

HOWELL'S SCHOOL: WHOLE SCHOOL ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY

Definitions

At Howell's School, Llandaff, we are committed to offering all learners a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure their best possible progress. Our approach to supporting those with Additional Learning Needs is guided by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 and The Equality Act 2010.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

At Howell's, we believe a learner should be considered for inclusion in ALN if they meet the following criteria, as defined in Section 2 of Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018:

- (1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.*
- (2) A child of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she—
(a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
(b) has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 (c. 15) which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.*
- (3) A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is, or would be if no additional learning provision were made, likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age.*
- (4) A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home.*

Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

If a child has ALN, Howell's School will endeavour to implement suitable ALP as defined in Section 3 of Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018:

"Additional learning provision" for a person aged three or over means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in—

- (a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,*
- (b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or*
- (c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.*

"Nursery education" means education suitable for a child who has attained the age of three but is under compulsory school age.

Howell's is an academically selective school, and admission is dependent upon reaching the required academic standard. Prospective learners with ALN will be admitted on the same basis, unless the school cannot reasonably make the adjustments required to provide ALP which caters for their needs.

Parents of children with ALN applying for a place at the school are invited to discuss the child's needs with the Assistant Principal ALN and the SENCO at an early stage, and the school may also contact the child's current school to gain further information. Each learner is looked at as an individual case to see whether the school can effectively meet their needs. Every effort is made to accommodate a learner's needs where possible, including in arrangements for entrance tests.

The school may charge for certain forms of additional provision for learners with ALN, such as one-to-one tuition for dyslexic learners. Further information on charges can be obtained from the school on request.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will make reasonable adjustments (without charge) to its provision to ensure that learners with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage to their peers. The nature of these adjustments will be determined in consultation with the child and parents.

Learners with an EHC Plan/Statement/ Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

The school can be named by the Local Authority (LA) in an EHC Plan/Statement with the school's agreement. Whether the school is named or not, a place will only be offered by the school once it is established that the school can support the provision specified on the EHC Plan/Statement/ Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Aims

At Howell's we aim to provide an inclusive education by:

- Creating an environment that meets the needs of each learner
- Providing a whole school response to any additional learning needs within the overall ethos of the school which is compatible with the needs of the majority of learners
- Identifying any difficulty as early and as thoroughly as possible
- Assessing and providing for these needs as quickly as possible
- Encouraging parental co-operation and keeping the parents well-informed
- Ensuring the learner has a voice in this process by adopting a 'person-centred approach'
- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning
- Providing a positive and active approach from all the staff to ensure that the learner feels valued
- Striving to give learners the maximum opportunity for enabling full access to all elements of the school curriculum at the appropriate level of learning

Objectives

The objectives of Howell's ALN policy are:

- To set achievable targets – however small – thereby promoting self-esteem and a positive attitude to learning
- To encourage differentiation by task and/or by outcome through a variety of

resources and teaching strategies

- To work in partnership with learners and parents
- To make all staff aware of the need for a whole school response to any additional learning needs
- To involve outside agencies where appropriate and promote effective partnership with them

Role of the class teacher

The class teacher will:

- Identify learners who are experiencing difficulties and inform the Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO of any learners causing concern; this may be through assessment of written work, or on-going classroom observation
- Provide evidence to support any referral
- Differentiate wherever necessary and practicable within the classroom to provide appropriate opportunities and resources for the SEND learner
- Monitor and record the progress of the learner as an on-going process
- Use the advice and guidance of the Pupil Passport as detailed on SIMS as a starting point in the support of a learner

Role of Assistant Principal ALN

As the member of the Extended Leadership Team with responsibility for Additional Learning Needs, the Assistant Principal ALN, with the support of the Principal, the ELT, the SENCO and specialist teaching staff in the Learning Support department will seek to develop effective ways of overcoming barriers to learning and sustaining effective teaching through the analysis and assessment of learners' needs, by monitoring the standard of learners' achievements and by setting targets for improvement.

