



# King Edward VI Education Trust

*Encouraging Excellence, Nurturing Talent*

**Examination Access Arrangements for children with learning difficulties;  
other disabilities or impairments, and social emotional difficulties.**

## **Equality of Opportunity**

King Edward's is committed to giving all children an equal chance regardless of their race, colour, creed, sexuality or disability. To this end King Edward's is committed to ensuring that all children are neither positively or negatively disadvantaged.

Within the context of this equality of opportunity the following document aims to set out the framework for access arrangements when pupils undertake any form of testing with King Edward's be that internal examinations; the 11+ examinations or public examinations at GCSE and GCE level.

## **Policy Framework**

The Joint Council for Qualifications [JCQ] guide to Access Arrangements in public examinations is the final end point for all students who join King Edward's and require some form of additional support. Any and all decisions relating to access arrangements for examinations will therefore be taken after due consideration has been given to the guidance provided by JCQ. The JCQ Access Arrangements are updated annually to reflect changes in legislation and best practice: the school will refer to the most up to date version when making its decisions and collate evidence accordingly and in line with the JCQ Policy.

## **Making Decisions to Award Additional Support in Examinations**

The Principal is the final decision maker in determining requests for additional support in examinations but this is routinely delegated through to the SENDCO; Heads of Departments; Examinations Officer and Admissions Officer who have the authority to determine access arrangements within the framework of the guidance provided within this document and by the JCQ Access Arrangements.

## **Determining Access Arrangements**

The JCQ Access Arrangements provided a significant wealth of advice, guidance and technical detail around access arrangements and it is important to note that access arrangements for examinations such as a reader; extra time or rest breaks do not automatically apply to children simply because they have a written report that has identified a specific learning disorder or impairment. Instead the JCQ Access Arrangements are graded according to need and it is when a need is identified as having a **"substantial and long term impact"** that the overwhelming majority of access arrangements are put in place. A child with mild or moderate impairment may simply need additional rest breaks or some form of coloured overlay or access to a laptop, by comparison a child with a substantial impairment may require additional time a lap top and or a reader. The same core-principles above apply in the case of social emotional needs or anxiety/panic disorder. Each individual need will be different and the child's written assessment provides the best starting point to commence the analysis of need against the JCQ Arrangements.

**Where a child has an EHCP or Statement the following guidelines are based on the JCQ guidance.**

1. Children will qualify for additional support in examinations where they have an Education Health Care Plan or Statement of Special Needs that clearly details the types of adjustments that the school **must** make in examinations to help support the child. EHCP's or Statements are typically only given to those children who have a need that is both substantial and long term; they also tend to be very prescriptive and clearly identify the actions that schools must take. Examples of the type of adjustment detailed in the report will include reference to giving a child additional time in examinations; the use of a lap top or coloured overlays or the use of a reader.  
**These statements provide children with an automatic and legal right to the prescribed access arrangements.**

## Where no EHCP or Statement exists then the school's internal guidance can apply:

2. Children may also be *considered* for additional support in examinations even if they do not have an EHCP. However, the onus is on the examination centre/school to be able to evidence the following so as not to negatively prejudice other candidates.

### Learning Difficulties

- a. The child must have a written assessment carried out by a certified assessor who possesses the correct SEND Qualifications Greater authority is ascribed to reports provided by certified local authority/school specialists over a privately commissioned independent report because the former will have worked closely with the school, teacher and the child overtime and will have greater insight into the child's normal working practices. All reports must be dated within two years of the examination to be sat.
- b. The assessment or report must clearly and unequivocally prescribe the additional adjustments that must be made for examinations or tests as distinct from classroom adjustments that must be made by a teacher.
- c. Where there is a vagueness around this the Headmaster will be the final arbiter and will consider the child's report and his or her standardised scores against the appropriate JCQ guidance for awarding additional support.
- d. In addition to this the JCQ guidance places a strong emphasis on the provision of evidence of a child's normal methods of working and that these additional adjustments or support have had a positive impact on progress: this would normally need to be evidenced by the school through a report and/or portfolio of evidence showing the types of support given and linked to evidence of impact on progress i.e. improved outcomes, either quantitative or qualitative e.g. test results or evidence showing improvements in hand writing.

### Social/Emotional Difficulties

- a. The child must have written evidence from their GP; Consultant and/or Healthy Minds demonstrating that they have a long standing; diagnosed mental health condition for which they are **currently** receiving treatment either medication or therapeutic [counselling/CBT/psychotherapy].
- b. The evidence must clearly recommend a specific course of action or set of arrangements in relation to public and school examinations.
- c. Part c & d above will also apply.
- d. The school's frontline methodology for exam anxiety/stress is to equip students with the appropriate coping strategies and these are delivered via the school's Wellness and Spirituality programme; internal and external speakers and via the schools tutoring/counselling/mentoring services: the expectation is that students will apply, use and practice these strategies in the normal examination settings ahead of the public examinations.

