



**the ST LAWRENCE academy**

## DDA Policy - Examinations

Within the academy we strive to create a learning environment, curriculum, experiences and relationships in which all individuals can find expression, be nourished and developed.

The academy commits itself to creating an environment for everyone that is characterised by our core values of Truth, Justice, Forgiveness, Generosity and Respect. These values have been used to determine this policy.

### **Rationale**

The following extract from the DfE's briefing sheet for exams officers, "*Improving access and meeting the requirements of candidates*" underlines the work which must be done to ensure that any candidate, regardless of their disability, should not be prevented from accessing opportunities and achieving their full potential.

*"It is a fundamental part of the requirements of the DDA that barriers which may prevent candidates from accessing opportunities and achieving their full potential are removed. This is a process which needs to be considered for the whole of the candidate journey, from provider attitudes, behaviour, policy and publicity relating to examinations to the receipt of results."*

The work undertaken by SENCo's and exams officers already significantly addresses the requirements of the DDA as we have to follow the arrangements as set down by the *Access arrangements and special consideration: regulations and guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations* document as set down by JCQ and any other awarding body documentation not covered by the JCQ .

Again, taken from "*Improving access and meeting the requirements of candidates*":

*"The first and primary point to make is the need for exams officers to establish and maintain a good positive working relationship which ensures that there are clear lines of communication with special educational needs departments or heads of department. You, together with heads of department, will need to provide evidence to support an application for access arrangements and ensure that appropriate arrangements and facilities are made available which meet the requirements of any candidate with a disability."*

By the very nature of the way that academy operates, the small staff and the close working relationships between the SENCo and the departments, we are far along the road of providing the best of opportunities for those students who might face barriers to learning.

We have close working relationships with parents and seek to provide those students who may find the academic life a challenge, with a good deal of support. Where need arises, students are tested either internally (e.g. for Dyslexia) or advised to seek external testing, and appropriate decisions and practices put into place within the learning environment, with close consultation with parents, to ensure that every student achieves the very best of what they are capable.

We have a number of students who have specific and identified learning needs. The appropriate provisions for them have been made to allow each student the best opportunity during their examinations. Each student has been awarded extra time (25%). Where extra time is concerned, staff are advised of the specific need for each student and classroom practice is adjusted accordingly.

This document seeks to work through terms of the DDA and show how we are meeting the needs of those students who may require special consideration currently, as well as those who might join the academy at a later date.

### **Ensuring that the examination centre is accessible**

Exam centres are required to be accessible to meet the terms of the DDA, not least if there may be instances where candidates are external to the exam centre.

### **The building**

<b>Statement of need</b>	<b>Current provision</b>
Ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the examination rooms are well lit.	The St Lawrence Academy is a brand new building completed in 2013 . The corridors are well lit either by natural light or by fluorescent lighting. The main examination room (Hall) is well lit in all directions leading to and away from the room.
Lighting should be checked for suitability both during the day and for evenings.	The caretaker is charged with ensuring that the lighting is fit for purpose and operational at all times the academy is in operation.
Lighting should be evenly distributed, ensuring that it does not cause glare and shadows. This is particularly important for people with a visual impairment or with perceptual difficulties.	The lighting is important for vocational lessons. Hence, a lot of time has been spent ensuring the lighting is even at all times in the rooms.
Ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those candidates with epilepsy.	The use of fluorescent lighting in any room can, when it malfunctions, cause flickering. As the hall, the main examination room, has many windows, the main source of lighting during the summer is natural light.
Use tactile surfaces to highlight any steps, stairways or changes in level.	The stairs in the building have, on their lip, special surfaces (raised slightly) which enable people to identify that they are stairs. The front of each stair is painted a different colour from the rest of the stair to ensure they are visually clear.
Make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors to enable a wheelchair to gain easy access.	There are no obstacles in any of the corridors. At this time, the academy does not have any students who require disabled access. In the case that we did have a student join us who needed to sit examinations and made use of a wheelchair, we can accommodate wheelchair access in the main hall.