The responsibilities of the Assistant Principal ALN include:

- Overseeing the day to day running of the school's ALN policy across both prep and senior phases
- Along with the SENCO, co-ordinating provision for learners with ALN
- Along with the SENCO, liaising with ALN learners and parents to provide the most effective support
- Overseeing record keeping of all learners with ALN
- Along with the SENCO and MATCOs, monitoring and evaluating the additional learning needs provision
- Managing the ANL resources
- Along with the SENCO, liaise with the Examinations Officer to organise access arrangements for learners with ALN
- Ensuring that access arrangements are administered as per JCQ regulations as outlined in *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
- Contributing to the professional development of all staff

Role of SENCO

The SEN Co-ordinator will work closely with the Assistant Principal ALN to develop effective ways of overcoming barriers to learning and sustaining effective teaching through the analysis and assessment

of learners' needs, by monitoring the standard of learners' achievements and by setting targets for improvement.

The responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- Overseeing the day to day running of the school's ALN policy across both prep and senior phases with regard to ALN
- Managing a department of specialist learning support teachers
- In conjunction with the Assistant Principal ALN, co-ordinating provision for learners with ALN
- In conjunction with the Assistant Principal ALN, liaising with, advising, and supporting colleagues on all aspects of ALN
- In conjunction with the Assistant Principal ALN, liaising with ALN learners and parents to provide the most effective support
- Maintaining the records of all learners with ALN
- Liaising with external agencies eg Dyslexia Action Cymru
- In conjunction with the Assistant Principal ALN, monitoring and evaluating the SEND provision
- Managing the ALN resources
- Along with the Assistant Principal ALN, liaise with the Examinations Officer and Lead Invigilator to organise access arrangements for learners with ALN
- Contributing to the professional development of all staff

Role of the Principal

In Howell's the Principal will:

- Report to the Governing Board about ALN where and when necessary
- Be familiar with the learners on the ALN lists and the arrangements that have been made for them
- Monitor teaching arrangements for ALN learners with the Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO

Role of Parents

The school will have regard to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 carrying out its duties towards all learners with ALN and will ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that ALP is being made for their son/daughter. Partnership with parents plays a key role in enabling learners with ALN to reach their full potential. The school recognises the importance of working in co-operation with parents to find the best ways of supporting the learners.

Developing good relationships with parents is vital to the success of our intervention. The parents can contact the Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO directly to help facilitate this. Parents are encouraged to give their support at home wherever possible with the emphasis on raising self-esteem and building a positive attitude.

Contact with parents is usually through:

- Letter, telephone or e-mail in the first instance
- Reports: as with all learners, yearly reports keep parents informed of academic progress and are the principal means of communication between school and home. In the case of SEND learners, the Pupil Passport gives specific advice to parents on how the child's learning difficulties are being addressed and sets annual targets for the learner
- Meetings with the Assistant Principal ALN, the SENCO, Deputy Principals, Director of College, and/or Heads of Year and any other relevant member of staff where appropriate

- Parents' evenings

If the SENCO makes a recommendation for assessment, this can be done either in school by our qualified specialist teacher, or if appropriate by an external specialist such as an educational psychologist. It is the responsibility of the parents to pay for any external assessment and any subsequent specialist teaching that may be recommended by the educational psychologist. All discussions with parents (with details of any action to be taken) are recorded by the Assistant Principal ALN, the SENCO and/or Head of the Prep School (as appropriate).

Role of the Learner

As part of a person-centred approach, learners are encouraged to be part of the decision making process. All plans for intervention are discussed with the learner.