## 3. FAQs

### My child has mild or moderate dyslexia do they qualify for extra time?

This is perhaps the most common learning need presented by students and prospective students at King Edward's. In the case of mild or moderate dyslexia point 2 above is the route that the school will use to assess the most appropriate type of access arrangement available for your child.

### Aren't all children who have dyslexia entitled to extra time/adjustments?

No. There are varying degrees of dyslexia from mild to severe. Children who meet the definition of having severe dyslexia do automatically qualify for extra time/adjustments as detailed in the EHCP or Statement. Children who have severe dyslexia but have yet to get an EHCP will also be entitled to extra time as evidenced by their written assessment and the recommendations within it.

### How do I tell how severe my child's dyslexia is?

Your child's dyslexia report should clearly state the level of dyslexia and will usually use words like mild; moderate; borderline or substantial or severe. Where a report is vague about the precise diagnosis - *and many are exceptionally vague when a child is borderline* - the standardised test scores provide a good starting point. As a general guide a child with severe, substantial and profound dyslexia will have most or all scores well below the average score of 84. These children almost always qualify for some form of additional support and it is usually clearly prescribed in the report. A more moderate child may well have many scores within or even above the average score of 84 but may well have one or two scores that are below average. A child with mild dyslexia will have scores above the 84 range but may well have some that are in the 84-90 range.

### What adjustments are normally made for children with differing severities of dyslexia?

All children are treated individually and on the detailed prescription made by the report but as an exceptionally rough guide the following are the types of adjustments that you could reasonably expect the school to consider.

Severity	Test Scores/Range	Reasonable Adjustments
Mild/Minor	90+	Normally limited to classroom adjustments only; possibly overlays or rest breaks if prescribed. Extra time would not normally be considered.
Moderate	84-90	As above with consideration of use of a laptop to support organisation and redrafting. Extra-time will be considered but is not guaranteed as much will depend on scores relating to speed; comprehension and processing: again a written statement about extra time or evidence of normal working and impact is needed.
Substantial/Severe	Well below 84	As prescribed in the EHCP or Assessment, and this could include 25-50% extra time; a reader; lap top; coloured overlays; rest breaks etc. etc.

### Does my child qualify for extra-time for all internal examinations and tests?

Extra-time is something that is given to students in their final public examinations but in order to meet the requirements of an EHCP where this is clearly prescribed then your child will sit all substantial end of year or end of unit tests under the appropriate examination conditions including the allocation of extra-time. Where a test is a less substantial nature then it is more common for departments to adapt the test for those children who may need extra-time e.g. by starting your child on the test earlier than others or by altering the number of questions on a paper or directing your child to start at an appropriate place in the test.

If your child does not have an EHCP directing the school to provide extra time in examinations then route 2 applies. For public examinations the JCQ requires schools to provide evidence collected from Year 9/10 onwards to prove that additional time provided a significant benefit over not being allowed the additional time.

### My child needs a reader does the school provide human readers?

Technology has advanced significantly in this area and the school only rarely provides a human reader and then this will only be in an examination session where an invigilator may be required to act as reader for one or more children in a separate examination room. Exceptions to this are obviously linked to need and where the EHCP unequivocally states that a child MUST have a human reader and CANNOT use or access an electronic reader.

### Why does the school use electronic readers?

We believe that supporting children with learning needs is about helping them towards independence rather than reliance. Electronic readers are widely used; highly effective; portable; less embarrassing for socially aware teenagers and are the normal method of adjustments frequently seen and used at University or in the work place. They are also recommended by many Dyslexic groups for the reasons detailed above.

**My child suffers from anxiety/panic attacks what adjustments are made for these difficulties?**

In the cases of mild to moderate anxiety the school's expectation is that students will learn to apply, practice and use the various anxiety techniques available to them and our first step would be to recommend a refresher course via any of the very good online resources available for anxiety via. MIND or CHILDMIND.org all of these groups recommend CBT and exposure to the fear in order to help children learn how to apply the techniques to reduce their anxiety: *they don't recommend avoidance techniques e.g. separate rooms or different arrangements for examinations.*

However, in the case of well documented; chronic/severe Panic Disorder then the disabling impact of this will already be well evidenced in the school; is likely to be characterised by consistent school refusal and other avoidance techniques and will have involved engagement with Healthy Minds or other professional psychotherapists. In these severe cases students would be entitled to some form of practical additional support/intervention to manage their anxiety and/or the provision of different examination arrangements.