



Access Arrangements Policy Statement

May 2020

1. Introduction

AQE Ltd was formed with the purpose of providing a testing platform (Common Entrance Assessment) by means of which its member schools may allocate places to Year 8. A child who might otherwise be prevented from taking the Common Entrance Assessment or whose performance is likely to be affected by illness, injury or disability may be granted Access Arrangements. An Access Arrangement will only be granted to provide a reasonable adjustment in the case of significant need. An example of an Access Arrangement would be the provision of an enlarged paper for a child with a visual impairment or extra time for a child with a specific learning difficulty.

2. Rationale

AQE Ltd is committed to ensuring that children suffering from a disability are protected under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by making reasonable adjustments, if appropriate, to the process of internal organisation and arrangements for conduct of the Common Entrance Assessment (CEA). Indeed, a child does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the DDA 1995) to be allowed an Access Arrangement if such an arrangement is shown to be appropriate for that child.

In applying this rationale AQE Limited may refer to Special Education Needs legislation (NI) as guidance.

3. Implementation

i. Parental Responsibility

Parents who are applying for Access Arrangements must ensure that all relevant information, including appropriate evidence of significant need, is submitted to AQE Ltd by the deadline specified on the AQE Ltd website. Such evidence must be in accordance with the requirements specified in the guidance issued to the parents (AQE Ltd website). **Any late applications will only be considered if the evidence was not available at the time of the deadline date or due to mitigating circumstances supported by independent evidence.**

ii. AQE Ltd Responsibility

AQE Ltd will convene an Access Panel to consider each application for Access Arrangements. The Panel will consist of suitably qualified and experienced professionals. Each application will be assessed on the information and evidence provided by parents. Access Arrangements will allow candidates with special

educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessments without affecting the integrity of the assessments. Reasonable adjustments will only be granted by the Access Panel where there is appropriate evidence of significant need and they are operationally and financially feasible.

iii. Centre Responsibility

An Assessment Centre is responsible for putting into place the reasonable adjustments agreed by the Access Panel. Assessment Centres will receive details of candidates with Access Arrangements, who are to sit the CEA tests in the Centres as soon as possible, to ensure appropriate procedures are put in place. Late applications for Access Arrangements due to emergency situations or additional new information will be processed and Centres informed as quickly as possible.

iv. Appeals Process

Whilst the decision of the Access Panel is usually final an appeal may be considered if there are sufficient grounds supported by appropriate independent evidence. Parents may appeal the decision of the Access Panel by writing to the Joint CEO of AQE Limited, setting out clearly the grounds for an appeal. The appeal will be considered by an Independent Appeals Panel, which will write to the parents outlining its decision. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

4. Review

The Policy Statement will be reviewed annually and approved by the Board of Directors of AQE Ltd.

Date of Review	Type of Review	Date Approved by Board
April 2020	New Policy	06/05/20