Identification in the Senior School and College

Identification of ALN may occur through one or more of the following formal procedures:

- Group screening tests (Dyslexia Screening, Reading Age Screening and Spelling Age Screening) take place in the first term of Year 7 (and for other new entrants at an appropriate state) to identify learners who are at risk from specific learning difficulties. These tests will be used in conjunction with entrance examination results and MidYIS (Year 7) to determine whether a learner should be referred for a more detailed assessment of their learning needs. The school will keep parents informed at all stages of testing where appropriate
- Group screening tests (Reading Age Screening and Spelling Age Screening) also take place in the first term of Year 12 (and for other new entrants at an appropriate state) to identify learners who are at risk from specific learning difficulties. These tests will be used in conjunction with other prior data (GCSE points etc.) to determine whether a learner should be referred for a more detailed assessment of their learning needs. The school will keep parents informed at all stages of testing where appropriate
- Classroom observation
- Internal exams and assessments
- Transfer of information across the primary and secondary phase (see Transfer from Prep Schools to Senior School, below)
- Information from parents about ALN and other medical conditions which may have a material effect on a learner's education (eg at Year 12 entry)

We are constantly assessing learners' work as part of the daily purpose of education and it is likely that on many occasions identifying SEN will arise out of a subject teacher's *informal* observations and discussion with learners. Subject staff may bring to the attention of the Assistant Principal ALN and the SENCO any learner they feel may require special help or support. The SENCO will liaise with parents about methods of assessment.

Assessment

After initial identification takes place, a formal assessment may occur. This happens in the following ways depending on which is appropriate for the individual learner.

In the Senior School:

- Educational psychologist's report to identify learners with a potential ALN and assess their needs

- Assessment of specific learning needs by a qualified member of the school's Learning Support staff, usually the SENCO. Such an assessment is carried out as necessary and at the direction of the Assistant Principal ALN
- Discussion with class teachers
- Discussion with school counsellor, appropriate members of SLT, Deputy Principals and with GP/consultant
- Discussion with HoD, Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO
- Samples of work sent to specialist teaching staff/ the Dyslexia Action for a second opinion

Responses to assessment

- The SENCO will liaise with parents, educational psychologists and other external bodies to decide on the best course of support
- Support may take the form of some small group or individual help, eg learning support, or more specialised help from the on-site Dyslexia Action Satellite teachers for dyslexic learners
- Learners receiving help either from Dyslexia Action Cymru have one or two hours a week of specialised tuition. This may be at lunchtime, after school or during curricular time; these learners normally follow a modified timetable
- Following the formal assessment, an individual education plan (Pupil Passport) may be drawn up where appropriate by the SENCO
- In the Senior School individual departments respond to learners with ALN through specific strategies outlined on the Pupil Passport
- The SENCO maintains a register of all learners with ALN who receive additional support beyond the normal curriculum (the Learning Support Register), together with advice on how best to support them in the classroom. An Additional Learning Needs site can be found on Teams with details of how best to address specific needs. All departmental staff are required to acquaint themselves with the information contained on SIMS, and HoDs are asked to have ALN as a standing item on their departmental agenda. It is essential that all new information about SEND which is issued via email by the Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO, is discussed at departmental meetings
- The Joint Council for Qualifications' deadline for processing Exam Access Arrangements is usually in February, though does alter each year; only in exceptional circumstances can EAA be processed after this date as this would not be the learner's "normal way of working"

Provision for learners with EHC Plans/Statements/Individual Development Plans

Provision for learners with EHC Plans/Statements/ Individual Development Plans will be made with due regard to the ALN Code of Practice. The school will co-operate with the LA and parents to work towards the provision set out in the EHC Plan/Statement/ Individual Development Plans, and to review the plan as required.

Record keeping in the Senior School

- ALN information, including advice on teaching learners with ALN and guidance in understanding the Pupil Passport, is available to all staff on Teams
- Regularly updated information about learners, including Pupil Passports and information regarding Examination Access Arrangements is available on

SIMS

- The Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO keep records of regular meetings with learners and parents
- The Assistant Principal ALN in conjunction with members of ELT and Heads of Year tracks the academic progress of ALN learners and addresses any concerns
- Letters, records of telephone conversations and meetings, educational psychologist's reports and Pupil Passports are held on SIMS and on the individual learner's file

Transfers from Prep School to Senior School

- Copies of ALN identification sheets and record of additional support sheets are transferred from the Head of the Prep School to the Senior School SENCO at the end of Year 6. There is also a meeting between the Head of the Prep School, the Year 6 teachers and the Assistant Principal ALN, the SENCO in the Senior School and the Year 7 Head of Year when these learners are discussed. The SENCO then distributes any relevant information via e-mail or initial staff meetings at the start of term
- Learners who come from other feeder schools have their records forwarded to Howell's; references also help with identification of learners with ALN

