

# SEND Bulletin

Mar 2023 Issue 3



## Access Arrangements:

What are they and who gets them?

**What:** Access Arrangements (AA), are an adjustment to a student's exam to mitigate an underlying specific need. The 'rules' behind AAs are set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the exams regulator, who is responsible as to what counts as a Reasonable Adjustment. Their guidance is updated each year.

**Who:** AAs can only be applied by a Level 7 assessor (E Ruddock) following a battery of assessments in which the learner demonstrates that they require a modification to their exam to ensure they have fair access (as per the Equality Act 2010). Students may also use medical evidence where relevant.

All AAs applied for must be the student's "normal way of working"; for example if the student does not have a reader in all lessons, then they should not have one in exams.

**Access arrangements include (but are not limited to):** extra time, separate invigilation, word processor, reader, scribe, prompter, supervised rest breaks, fidgets, modified papers, bi-lingual dictionaries, read aloud, ear plugs

**Referral:** If you feel that a student requires AAs for their assessments please contact the SEND team, the earlier the better as all arrangements should be in place by the end of year 10.

If you are aware that a student has agreed access arrangements, then please ensure you allow them to use these in class to maintain their normal way of working. Please contact me if you require any further information regarding AAs.

## Key dates:

- 22.03.2023: SEND Review update
- 17.04.2023: Phonics and reading CPD

## Meet the Team



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# Spotlight on ...

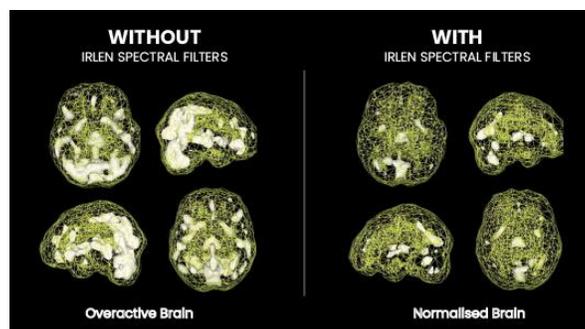
## Irlen Syndrome

Irlen Syndrome is a type of visual or perceptual processing disorder. Someone with a visual or perceptual processing disorder has difficulty making sense of visual information. This is different from problems involving sight or vision. When an individual suffers from Irlen Syndrome, their brain has difficulty processing certain wavelengths of light. In this way, light (especially bright and fluorescent lighting) becomes a stressor on the brain. This stress causes certain parts of the brain to become overactive. It is this over-activity and inability to effectively process visual stimuli that creates a variety of visual, physical, cognitive, emotional, and neurological symptoms.

Light sensitivity is very common with Irlen Syndrome.

Irlen Syndrome is hereditary and tends to run in families, affecting males and females equally. However, an individual can also acquire symptoms of Irlen Syndrome as a result of illness, medical procedures, or traumatic brain injury (or concussion).

Like Autism, Irlen Syndrome is a spectrum disorder, falling on a continuum from slight to severe.



Symptoms of Irlen Syndrome are wide and varied but often include:

- Reading problems- losing place, misreading words, skips words or lines, very slow reading, words may seem distorted
- Discomfort- Headaches and nausea, fidgety and restless, eyes that hurt and become watery
- Writing issues- struggle to copy writing, unequal spacing and letter size, inconsistent spelling, writing up or downhill
- Depth perception- difficulty catching, judging distances and clumsiness

Support strategies:

- Access to natural light wherever possible- could the student sit near the window?
- Avoid any copying from the board
- Avoid black on white, including whiteboard pens
- Change the background colour of the smartboard
- Provide a printout of the PowerPoint if possible
- Work provided in students preferred colour
- Allow rest breaks

## What happens in interventions?

Interventions take place weekly to support our students to overcome their barriers to learning.

All staff on the SEND Team report on intervention progress using our Provision Map software. This information can be found on each students' profile. Please ask a member of the team if you need help locating it!