

ISEB COMMON ENTRANCE (CE) ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Pupil assessment is evolving, and ISEB is committed to providing schools, teachers, parents and pupils with the best research, assessment designs, access arrangement guidance and new features to support all children.

When reviewing our assessments, we commissioned research from leading neuroscientists that make provision for those with SEND and neurodiverse children. Using that underpinning research, we can confidently provide schools and parents with guidelines to help ensure that access arrangement decisions are fair to all.

ISEB's core values are to accept, transform and inspire. These values underpin the widely researched ISEB CE Access Arrangement guidelines.

WHY HAS ISEB PRODUCED ITS OWN GUIDANCE FOR CE?

The CE curriculum is specifically designed for pupils in Years 7 and 8 and can be used as part of the admissions pathway into senior schools, or as a milestone of achievement.

Therefore, an access arrangement decision should be made that follows the ISEB CE Access Arrangements guidelines and that decision is only valid for CE examinations (i.e. an access arrangement decision made by a senior school for a pupil taking CE is not indicative of a decision which may be made for any other tests including a senior school's own entrance examinations, written tests, SATS, GCSEs, A Levels or any other qualifications).

Underpinned by research which supports the design principles of the ISEB CE examinations, this document will outline the access arrangements suitable for SEND pupils and give guidance to senior schools on making their decision on whether access arrangements should be provided, ensuring that access arrangement decisions are fair to all.



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WHAT ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR THE CE EXAMINATIONS?

Schools with SEND candidates should contact the relevant senior school to discuss each candidate's needs.

Access Arrangements considered include (but are not limited to):

- Extra time
- Rest breaks
- Readers (Human or Computer)
- Scribes
- Prompts
- Digital copies of the papers
- Enlarged papers - For visually-impaired candidates, ISEB can arrange for copies of the examination papers to be enlarged to A3. If other print amendments are required, please contact ISEB at least 1 year in advance of the examination session to obtain a quotation.
- Bi-lingual dictionaries - Candidates whose mother tongue is not English are allowed to use English to mother tongue dictionaries. They are also allowed up to 10% extra time if they have studied in the medium of English for less than three years. This must be agreed in advance with the candidate's first-choice senior school.

Senior Schools will decide whether a pupil should be given any of these access arrangements based on evidence of need (by way of a professional assessor's report) and normal way of working. By 'normal way of working', we mean that the pupil regularly receives that support as part of normal classroom practice.

As each child's needs are unique, an access arrangement request could span a range of provisions. The following guidelines should help senior schools to make their decision on whether, and which, access arrangements will be given for CE examinations.

Due to the diversity of pupils' needs, this guidance does not list every circumstance where it may be appropriate to use access arrangements. If, after following our guidelines, a senior school is unsure whether the request is suitable for the CE, they are welcome to contact ISEB to discuss the individual request.



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HOW SHOULD THIS GUIDANCE BE USED?

ISEB recommends that senior schools review each request based on evidence of the needs of the individual child and their normal way of working, and how these will affect them when accessing the CE examinations.

Senior schools will wish to refer to their own admissions policies and SEND processes, but where any specific decisions about requests for access arrangements of the CE examinations are being made (especially in SEND Appeal cases) this Access Arrangement Guidance should be used.

Access arrangements must never advantage or disadvantage any pupil or affect the integrity of the CE examinations.

EVIDENCE OF SEND STATUS

Evidence of the needs of the individual child and their normal way of working should be sent by the junior school to the senior school using the [ISEB SEND Report](#).

We expect that those applying for access arrangements may be pupils with visual impairments; learning, communication and interaction needs; a medical condition; sensory, physical, social or mental and emotional needs. This may result in difficulties with reading, writing, concentrating, and/or processing.

We expect that the evidence required by the senior schools will likely include an Educational Psychologist (EP) report (usually no older than 24 months) and/or letter outlining the child's normal way of classroom working (as defined by their current school/Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) giving details of:

- reading speed; and/or
- cognitive processing; and/or
- handwriting speed; and/or
- any other support tests or evidence.

Access arrangement requests are not guaranteed until the senior school confirms approval.



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25% EXTRA TIME

When considering an application for extra time, senior schools should seek answers to the following questions, from the evidence submitted:

- Can this pupil focus on a task, which requires them to work independently and without interruption, for at least 15 minutes without being prompted to stay on task?
- Does this pupil have a learning disability, physical or motor skill which prevents them from writing independently at a speed of more than 10 words per minute?
- Does this pupil have difficulty processing information, which prevents them from being able to answer questions on other practice tests, even when they are allowed to refer back to the questions?
- Can this pupil read age-appropriate texts aloud and fluently, at a speed of 85 words per minute, with few errors (this means less than 5 errors per 20 words)? (i.e. do they have a standardised score below 85?).