Training

Training in Additional Learning Needs may take several forms for staff:

- In departmental meetings where a member of a body such as the Dyslexia Action or Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO advise staff on procedures such as the marking of a dyslexic learner's work and use of assistive technology
- In HoDs' meetings where the Assistant Principal ALN, the SENCO or ALN teacher reports to staff on developments in ALN teaching
- In staff meetings/staff briefings/via e-mail where information concerning individual learners requires quick and effective communication with subject teachers
- The Assistant Principal ALN or SENCO is available to attend core subject departmental meetings to advise staff on such provision
- INSET days: on these occasions part or all of a day may be devoted to examining one of the key issues of ALN, or on giving practical advice to the whole staff from specialists in the field
- Specific training via external agencies such as the GDST for SENCOs or teachers in co-ordinating and implementing policy on ALN

Specific provision is made for the following ALN:

1 Dyslexia

We have an independent Dyslexia Unit on-site run by specialist staff. Learners follow an individual programme and are taught 1:1 or 1:2. Liaison occurs between the SENCO and the Dyslexia Unit teachers who regularly report on learners' progress. Parents pay Dyslexia Action Cymru direct for this extra support.

2 Learning Support

Improved literacy and numeracy skills have been identified as the most significant and common

factor in raising GCSE grades in all subjects. The aims of Learning Support lessons are to improve and strengthen study skills in those learners for whom such skills are under- developed. Learners are generally offered learning support classes if it is felt that they would benefit from extra tuition in reading, comprehension and general literacy or numeracy. Learning Support learners usually follow a modified timetable (eg with a reduced number of languages), and attend one or more Learning Support lessons in private study periods. Recommendation for learning support usually comes from a core subject teacher via the Assistant Principal ALN. These lessons are paid for by the school and parents are not expected to contribute.

In the Prep School early intervention with regard to literacy support for those learners who are encountering some difficulty is considered of crucial importance. Problems where help is given include those where the learners have a poor reading or spelling age, poor comprehension skills or underdeveloped writing skills. The majority of these lessons take place in small groups of learners who are withdrawn during the English curriculum lessons. This support is given principally by one of the specialist Learning Support teachers, or by either the English co-ordinator or the classroom assistants. The library reading time and some assembly times are also utilised for reading, language and mathematical activities in Key Stage 1.

While we are keen to cater for all learners, as an independent school we cannot promise to offer specialist provision for more complex conditions, such as ASD, ADHD, or sensory disabilities; however, current information and guidance for teaching staff on such conditions is available on Firefly and via Pupil Passports. As we are outside local authority control we do not have access to the full range of services on offer to the maintained sector. Where possible we will, however, endeavour to seek advice from external agencies.

3 Medical conditions

Parents are expected to inform the school of any physical or mental impairment that is known and that is likely to have a noticeable effect upon a learner's daily work and progress. A register is maintained in SIMS which is continually updated and published as the medical list when required. Training is provided if needed for all staff (eg on the use of the 'Epipen', medical condition awareness etc) and all staff are asked to make themselves aware of learners on the medical list. Staff are updated of any additions or deletions to this list either by email, at the weekly briefing meeting or at a staff meeting. Where appropriate, a learner's timetable may be modified to accommodate individual needs.

4 Those whose difficulties arise from an emotional, behavioural, or familial problem

In the Senior School members of staff who teach these learners and others who support them (the school counsellor, Heads of Year, members of ELT) are kept informed via email or meetings of the way the problem is to be tackled, monitored and what progress has been made. This is to ensure we have a consistent approach. The SENCO liaises with outside agencies or may delegate this task if appropriate. The SENCO will also liaise with the examinations office at regular points in the year and before school and public examinations to pass on information about learners who may qualify for special consideration. In the case of emotional issues Deputy Principals may refer to Assistant Principal ALN to add to a register of concessions.

