

# **ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS SITTING**

## **EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS**

Sir William Ramsay School must adhere to the stringent conditions of The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), when entering students for their formal examinations, this includes students who have specific access arrangements in place. These access arrangements allow students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment.

Currently, we have students with the following access arrangements: extra time, movement breaks, readers, scribes, prompts and the use of ICT. Access arrangements are determined on an individual basis and are based on assessment evidenced by trained staff recognised by JCQ. The access arrangement assessments are set by JCQ and not the school. We have to send in the assessment evidence when applying for access arrangements for each student.

In the exams, students are being assessed on their ability to manage their time along with specific subject knowledge. This means that the staff invigilating are prohibited from informing students of 'how much time is remaining', during an exam. There will be one announcement stating, "You have 5 minutes remaining!", this announcement applies to students with access arrangements (other than those with a prompt) so they cannot have additional time reminders.

### **STUDENTS ENTITLED TO - SUPERVISED REST BREAKS**

The timing of the exam will be paused when the student starts their rest break and will re-start when the student is ready to continue. The student can choose when they want to take a rest break.

Students can take a break and either:

- Remain inside the exam room, sitting at his/her desk and have time to pause or stretch.

or

- Leave the exam room, go to and remain in a pre-agreed set place.
  - In this instant an invigilator must always accompany the student and very closely supervise the student. The exam cannot be discussed, and the student remains in exam conditions throughout the break.

During the supervised rest break, whether completed within the exam room or exiting the room, the student must not have access to the question paper/answer booklet. Their answer booklet will remain under the supervision of other invigilators.

There is no limit on the number of breaks or the duration of it however, restrictions may have to be put in place if a student has more than one examination in a day. Equally, the duration of a break is dependent upon the number of staff available.

## STUDENTS ENTITLED TO - A READER

Some students meet the criteria to have support with their reading during examinations. At Sir William Ramsay all students meeting this requirement will have access to a reader pen.

A reader pen allows students to read the exam questions themselves. They scan the pen over the text need to have read and then listen via headphones as it is repeated back. The discrete headphones mean that other students are not disturbed, and the reader pen we have available for students is approved by JCQ.

Some students who are unable to use this equipment e.g. students with cochlear implants, will have access to a 'live' human reader. A 'live' reader at Sir William Ramsay School is a responsible, fully trained Learning Support Assistant or other adult who reads the instructions of the exam paper and the questions to the student in an exam. During the reading section of the English language paper a 'live' human reader is not allowed. This is because a human reader can add nuance and meaning (vocal interpretation) that a reader pen does not. A reader is only able to read text, the text cannot be explained.

- A reader **cannot** see the paper in advance of the examination. They are seeing and reading out the question, to the student, for the first time.
- A reader **can work with more than one student** where students require only occasional words or phrases to be read. Students will need to put up their hand when requesting help with reading. Three or four students may share one reader.

The regulations for a human reader in an exam are as follows:

- The reader may read numbers printed in figures unless the reading of such digits will give an unfair advantage.
- From 2019/20 human readers can now decode symbols and unit abbreviations in Maths and Science. It would be expected that this level of support would be for a student who is unable to independently access any of the text and symbols in questions such as; a student with such a visual impairment who cannot read Braille, cannot access tactile diagrams or, due to the severity of their impairment, cannot access the standard modified enlarged papers. It would not be expected that a reader would decode symbols or unit abbreviations for most students who qualify for a 'live' human reader at Sir William Ramsay school. Decoding means naming the symbol and does not involve explaining when or how the symbol
- The reader should point to symbols e.g. in Mathematics papers  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$  and not decode unless fitting the criteria outlined above.
- The reader may only read back what the student has written, when requested – they are not allowed to point out errors.
- The reader may give the spelling of a word if contained within the text, otherwise spelling cannot be given.
- The reader must read accurately, though human error can occur.
- The reader can only read the instructions of the exam paper and the questions – they must not explain or clarify any part of the text/question.
- The reader must only repeat the instructions of the paper if asked to do so.
- For an exam paper testing reading, such as the reading section of the English Language GCSE, the reader can only read the instructions and rubric of a paper and cannot read individual questions or text.

- The reader cannot advise the student which questions to complete, when to move on to another question or the order in which questions should be answered.
- The reader cannot decode symbols e.g. in Mathematics papers  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$  cannot be read as 'a squared plus b squared equals c squared' symbols must be pointed to.
- Extra time may be added to an exam where the student has a reader - this depends upon the reason for the reader. Students/parents/carers will be told on an individual basis if the entitlement includes extra time.

**Please note - All students must say immediately, during an exam, if they experience problems communicating with or understanding their 'live' reader or experience technical difficulties with their reader pen. It is the student's responsibility to say if they want something re-read to them.**

### **STUDENTS ENTITLED TO- A SCRIBE**

A scribe at Sir William Ramsay School is a responsible, fully trained Learning Support Assistant or other adult who writes/types the students dictated answer to questions, during exams. A scribe cannot perform tasks that are part of the assessment process e.g. in a Design & Technology paper a scribe cannot draw a graph or diagram. A scribe cannot see the paper before the exam begins.

