulties, learning difficulties and social, mental and emotional needs.

They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- access the assessment
- show what they can do

The intention of an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of the candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

Awarding bodies have a duty under Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disability. The process often involves an assessment by a specialist assessor which will provide the centre with evidence which they can use to decide on the most appropriate exam access arrangements.

### **JCQ Definitions**

JCQ exam access arrangements guidance uses the definition of disability as per the Equality Act 2010; this applies to mental or physical impairment.

A disability needs to be:

- Substantial
- Long term; existed for 12 months +

- Having an adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Definition of Special Educational Needs as per the SEND code of practice:

- Candidate who needs special educational provision made for them.

### **Application requirements**

An application must be accompanied by the following teacher evidence:

- Documentary evidence showing the nature and extent of difficulty
- Normal way of working; in class/in support lessons/ in mock exams
- Involvement of teaching staff including feedback on regular working practice in classwork and tests/exams, and raising concerns about candidates

### **The process at St Bede's Catholic College**

#### **How does the process start?**

- Teachers, parents/carers and students should inform the SENCO, Mrs Parry, of any additional needs that may affect access to exams as soon as possible.
- Mrs Parry and her team work with teachers and students to identify possible arrangements.

#### **Who makes the assessment?**

- In the case of learning difficulties, the college's assessor, Mrs Bird, conducts an assessment to determine the need for arrangements such as extra time. This usually happens in Year 10 or Year 11.
- In the case of physical, emotional or mental health needs, specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) must provide a formal diagnosis.
- Teachers must provide evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed.

#### **How does the process end?**

- The college applies to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) for some arrangements, such as extra time.
- JCQ confirm their approval and the exams officer, Miss Mendez, ensures that students receive the arrangements in their exams.