Familial, behavioural or psychological issues affecting learners, where and when appropriate, are conveyed to subject staff and the Examinations Officer by the Deputy Principals or Head of College/Head of Year. (Please see separate policy on confidentiality.)

The Equality Act 2010, ALN and access arrangements

All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law. Additionally this policy complies fully with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. A candidate's ALN requirements are determined by the SENCO with reference to any relevant documents, such as reports by an educational psychologist or specialist teacher. Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams and submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO and the Examinations Officer. Rooming, invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Examinations Officer and Lead Invigilator with support from the SENCO and Assistant Principal ALN. The Assistant Principal ALN also has responsibility for annually checking the qualifications of the centre's assessor (the SENCO) are up-to-date, with a copy of the assessor's Assessment Practising Certificate being kept with all access arrangement files.

ALN Procedures in the Prep School Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- liaise with the previous teacher prior to the new academic year
- use appropriate strategies and monitor and record the progress of the learner
- identify additional learners who are experiencing any difficulties
- discuss with either KS1 or KS2 co-ordinator, who will gain evidence and suggest simple strategies to address concerns
- inform Deputy Head of Prep who will discuss with Assistant Principal ALN and SENCO at next regular meeting
- class teacher/KS Co-ordinator/ Deputy Head of Prep to monitor progress. If still concerned after half a term, Deputy Head of Prep to contact Assistant Principal ALN/SENCO/Educational Psychologist for advice which may lead to the next stage. This may involve observations by SENCO, informal observations and/or assessments by Educational Psychologist or a teacher from the Dyslexia Action. Parents are involved at each stage as appropriate
- follow and monitor any Pupil Passport a particular learner may have. Share the Pupil Passport with the learner and parents and update regularly in September and March
- inform other teachers who may teach the learner
- differentiate within the classroom and provide appropriate opportunities and resources
- keep evidence of strategies used for learners experiencing emotional difficulties and will involve parents in a supportive role

Role of the Learner

As part of a person-centred approach, learners are encouraged to be part of the decision making process. All plans for intervention are discussed with the learner who will discuss their Pupil Passport with either the class/support teacher.

Identification, Assessment and Recording in the Prep School

- All our learners are assessed (both formally and informally) when they join the school so that we can build upon their prior learning
- We use this information to provide starting points for the development of an appropriate curriculum for them

- If our assessments show that a learner may have a learning difficulty we use a range of strategies that make full use of all available resources. In Howell's Prep School we have regular assessment and review so that we can identify any learners who are not making the expected progress and intervene and monitor as necessary, at any stage during their time in school
- The learner's teacher will offer interventions that are different from or additional to those provided as part of the school's usual working practices
- After discussion the Deputy Head of Prep and the class teacher will inform the parents and draw upon them for additional information
- Support for the learner may be in the form of:
 - different learning materials or special equipment
 - some group or individual support
 - different strategies to those usually used
- We will record the strategies used to support the learner within a Pupil Passport. The Pupil Passport will show the short-term targets set for the learner and the teaching strategies to be used. It will also indicate the planned outcomes and the date for the plan to be reviewed. The reviews will take place every six months

ALN in Breakfast Club/After School Care/Howell's Holiday Club

All the Out of School Care Clubs are staffed by teachers, teaching assistants and catering staff working in Howell's; they use their experience, knowledge of the children and regular contact with class teachers and teaching assistants to provide the most appropriate approaches and opportunities for each child and their particular needs and preferences.

Facilities, equipment, staffing and resources, within reason, can be adapted to cater for specific needs, and excellent partnerships with parents facilitate the sharing of information so that each and every child has the best possible care.