If at all possible, try to arrange examination rooms on the ground floor of buildings, and at the very least ensure that they are located near emergency exits.	The best room for holding examinations to allow for the best lighting, space and reduction of noise levels, and mobility issues is the hall. Consequently, it is felt that this is the best room to use.
Where a private room has been arranged for an examination, check that the environment is suitable for the candidate. For example, is there enough room for a wheelchair and its supports? Is the decoration likely to result in discomfort or hyper nervous stimulation if the candidate has autism?	The room used for examinations is large enough to accommodate 150 students and caters for mobility issues. There are limited displays around the walls. Alternative smaller rooms are also suitable.
Ensure that those who need to take medication during the course of an examination can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible.	Any student who needs to leave an examination room will do so under normal examination guidelines for students who need to leave. An adult will follow the student where they will be able to make use of the Medical Room (a private room with access by one door).
Try to arrange examination rooms which are close to an accessible toilet. Be aware that many candidates may need adult changing facilities in the accessible toilet.	Should a student require the use of a toilet, they will need to make their way to a toilet on the ground floor, accompanied by a member of staff.
Lighting in toilets should be adjustable as this is essential for candidates who are blind.	Lighting within the toilets/changing rooms is sufficient to ensure students can get changed and use the facilities properly.
Mirrors should be used sparingly in an accessible toilet as they can add to the confusion of perceptual problems.	There are limited mirrors in the toilets.
Check that there is also a facility to open the door in an accessible toilet from the outside in an emergency.	All locks are openly accessibly from the outside in the event of needing to gain access in an emergency
Centres should ensure that both disabled candidates and staff are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures to ensure that disabled candidates can be safely evacuated from the building whatever their disability or impairment.	The evacuation procedures are provided to all students and staff before an examination series. In the event of an emergency whilst using the ground floor there is an out of the main entrance into the academy which also allows for wheel chair access. It will be made clear that the disabled candidates will need to be given the required assistance in the event of an emergency.

## Seating

Statement of need	Current provision
If you know that a candidate may become unwell during the examination because of the nature of their disability, try to ensure that you seat them close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit disruption for others.	Standard practice at the start of the examination series is to ensure that those candidates who may be unwell are seated next to the door such that they can exit the room with the least amount of disruption.
Make sure that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a	Students who may require the use of a wheelchair will be allocated a seat near the

candidate (or invigilator) who uses a wheelchair to enter and leave the area without difficulty.	main entrance to the room. There will always be a minimum of 1.25m between chairs and tables. If space permits, there will be more space given to those students in wheelchairs.
Make sure that there are chairs available outside examination rooms to enable those with mobility issues or those who may simply be experiencing particular stress to sit and rest before they enter the examination.	As students congregate in the central atrium before the examination, there is seating provided for students. Seating will be made available to any students who might have mobility issues before an examination in the corridor area.
Ensure that seating is appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability that affects seating and posture.	Where we admit students where seating and posture might be an issue, we will do all we can to ensure that there is seating available which meets their needs.

## Signage

Statement of need	Current provision
Make sure that all the signs for the examination and those provided by JCQ are suitably sized and adapted to meet the needs of candidates with a disability.	All signs are produced in both A4 and A3 format and displayed throughout the academy to enable those students who might have visual impairments the opportunity to read and access the text.
Sign content should be simple, short and easily understood.	All signs produced are simple, short and easily understood.
Text and lettering should be in a clear, uncomplicated and reasonably sized font (12pt). Sans serif fonts such as Arial are recommended.	The academy uses Arial, size 10pt, for all their documentation and communications with parents and students.
The style, wording and design of signs should be consistent throughout the exam centre. This will help candidates to easily recognise signs as they move around the building.	All signs are, where possible, produced to the same standards and the same layout and design.
Signage should combine raised text, pictorial symbols, arrows and Braille.	Signage is in Braille where necessary.
Braille signs should have a small tactile arrow on the left side.	All Braille signs have a small tactile arrow on the left side.
The colour of signs should contrast with the colour of the walls.	All examination signs are displayed in a suitable notice board with a bold red background. They are a stark contrast to the colours of the walls and are easily identifiable.
Signage should be placed at consistent heights.	All signs are placed at chest height to ensure that all students have the best opportunity to view them.
Make sure that signs which identify examination rooms are situated on the wall in case the door is open when a candidate needs to see the sign.	Signs are placed beside doors or when placed on doors are clearly visible whether the door is open or closed.

<p>Floor plans should be placed at main entrances and at designated areas within buildings, such as outside lifts and close to stairways. These should have easily distinguishable symbols to locate areas and should include instructions for visually impaired candidates to enable them to locate lifts, staircases, accessible toilets and examination rooms.</p>	<p>Floor plans are displayed throughout the academy for all staff and students to access.</p>
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## Emergency evacuation

