

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

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PART A: Applying for Access Arrangements

1. Who can apply for Access Arrangements?

Parents of children who possess any physical, learning or medical impairment which may impact upon their ability to perform at their best in the assessments may apply for Access Arrangements. This will be for children for whom arrangements have been in place in Primary School up to the end of Primary Six. The most common reasons a candidate might apply for Access Arrangements are listed below, this is not an exclusive list and any physical, learning or medical impairment will be considered.

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- ADHD
- ADD
- Vocal Tics
- Diabetes
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing Loss
- Visual Impairments
- Heart Conditions
- Spina Bifida
- Cerebral Palsy
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Epilepsy
- OCD

Parents of children whose first language is neither English or Irish **and** who have spent less than three years in the United Kingdom and/or Ireland before September 2018 may also apply for Access Arrangements.

2. For what kind of assistance can I apply?

You should refer to our Guidance Notes for Access Arrangements, which can be found on our website under the section 'Access Arrangements' for an extensive list of arrangements that can be requested and examples of appropriate evidence.

3. How should I apply for Access Arrangements?

Parents should tick the box in Section B of the Registration Form and complete the Access Application Form (ACC/18) which should be attached to the Registration Form along with all appropriate evidences. If it is not possible to attach your Access Application Form and evidences along with the Registration Form you should still tick the box in Section B but you may send your application separately as long as it submitted to the AQE Office by **Friday 7th September 2018** at the latest. Access Application Forms are available from the AQE website (www.aqe.org.uk) or hard copies can be posted out from the AQE Office on request.

PART B: For children who possess a physical, learning or medical impairment

4. What evidence should I send?

You should send any evidence that supports your claim. This can include, where appropriate:

- Any medical evidence
- Educational evidence from an educational psychologist (Key Stage 2)
- Evidence from the primary school of the candidate's normal way of working in class up to the end of Primary 6.

More detailed information on examples of appropriate evidence can be found in the Guidance Notes for Access Arrangements, available from our website.

5. I don't have an Educational Psychologist's report from Key Stage 2. What else can I provide as evidence?

Reports from an independent Psychologist or Educational Psychologist's Report from Key Stage 1 will be considered, but you will need strong backing from your Primary School to show your child's normal way of working in the classroom up to the end of Primary Six.

6. Does my child have to sit the assessments if they have a Statement of Special Educational Needs?

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs you should contact your Education Authority to find out if they can be admitted to post-Primary Schools by another route.

Children with a Statement of Special Education Needs can sit the CEA and apply for Access Arrangements but parents should be aware that the Access Committee may not necessarily award as an Access Arrangement all to which the Statemented child is entitled under their statement, because a balance has to be struck between making reasonable adjustments and maintaining fairness and consistency for all candidates.

PART C: For children whose first language is neither English nor Irish and who have spent less than three years in the UK/Ireland before September 2018.

7. My child's first language is neither English nor Irish; can they sit the assessment in their first language?

No. It is only possible to sit the assessments in English and Irish. However if your child's first language is neither English nor Irish and they have spent less than three years in the United Kingdom/Ireland before September 2018 they can apply for Access Arrangements to receive some assistance. Please see points 2 and 3 above, for how you can apply for assistance.

8. What evidence should I send?

You should send any evidence which supports your claim. This should include evidence of entry into the UK/Ireland (for example a passport stamp) where available and a letter from your Primary School confirming the date you enrolled with them and, where possible, confirmation that they transferred from outside the UK/Ireland.

9. My child has just arrived in Northern Ireland from outside the UK/Ireland. Do they have to sit the assessments?

If your child arrives in Northern Ireland in time to register (i.e. before the 7th September 2018), then they should do the assessments and apply for assistance (see above). If your child arrives after the registration period then they cannot sit the assessments, but you should make use of Special Provision to apply for a grammar school. (See the section on our website regarding 'Special Circumstances/Provision').

10. My child has been educated elsewhere in the UK/Ireland but has spent less than three years in Northern Ireland, can we apply for assistance?

Access Arrangements are granted to children who have been educated outside of the UK/Ireland **and** whose first language is neither English or Irish, therefore children educated within the UK/Ireland for more than three years before September 2018 do not normally meet the criteria for Access Arrangements. If your child is not eligible for assistance through Access Arrangements, it may be possible for parents to ask for special consideration later on in the process. For more information you should see the section of our website entitled 'Special Circumstances and Provision'.

11. My child's first language is neither English/Irish but they have been educated in the UK/Ireland for more than three years before September 2018, can we apply for assistance?

Please see point 10.

12. My child's first language is English/Irish but they have been educated in the UK/Ireland for less than three years before September 2018, can we apply for assistance?

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PART D: The Access Arrangements procedure, following an application.

13. I have submitted my Access Application Form (ACC/18) and evidences. What happens now?

Your application will be considered by the Access Committee. The Access Committee will meet on several occasions between the middle of June and middle of September 2018. Therefore, any applications submitted in May will not be considered until the first meeting in June. Each case is submitted to the next scheduled Access Committee meeting, after it is received by the office. Cases will only be considered by the Access Committee when all evidences have been submitted.

14. How will I be informed of the outcome of my application?

The AQE Office will write to you informing you of the assistance granted to your child. You do not have to do anything further as the AQE Office will also inform your child's assessment centre in time for preparations to be made.

15. What can I do if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my application?

If your application has been turned down due to insufficient evidence you are able to submit further evidence for re-consideration. Details of how to do this will be included with your outcome.

If you feel the assistance granted to your child does not meet what was requested **nor what was outlined in the evidence you provided** please contact the AQE Office for advice on how to appeal. Please be aware

that a balance has to be struck between making reasonable adjustments and maintaining fairness and consistency for all candidates.

16. I need to change/adjust/cancel or add to the assistance already granted for my child by the Access Committee, how can I do this?

Any requests for adjustments, changes or additions to already granted Access Arrangements should be made in writing to the AQE Office along with any supplementary evidences where appropriate. This correspondence will then be submitted to the next Access Committee meeting for consideration.

If you wish to cancel any or all arrangements granted for your child you should inform the AQE Office of this in writing, please bear in mind that letters should be written and signed by the **first contact on the original Registration Form.**