The Role of the Managers

The Managers will:

- liaise with SENCO, class teachers, teaching assistants and parents to ensure that, where ALN have been identified through Howell's initial assessment, ongoing assessments and day to day interactions, staff are fully briefed and can adapt their approaches to meet those needs and preferences
- provide special equipment and resources and adapt staffing arrangements to meet identified and additional needs as appropriate
- provide training as appropriate to cater for specific needs in conjunction with SENCO and Mrs Abby Matthews, Head of the Prep School
- ensure that the home language, social, cultural and religious practices of individual children are understood and catered for as appropriate by all staff
- address ALN and preferences that are identified in the Clubs in conjunction with staff, parents, Head of the Prep School and SENCO as appropriate
- ensure that all children have access to the play opportunities, facilities and activities in order to promote their welfare and development
- liaise with internal and external agencies through the SENCO and parents to facilitate meetings and appointments supporting children with ALN in BC/ASC/ Howell's Holiday Club hours
- Howell's Holiday Club only: liaise with parents of siblings of Howell's girls who do not attend Howell's to discuss any ALN and preferences and agree how these can be met within the

Holiday Club

The Role of the Out of School Care Club staff

The staff will:

- inform the Manager of any concerns about individual children so that a plan of action can be formulated and agreed with all concerned
- discuss their knowledge, experience and up to date observations of individual children with the Manager and other staff in order to address ALN and preferences as appropriate
- take part in training as appropriate
- ensure that, when intimate care is being provided, the privacy of all children is respected

The Role of the Child

Children in all clubs are encouraged to voice their thoughts, ideas and concerns with staff and suggest ways forward in order that they are involved in their own development.

Policy updated: TW November 2023

Key contacts

- Assistant Principal ALN – Mr Tom Walters
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – Mrs Freda Harvey
- Deputy Head of Prep – Miss Louisa Gardner

Appendix 1

Howell's School, Llandaff ALP Return for Independent Schools

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) at Howell's: Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

A person has ALN if the person has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision (ALP).

The school makes additional learning provision for pupils aged 3 to 18 with mild or moderate additional learning needs. This covers all specific types of needs, including combinations of needs, provided that taken together, the learner's needs are mild or moderate rather than complex.

The school employs a Specialist Teacher with experience of Specific Learning Difficulties who holds a current practicing certificate. Along with the Assistant Principal with responsibility for ALN they oversee all provision for those with ALN.

The following table details the ALP provided by Howell's on a voluntary basis.

ALN	ALP
ADHD	Guidelines for staff from specialist services/organisations IDP Pupil Passport (summary of strengths and weakness and suitable strategies shared with teaching staff) Staff Training/Awareness
ASD	Guidelines for staff from specialist services/organisations IDP Pupil Passport Staff Training/Awareness
BESD	Awareness for relevant staff/access to support from relevant specialist agencies
Dyslexia	IDP Pupil Passport Staff Training/Awareness Specialist provision available (outside agency/private funded provision) Adaptations to physical environment, as necessary
Dyspraxia	IDP Pupil Passport Staff Training/Awareness Adaptations to physical environment, as necessary
Hearing Impairment Visual impairment	IDP Pupil Passport Staff awareness and access to information on sensory impairments from professionals from outside agencies Adaptations to physical environment, as necessary
Physical/Medical differences & disabilities	Consultation with relevant medical professionals/OTs/School nurse on management of condition/disability. Information made available to relevant staff Adaptations to physical environment, as necessary

Appendix 2.

HOWELL'S SCHOOL: EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS POLICY

Access Arrangements

For all public examinations, the school follow JCQ's Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments regulations. These are accessible via the following link: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/AA_regs_23-24_FINAL-2.pdf

Access Arrangements are for students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Howell's School ensuring reasonable adjustments are made for exam purposes.

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Act, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. Howell's School is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example might be an enlarged paper for a visually impaired person. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the individual needs of the student
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the cost of the adjustment and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs
- involves unreasonable time frames or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment

This is because the adjustment is not "reasonable".

For public examinations, decisions to apply for access arrangements will always be made by the school acting for and on behalf of the GCSE and GCE awarding bodies. They will be guided by a thorough understanding of the candidate's learning needs over time and in a range of circumstances, assessments by the SENCO, recommendations from external reports (where the private provider has consulted with the school prior to the assessment taking place), the school teachers' own knowledge of the candidate's needs and their normal way of working both in school and at home. A portfolio of 'evidence of need' will be put together by the SENCO to support any access arrangements that will include teacher feedback and evidence of a student's work.