Statement of need	Current provision
<p>Think about evacuation procedures and ensure that all staff, including invigilators, know what procedures are in place for those with a disability, in particular for those who may need assistance to leave a building.</p>	<p>Invigilators, at the time of an examination, will be aware of which students might need assistance with leaving the examinations room should there be an emergency. The academy has specific exit strategies and all invigilators are aware of them and will put them into place.</p>
<p>Procedures should be in place so that staff and invigilators know who is responsible for responding to emergency calls.</p>	<p>All invigilators know that it is the responsibility of the principal/vice principal to make the call in light of an emergency. All students will remain in the room until such a time as either the principal or the vice principal advise them otherwise (either in person or via the communications systems in place).</p>
<p>Make sure that when evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to candidates, attention is given to appropriate explanation for those with a disability whose arrangements may be different.</p>	<p>Students have the processes detailed in their examinations handbook (given at the start of each examinations year). This is also explained to them in assemblies before the examinations season starts. Those students who might have specific learning difficulties or disabilities which might require them to have instructions explained in a different format will be spoken individually.</p>
<p>Fire alarms which have both aural and visual alerts should be installed. Consider making arrangements for a flashing visual alarm and/or a handheld vibrating alarm. Visit the Deaf Alerter website at <a href="http://www.deaf-alerter.com/website.htm">www.deaf-alerter.com/website.htm</a>.</p>	<p>In the event of an alarm, all students will be made aware of the fact an alarm is in progress using whichever many methods required to assist those with learning/auditory/visual disabilities.</p>
<p>Pictorial symbols should be included on all fire evacuation signs. This will help people with learning difficulties, people with dementia and people who have difficulty reading English.</p>	<p>The academy use the current legally acceptable signage with regards to fire exit and evacuation. Students should be able to follow the signs, or the instructions of the members of staff/invigilators.</p>
<p>All fire exit signs should indicate which exits are suitable for wheelchair users.</p>	<p>In the event of a wheelchair user sitting an examination at the academy, all side exits from the hall are accessible to wheelchair users. Ramps are available where necessary.</p>
<p>Ensure that all ground floor exits are level and are accessible to wheelchair users.</p>	<p>The main exit from the ground floor is at floor level and accessible to wheelchairs.</p>

<p>Make sure that staff are aware of where any 'evacuation' chairs are and that the chairs are located at identifiable points. All staff should be trained in using them.</p>	<p>The academy does not, at this time, have an evacuation chair. There will be measures put into place, and sufficient training, to ensure that any person who requires evacuation, will be able to do so without the use of an evacuation chair. We will, however, look into the possibility of purchasing such things in the future.</p>
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## Resources

Statement of need	Current provision
<p>Where computers are being used for an examination, ensure that hardware and software has been properly adapted and tested for those who may use them, such as people with a visual or aural impairment.</p>	<p>For on-screen tests the academy will use all available tools to ensure fair and appropriate access to computer facilities for our students.</p>
<p>Ensure that there are backups and alternatives in case support equipment ceases to function.</p>	<p>We have current back up of all systems within the academy at regular intervals. We have technical support available on a 'needs basis'.</p>

## Review

In order to ensure that it reflects current best practice, this policy will be reviewed every year.

The next review date is: September 2015

## Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations:

The following checklist, which is not an exhaustive one, has been produced as a good practice guide for centres.

<b>A Training invigilators</b>	
1.	Ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues.
2.	As part of the training process make sure that invigilators are aware of policies and procedures relating to emergency evacuation and medication, especially where they relate to candidates with a disability.
3.	Ensure that invigilators are aware of alternative means of communication, especially in the exam room when conveying information to disabled candidates.
<b>B Information for candidates</b>	
1.	Ensure that information supplied to candidates with a disability, such as JCQ Information for candidates, are suitably sized and adapted.
<b>C Seating arrangements</b>	
1.	Make sure that there are chairs available outside the examination rooms to enable those with a disability or those candidates who may simply be experiencing extreme stress or anxiety, to sit and rest before they enter the examination.
2.	Ensure that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a candidate (or an invigilator) who uses a wheelchair to enter and leave the room without difficulty.
3.	If you know that a candidate may become unwell during the examination due to the nature of their disability, try to ensure that you seat them close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit any disruption to others within the examination room.
4.	Ensure that the seating is both appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects sitting and posture.
<b>D Candidates requiring access arrangements</b>	
1.	Where a candidate has been granted the use of an Oral Language Modifier, a reader or a scribe, ensure that those individuals who will be acting as an Oral Language Modifier, a reader or a scribe are introduced to the candidate prior to the examination(s) taking place. This is particularly important for those candidates with autism, who will find it difficult to relate to someone who is a stranger.
2.	Where a candidate has been granted supervised rest breaks, try to ensure that the rest areas are suitably comfortable as well as maintaining the security of the examination. Supervised rest breaks will apply to those candidates who suffer from fatigue, hyperactivity, obsessive compulsive disorders or long term health conditions.
3.	Where a candidate has been granted the use of a prompter, it is important that the person appointed to act as a prompter is aware of disability etiquette, particularly when touching the candidate's desk as a means of a prompt, or tapping the candidate's arm or shoulder. This will apply to those candidates with autism who may have difficulty with time.
4.	For on-screen tests, ensure that hardware and software have been adapted for those candidates with a visual or aural impairment.
<b>E Emergency evacuation procedures</b>	
1.	Invigilators and all other centre staff involved in conducting examinations should be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures in place for those candidates with a disability who may need assistance in leaving the building.
2.	When evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to candidates, attention should be given to those candidates with a disability, for whom such procedures may be different.