

Keeping it fair

The support provided in examinations must not however give the student an unfair advantage. So access arrangements are reasonable adjustments, which do not change the demands of the assessment.

The Joint Council for Qualifications, which governs public examinations lays down the criteria for allocating particular arrangements and schools have a responsibility to allocate access arrangements appropriately and fairly. In general the arrangement reflects the candidates normal way of working within the school and applications for access arrangements are based on this and supported by the results of diagnostic assessment.

The need of students for support in examinations may change as their skills improve or the demands of their studies increase. If a particular arrangement is no longer necessary or justified or a new need becomes apparent we will inform you of the change.

Edgbarrow School



Access Arrangements

What is an access arrangement?

Some students find it hard to show what they know and understand when it comes to examinations. There could be many reasons for this but the most common ones are difficulties with reading, handwriting and getting their answers down in the time allowed.

An *Access Arrangement* is support provided in examinations to enable students to demonstrate what they know and can do, in spite of difficulties which might otherwise prevent them from doing so. For example a slow reader might need additional time, a student with illegible handwriting might need to have a scribe or use a word processor.

What support might a student receive?

The most common access arrangements are:

- A reader
- A writer
- Use of word processor
- Additional time (because they work slowly)
- Rest breaks
- A Prompter (because they cannot focus for the length of the papers)
- A bilingual dictionary (because they have English as an additional language)

What happens in school?

When the children come to Edgbarrow from the junior schools we already have quite a lot of information about some students who have special needs. Our most important aim in their first year is to get to know them, understand what kind of support they need in order to do well at secondary school, and to provide the right kind of support so that the students can benefit as much as possible from the curriculum.

In addition during years seven and eight we are discovering the best way for students to work. That is their 'normal way of working'. This might involve using a word processor because they have difficulty with handwriting, having support for their reading or being given a little extra time to complete assessments.

Assessing the Students' Need for Support in Examinations

The process of getting to know how our students work best and what kind of support they need in order to do so, is the basis for assessing their need for support in examinations. Their normal way of working with support is part of the evidence we need to have when making applications for access arrangements for GCSE examinations. In addition for some arrangements the school must submit the results of assessments carried out by its specialist teacher.