A number of access arrangements are available. Their use depends upon the student's needs, their

normal way of working, the type of exam and the current JCQ regulations. This means that different arrangements might be allowed in different examinations.

The access arrangements currently used at Howell's School include:

- The use of a word processor (with spelling and grammar check disabled)
- rest breaks
- separate invigilation
- extra time
- reader
- scribe

Supervised Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks (SRB) will always be considered before making an application for extra time. The SENCO is allowed to provide a supervised rest break if it is the candidate's normal way of working. The SENCO must be satisfied there is a genuine need for the arrangement due to a candidate's disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act). Supervised rest breaks are given to candidates to take account of:

- cognition and learning needs
- communication and interaction needs
- a medical condition
- sensory and physical needs
- social, mental and emotional needs

At the start of the SRB, the timing of the examination will be paused and restarted when the candidate is ready to continue. The candidate will not have access to the examination for the duration of the SRB.

Use of a Word Processor

In some instances, a student may be advised to consider the use of a word processor for their examinations. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a student because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because the candidate uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and Howell's School must hold evidence demonstrating the reasons why a word processor has been awarded. Although not an exhaustive list, the reasons may include:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a student's ability to write legibly
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- illegible handwriting
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- slow handwriting speed but no other below average scores
- the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand

- a medical condition with evidence supplied by a medical professional (consultant for example)
- traits of ASD or ADHD where the student is able to concentrate much better with the use of a screen
- slow handwriting speed alongside slow processing and reading speeds would require use of a word processor in addition to extra time

If a student uses a word processor, they must do so with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) and this must be the student's normal way of working within school.

It is permissible for a student using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. Examinations that have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where students will frequently need to type. Examinations that require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The student avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

Temporary Access Arrangements and applications for **special consideration** can also be made in certain situations. These arrangements can be processed as the need arises. An example could be, a Year 11 student has fallen off her bike and broken her wrist of her writing hand. In such a case, the school would look at the most appropriate and reasonable adjustment to make to ensure that the student can access the exam but is not given an unfair advantage. As with all applications, the school **must** ensure that the appropriate documentation is held on file to support any arrangement made.

Evidence Required

Note: Access Arrangements must comply with the current regulations from JCQ.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is very important in helping us make a judgement about whether to consider applying for Examination Access Arrangements or before making reasonable adjustments for candidates. To quote the Act, disability means, **'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people.'**

Any arrangement or reasonable adjustment we consider has to be evidenced. The most complex, but also most common request we make to the exam boards is for extra time. **In order to award extra time of up to 25% the school must assess the needs of the student based on one of the following documents:**

- A Statement of Special Educational Needs, Individual Development Plan, or Education, Health and Care Plan relating to secondary education which confirms the candidate's disability
- or
- An assessment carried out from the start of Year 9 by a specialist assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary education.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the specialist assessor's report must also confirm that the candidate has:

At least one below average standardised score of 84 or less which relates to an assessment of:

- Speed of reading; or
- Speed of reading comprehension; or
- Speed of writing; or
- Cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working

In addition to this core evidence, **we must paint a picture of the normal way of working** for the candidate, clearly demonstrating the need for extra time of up to 25%. This may include, but is not limited to: unfinished mock examinations or other timed assessments or comments from teaching staff; a significant improvement in legibility or quality of language when extra time is applied. Extra time may not be appropriate in practical examinations where the impairment has a minimal effect on the assessment (e.g. Art, Drama).

Once evidence has been gathered, the SENCO **must**:

- Provide relevant information/evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty; i.e. the candidate has **an impairment** which has a **substantial and long term adverse effect on their speed of processing**
- Confirm that the candidate has **persistent and significant difficulties** when accessing and processing information
- Show evidence of how the disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Show the **involvement of teaching staff** in determining the need for extra time of up to 25%.
- Confirm that without the application of extra time of up to 25% the candidate would be at a **substantial disadvantage**.
- Confirm that extra time of up to 25% is the candidate's **normal way of working** within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

It is expected that this information is supported with, for example:

- **A letter from CAMHS, a clinical psychologist, a hospital consultant; or**
- **A Speech and Language Therapist; or**
- **A letter from a Local Authority Psychology Service or Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or**
- **A Statement of Special Educational Needs, Individual Development Plan relating to the candidate's secondary education which confirms the candidate's disability.**

Please note that a GP's letter is not regarded as suitable/enough evidence.