The regulations for a scribe are as follows:

- A scribe must write or type accurately and only what the student says.
- A scribe will only write punctuation if told to by the student, e.g. the student must say words such as "full stop", "comma" etc. In a very small number of cases, the student does not have to say "comma" etc, but they lose all on their spelling, punctuation and grammar marks for that paper.
- A scribe can only draw or add labels to maps strictly in accordance with the student's instructions.
- Subject specific keywords have to be spelt out by the student - it is their responsibility that the scribe writes these words correctly.
- A scribe must write, or word process a correction if asked to do so by the candidate.
- A scribe cannot advise the student on which question to do, when to move on or the order in which to answer questions.
- A scribe can, at the students request, read back what has been recorded.
- A student making use of a scribe will be awarded with 25% extra time to compensate for dictation.

**Please note - All students must say immediately during an examination if they experience problems communicating with their scribe.**

- A reader and/or scribe are not permitted in Modern Foreign Language Papers.
- A reader and scribe can be the same person.

## **STUDENTS GRANTED WITH - EXTRA TIME**

It may be necessary to grant some students with additional time in their exams. This may be due to medical needs, a learning disability, sensory needs, social, mental or emotional needs. The granting of extra time is carefully evidenced, so as not to give an unfair advantage, and must be sent to the Exam Boards.

- Students with extra time can sit their exams in the Main Hall, with appropriate invigilation put in place to allow for this.
- Some students with extra time sit their exams in the SEN rooms as they have other requirements alongside their extra time - appropriate invigilation is still put in place.
- Timetabling of the exams allows for extra time during both internal formal mocks and external examinations but can mean that break or lunch times, for individuals, are adjusted (including shortened) to facilitate the additional time.
- Extra time is not allowed in exams that are 'testing the time' in which a skill is performed, and the timing is an explicit part of the assessment objective, such as a musical performance or a sport.
- Extra time and rest breaks are different and must not be confused.
- A student is not required to use their extra time: Students can use some, none or all the additional time permitted.
- Students with extra time will be dismissed separately, from the main cohort of students in the SEN rooms.

## **STUDENTS ENTITLED TO - A PROMPT**

A prompter may be permitted where a student is deemed to have a substantial and long-term adverse impairment, resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating.

For example, the student may:

- have little or no sense of time (e.g. candidates with ADHD or ASD)
- or
- persistently lose concentration

In these instances, the student may be assisted by a prompter who can keep the candidate focused on the need to answer a question and then move on to answering the next question.

- The prompter may tell the student how much time remains.
- Gentle tap them on the arm to reengage them.
- If housed separately, the prompter can address the student by name and re-focus his/her attention.
- A student with just a prompt does not get extra time for the exam.

## STUDENTS ENTITLED TO - ICT

The Joint Council for Qualifications policy on the use of word processors during examinations is clear.

Sir William Ramsay School cannot allow a student to complete exams using ICT simply because: -

- it is their preferred method of recording information
- they use a laptop at home
- they work faster on one

Using a word processor must reflect the students '**normal way of working in school**' and cannot be deemed to give an unfair advantage. The school has to provide the required evidence to the Exam Boards to allow a student to use ICT.

Students completing exams using a word processor have been identified because of one or more of the following criteria:

- A learning difficulty that has substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- A medical condition.
- A physical disability.
- A sensory impairment.
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
- Poor/illegible handwriting.

The above list is not exhaustive.

- Students can complete all their exam on the word processor or choose to write in both the answer booklet and the computer.
  - A formal declaration must be completed at the end of the exam by the student as to how they have written their answers. Students must be clear about the way they have recorded their answers.
- When the exam is complete students must be present to identify their work and watch it be printed by staff.
- Students are required to complete the front of the answer booklet by hand.
  - Full name, centre number and candidate number (plus any additional information required by specific exam boards).
- Students must also complete a 'Header' or 'Footer' to appear on each page of the word document.
  - This must include; **unit/component code, centre number, candidate number**.
  - Each page of typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6.
- Students must label/number their answers clearly - any work that they do not want marked must be crossed through or deleted.
- Students are required to complete all work in **black** using **Arial** font number **12**

- Students must also ensure their work is recorded using **double line spacing**.
- Students must ensure that they **continually save** their work throughout the exam.
  - The invigilators cannot remind them. If they do not save their work and it is lost e.g. due to network issue, there is nothing that can be done.
- Students will be assisted in creating the folder to save their work in, prior to the start of the exam.
- Students using ICT will enter the exam room first to enable ICT to be 'set up'.
- Spellcheck is disabled on the word processors and students have no access to their previous work.
- Students are issued with unique logins for exams.
- Students using ICT may get extra time depending upon the reason for the use of ICT.
  - Students/parents/carers will be told on an individual basis if the entitlement includes extra time.