

## **Script for Video: Support for exams for pupils with SEND (special educational needs or disabilities)**

### **Title slide**

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities or temporary injuries may qualify for extra help and adjustments for exams to make sure that they are not at a disadvantage compared to their peers. These are known as 'access arrangements.'

### **Slide 2**

Access arrangements are adjustments for pupils based on evidence of need and on the support which they would normally receive in class.

A pupil does not need to have a diagnostic assessment (such as a formal Dyslexia assessment or medical diagnosis) in order to receive them.

Each year the Joint Council for Qualifications produces new regulations about these access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. You can download this for free if you would like to. This recording draws key points from these regulations.

(The slide shows a screenshot of the title page of these JCQ regulations).

### **Slide 3**

Access arrangements fall into two different categories.

Some can be decided by the school or college based on their assessment of a pupil's needs and their normal way of working in class.

Other arrangements will need advance approval from the Joint Council for Qualifications for exams.

Each application is looked at individually & the evidence required will depend on the pupil's needs and the arrangement required. This may involve some testing.



## Slide 4

For example, a school or college may need to carry out assessment tests for skills like reading, spelling or comprehension, or they may need to test the speed a child can write or process information to see what help your child is entitled to.

Evidence may also be gathered from class teachers or other staff, from other professionals who may be working with the child and the parents and pupil.

## Slide 5

A learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all exams or assessments. For example, some pupils may only need adjustments for the exams which require a lot of writing.

Some learners may have a variety of needs which may require a range of access arrangements. Some of these arrangements may need some practice, like getting used to giving instructions to a scribe.

The Joint Council for Qualifications is clear that 'learners should be fully involved in any decisions about adjustments or adaptations.'

## Slide 6

Common access arrangements granted are for

- Extra time
- Use of a laptop
- A person to read or write for the pupil, or prompt or offer practical assistance
- A paper in Braille or modified and enlarged for a pupil with a visual impairment
- Supervised rest breaks (for example with a pupil with high anxiety or who is highly distractable)
- Assessment materials on coloured paper (for example for a pupil with Irlen's)
- A separate room within the centre (for example for a pupil with high anxiety)
- Alternative site arrangements (for example, for a pupil to take an exam at their home or at a hospital if a medical condition prevents them from taking the exam in the school or college).



## Slide 7

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make 'reasonable adjustments' where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment.

A person is disabled if they have:

'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Study and education related activities are included in the meaning of 'day to day' activities.

## Slide 8

Factors that might have a substantial adverse effect include:

- persistent and significant difficulties in reading and understanding information;
- persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- difficulties understanding or following simple verbal instructions;
- difficulties writing at the same speed as others, for example due a physical impairment

## Slide 9

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

A pupil with Dyslexia is allowed the use of a coloured overlay, a word processor, and is given 25% extra time.

A pupil with Attention Deficit Disorder (or ADD) who has persistent difficulty concentrating and has a poor working memory has supervised rest breaks and the use of a prompter. The prompter may need to physically show where on a page the pupil had been working in, in order to re-start work.

Another example might be a pupil with Asperger's and high anxiety being able to take an exam in a separate room. This might be in a small group of pupils with similar needs.

A pupil with a severe vision impairment has modified enlarged papers and is given 50% extra time. Also, a practical assistant and reader are awarded for any papers which involve complex diagrams and layout.



## Slide 10

Every pupil with SEND will present in a different way and the Joint Council for Qualifications guidance states that:

‘A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.’

## Slide 11

A temporary injury or sudden illness could impact on a young person’s ability to take an exam. Let’s consider a couple of examples.

A Year 11 pupil falls off a bike and injures their writing hand just before a GCSE exam and is unable to write or type.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (or SENCo) processes a temporary application for the use of a scribe.

As the pupil is not used to using a scribe and dictating responses to someone else, 25% extra time is also granted.

## Slide 12

In this next example, a year 13 student suffers a back injury playing rugby and cannot come to school to sit exams.

The SENCo arranges for him to sit his exams at home (through an alternative site arrangement) and for him to have supervised rest breaks, as sitting for long periods of time causes significant discomfort.

During the exam, the student is in severe pain and the invigilator logs this. The exams officer receives the incident log and applies for special consideration to the respective awarding body.

## Slide 13

A special Consideration is different from an Access Arrangement.

It happens **after** an exam has taken place.

It is an adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury such as a broken arm, an illness or another indisposition which the pupil was suffering from at the time of the examination or assessment.



## **Slide 14**

If you think that your child may need extra help the first step is to speak to the class teacher and SENCo. We would encourage you to do this well in advance of the exam, preferably in the autumn term. Many arrangements which need to be formally requested will have deadlines in the spring term before the exam.

You might like to prepare bullet point notes of what your child finds most difficult and which you think may put them at a substantial disadvantage in an exam.

You may have some additional evidence from professionals like reports from a Speech and Language Therapist or Physiotherapist which can be shared with the school or college.

## **Slide 15**

There is more information about inclusion for pupils with SEND on our SENDIASS website in Suffolk, including videos explaining how disabled pupils and those with medical conditions are supported in school.

(The slide shows screenshots of three SENDIASS videos and the Suffolk SENDIASS webpage for education).

## **Slide 16**

This video was made by Suffolk SENDIASS, but every county will have an impartial and confidential SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.