Identification of Students who may require exam arrangements

- 1) the student self-refers or is referred by a parent or teacher
- 2) Teachers respond to a request for evidence/their professional opinion
- 3) SENCO meets with the student and conducts a 'student voice' interview
- 4) SENCO collates the information and decides whether or not to assess and which areas of assessment are required

- 5) SENCO completes Section A of the JCQ Form 8
- 6) Assessments take place
- 7) If there is one or more standardised score of 84 or below, the SENCO completes Sections B and C of Form 8 and informs the Exams Officer
- 8) The student signs the Data Protection Notice
- 9) SENCO or Exams Officer makes an application for access arrangements to the JCQ through Access Arrangements Online
- 10) The student, parents and teachers are notified of the outcome
- 11) Evidence is kept on file for inspection by the JCQ inspector

Assessment, Internal Exams and Tests.

For those students requiring access arrangements to be made for internal assessments and exams:

- 1) Departments will be informed of which students require Examination Access Arrangements and individual departments will then coordinate this with guidance from the SENCO as necessary.
- 2) Students with extra time are to write in their normal way and to participate within normal exam conditions. Students with extra time will change pen colour when their 25% becomes available. Students use coloured pen until the 25% is finished, or when they have finished – this contributes to providing essential evidence of need.
- 3) Teachers mark exam script or other assessment with and without the 25% extra time and comment on the qualitative differences with 25% extra time, eg. Has a student's work moved into an A grade from a B grade or vice versa?
- 4) If requested teachers supply SENCO with copies of exams scripts where 25% extra time has been used; scripts should be accompanied by teachers' comments, i.e.: the qualitative differences AND comment on how extra time affected exam performance.
- 5) Students may use a laptop in examinations if this has been their normal way of working. If a laptop is used, this will be used with the internet, spelling and grammar check disabled. For public examinations JCQ regulations will be followed.

Special Considerations

For all public examinations, the school follow JCQ's Special Considerations regulations. These are accessible via the following link: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Guide_to_spec_con_process_2023_24_FINAL.pdf

Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control **at the time of the assessment**. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment. The school informs the relevant examination board and submits relating evidence. The examination board will then decide whether to accept the application or not, and applies a percentage to the component in questions. The actual percentage uplift is not revealed to the centre or the candidate, though a note is made on results statements to confirm special consideration has been applied.

It is therefore important for candidates to keep the school informed of any difficulties they are facing, most likely via their Head of Year or other pastoral leaders who will keep the Exams Officer informed of any issues which may require special consideration to be applied for. As special consideration exist to ameliorate

difficulties at the time of the assessment, it is also essential that any difficulties during assessment are made known to the invigilators leading each session. Where the difficulty is of a medical nature, evidence is required to be submitted, usually in the form of a doctor's letter, which states the reason for the difficulty and the impact it would have at the time of the assessment.

It is essential that candidate's communicate clearly with centre staff; if in doubt about any issue relating to special consideration, advice from pastoral staff (eg Head of Year), the Assistant Principal ALN or the Exams Officer should be sought.

Appeals

If there are any queries with regard to centre decisions relating to access arrangements or special consideration, please contact Assistant Principal ALN, Mr Tom Walters. All decision making is guided by the principals outlined in the JCQ documentation linked in this document. In the event of an appeal, we would outline what decision had been made and how this decision had been arrived at in relation to the regulations and the specifics of the candidate's situation. Where necessary advice from the JCQ and/or the relevant examination boards is sought.

Policy updated: TW November 2023

Key contacts

- Assistant Principal ALN – Mr Tom Walters
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – Mrs Freda Harvey