WENTWORTH COLLEGE

Disability Access to Examinations Policy

Approved by: Manuel Guimaraes, Principal

Last Review: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Disability Access to Examinations Policy

For the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. More specifically this might include sensory impairments, mobility difficulties, medical conditions, learning difficulties and mental health problems.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to establish and maintain clear lines of communication with colleagues directly involved with the requirements of candidates who fall under the heading of disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010. These lines of communication extend to invigilators so that everyone involved with the examinations is clear as to their responsibilities under the Act.

Communication with invigilators will normally be done by general oral briefing of invigilating staff, a requirement that they read the ICE document and/or by written communication. Attention will be drawn to the relevant needs of specific candidates on the day of their examination. Invigilators will also be briefed in evacuation procedures and alternative means of communication with candidates. For public examinations, this policy is subject to the requirements of the JCQ.

The majority of the examinations at the College are taken in Room 1. A designated classroom is used as a private examination room and clash candidate room. The specialist examination rooms include Drama Room, MFL room and Art room. Ensuring that examination rooms are accessible falls under the general requirement for these rooms, which have other specific purposes during the school year.

We will:

- ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the rooms are well lit
- check lighting for suitability both during the day and for evenings
- check that lighting is evenly distributed, ensuring as far as possible that it does not cause glare and shadows, especially when there are candidates with a visual impairment or with perceptual difficulties
- ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those candidates with epilepsy
- make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors to enable a wheelchair to gain easy access

When there is a candidate whose disability requires it, we undertake to make the reasonable adjustments required which may include:

● arranging examination rooms which are close to an accessible toilet

● ensuring the suitability of private rooms arranged for candidates; for example, that so far as is possible the decoration is not likely to result in discomfort or hyper-nervous stimulation if the candidate has autism, and that the room is warm/cool enough

● ensuring 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

● ensuring that those who need to take medication during the course of an examination can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible, usually by leaving them with the office

● ensuring that a candidate who may become unwell during the examination because of the nature of their

disability, is seated close to the door to make them feel more comfortable and so that they can exit quickly and to limit disruption for others

● ensuring 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

Signs

It is the duty and responsibility of the EO to establish good lines of communication with the candidates. In terms of accessibility, this has an impact on examination signage. In particular we undertake to ensure that

● in the event of the presence of candidates from outside the College, arrangements are made for them to be accompanied to the examination room

● wherever possible signage will be placed at consistent heights

● signs which identify examination rooms are situated on the wall in case the door is open when a candidate needs to see the sign

● 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

● sign content will be simple, short and easily understood

It is the duty of the EO to ensure that all practical steps are taken and all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that the centre is appropriate for candidates with a disability. The EO will take

steps to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure, so far as is possible, a level playing field with other candidates. These adjustments might include:

● modified test papers, for example enlarged print or braille

● up to 25 per cent extra time (more if a candidate's disability is of a profound and extensive nature)

● a reader or scribe. Where necessary steps will be taken to introduce the candidate to the scribe before the examination

● supervised rest breaks. Candidates with hyperactivity or obsessive compulsive disorders may need opportunities to take a break and rest during an exam. This may also be the case for candidates who suffer from fatigue or long-term conditions such as cancer. We will do our best to ensure that these rest areas are suitably comfortable while still remaining secure for the purposes of the exam process

● different coloured scripts

● use of a bilingual dictionary

● a prompter. In some cases where a candidate may have difficulty with time, for example if a candidate has autism, a prompter will be able to assist the candidate to move on and not become fixated with a particular question at the expense of the whole paper. Prompters will be made aware of disability etiquette, particularly if they will need to touch a desk to prompt

● use of a computer or other technology

● use of an individual room

In revising this policy, the Examinations Officer will seek out the opinions of representatives of those candidates to whom the policy applies.