

## **Step-by-Step Parent Guide to Access Arrangements for the Entrance Tests**

Some applicants may require access arrangements when sitting the entrance tests because of a special educational need, disability or temporary injury.

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure that, where possible, barriers to the assessment are removed so that applicants are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with other candidates.

Access arrangements will only be approved where the evidence demonstrates that the arrangement reflects the applicant's **normal way of working in their current school**.

### **Step 1 – Consider whether your child may need access arrangements**

You may wish to apply for access arrangements if your child:

- has a **special educational need or disability** that affects their ability to access the entrance test;
- normally receives **additional support or adjustments in school tests or assessments**;
- has a **temporary injury or medical condition** that may affect them on the day of the test.

If the request relates to a temporary injury or medical condition, please include:

- hospital note or medical letter;
- confirmation of the injury or condition.

Examples of possible access arrangements include:

- 25% extra time
- supervised rest breaks
- separate invigilation or a smaller room
- enlarged papers
- use of coloured overlays (provided by parents)

These examples are not exhaustive and each application is considered individually.

### **Step 2 – Gather the required evidence**

All applications must be supported by **clear evidence** of the applicant's needs.

Parents should submit relevant documentation such as:

- a specialist assessment report (for example for dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty)
- a report or letter from a relevant professional, such as:
  - CAMHS
  - an NHS consultant or psychiatrist
  - an HCPC-registered psychologist
  - a Speech and Language Therapist
  - a Local Authority Educational Psychologist or specialist service
- an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Please note that an EHCP alone does not automatically qualify an applicant for extra time or other arrangements.

The evidence **must** demonstrate how the applicant's difficulty affects their learning and access to assessments.

### Step 3 – Obtain a letter from the school SENDCo

A letter from the SENDCo at your child's current school must be included with the application. Please ask the SENDCo to use the bullet points as a framework for their letter.

This letter must:

- be written on school headed paper;
- explain the applicant's difficulties in the classroom setting to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in the class, as well as tests, summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff;
- outline the support and adjustments currently in place in the classroom;
- confirm that the requested arrangement is the applicant's **normal way of working**.

The information provided should be consistent with the applicant's **Individual Education Plan or Learning Plan** where relevant.

Applications cannot be considered without this evidence.

### Step 4 – Evidence for specific learning difficulties

Where access arrangements are requested for a **specific learning difficulty** (for example dyslexia, dyscalculia or dyspraxia), evidence must include:

- a specialist assessment completed by a suitably qualified professional;
- standardised test scores showing evidence of difficulties affecting **processing speed or reading speed**.

Assessments should usually have been completed **no earlier than the start of Year 4**.

Screening tests alone will not be accepted as sufficient evidence.

### Step 5 – Submit the application by the published deadline

Parents must:

- complete the access arrangements application form in full;
- include all required supporting evidence;
- submit the application **before the published deadline**.

Incomplete or late applications may not be considered.

### What happens after you submit the application?

All applications are reviewed by a panel comprising SENDCos and specialist staff from the schools in the Consortium.

The panel will carefully consider the evidence provided and determine whether access arrangements are appropriate.

The panel must be satisfied that:

- the evidence demonstrates the applicant's difficulty;
- the requested arrangement reflects the applicant's **normal way of working in school**;
- without the arrangement the applicant would be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with other candidates.

Parents will be informed of the outcome after the panel meeting.

### Important points to remember

- Access arrangements are intended to **remove barriers to assessment**, not to provide an advantage.
- Requests must be supported by **clear and appropriate evidence**.
- Decisions about access arrangements are made by the **Consortium panel**, based on the evidence provided.

Please note that this parent guide supports and reflects the Access Arrangements Policy also published on the website.