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or who are waiting on confirmation of one; should automatically be given 25% extra time if needed.

Pupils who qualify for extra time may also be allowed the use of other access arrangements (an aid) as well as 25% extra time.

In some cases, it may be that a candidate requires more than 25% extra time. This should be agreed between the senior school and junior school based on the evidence given by a professional assessor.



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GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR SCHOOLS ON DECISION-MAKING

SUPERVISED REST BREAKS

Most pupils in this age range should be able to complete the tests without a break. However, supervised rest breaks may be needed for pupils who experience fatigue or who find it difficult to concentrate.

We expect that senior schools will allow supervised rest breaks where applicants show evidence of:

- cognition and learning needs; and/or
- communication and interaction needs; and/or
- sensory and physical needs; and/or
- social, emotional and mental health needs; and/or
- a medical condition.

Pupils using supervised rest breaks should be given the same overall exam duration as the rest of their peers to complete the paper, unless they also qualify for 25% extra time. During supervised rest breaks, pupils should remain under test conditions.

PROMPTERS

Pupils who are unable to focus independently, or who lose concentration easily, may be aided by a prompter. The prompter should keep the pupil's attention on the exam but not to help them answer any of the questions.

A prompter usually taps on the desk or says the pupil's name, depending on what is normal working practice, to remind them to focus on the task.

We expect that senior schools will allow prompters where applicants:

- have little or no sense of time; and/or
- persistently lose concentration; and/or
- are affected by an Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder which inhibits them from moving onto the next question.



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READERS AND/OR READ ALOUD PROVISION (SUCH AS A SEPARATE ROOM)

ISEB commissioned specific research to clarify the academic, legal and scientific basis for allowing readers for the CE examinations.

The research found reading comprehension constitutes two interconnected areas, decoding text and language comprehension. Any candidate who has difficulty reading would be at a substantial disadvantage in accessing, and therefore demonstrating their skills/knowledge, in the language comprehension element of any reading comprehension assessment.

According to the Equality Act 2010 it is therefore a candidate's legal right that reasonable adjustments are made for any candidate who has difficulty reading.

The Common Entrance is a paper-based examination and therefore allowing a computer or human reader in these circumstances would be a reasonable adjustment. This applies to candidates who use a computer or human reader as their normal way of working and candidates where their disability would make a computer or human reader for the examination a reasonable adjustment to make.

This is a reasonable adjustment because the academic evidence is clear that:

1. Readers allow equity of access to comprehension
2. Having a human reader offers no advantage over a computer reader.

The findings were that a reader can be used for all CE examinations, including all sections of the English Reading paper, where this need is evidenced by a professional assessor or is part of the pupil's normal way of working in the classroom.

The provision of a reader for all pupils who have a reader as their normal way of working would constitute a reasonable adjustment for those who are considered disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010.

HUMAN READERS

Pupils who have difficulty reading (e.g. have submitted evidence of lower than average reading speeds) may be supported by a human one-to-one reader who can read to the pupil as long as no additional information is given which could give the pupil an advantage over their peers.

For further information on the guidance for readers, please see Appendix 1.



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ISEB CE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR SCHOOLS ON DECISION-MAKING

COMPUTER READERS

ISEB can also provide PDF versions of the question papers for electronic reading programmes, where the senior school is in approval. Schools must contact ISEB well in advance of the examinations for information regarding the security procedures required for this provision.

For further information or advice about computer reading software, please contact ISEB via common-entrance@iseb.co.uk

READ ALOUD PROVISION (SUCH AS A SEPARATE ROOM)

Senior schools may decide that reading aloud to himself/herself is a granted access arrangement for a pupil who provides evidence of this requirement. A separate room (with invigilator) should be provided as a pupil reading aloud is likely to disturb or aid others in the cohort.

SCRIBES

A scribe is a person who writes down answers dictated by the candidate during the exam. The use of a scribe must reflect normal classroom practice.

The scribe must:

- work in accordance with the candidate (in terms of speed and direction)
- write precisely what the candidate instructs – corrections can only be made on a test script at the request of the candidate
- follow the candidate's instructions precisely to draw or add to diagrams, charts and graphs, where applicable

COMPUTER/WORD PROCESSOR

Where recommended, a computer/word processor may be used by candidates identified as having a specific learning need, if this is their normal way of working. During the examination, the computer/word processor must have the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled, and candidates must not have access to any web-enabled information or previously stored work.



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ISEB CE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR SCHOOLS ON DECISION-MAKING

EDITABLE FORMATS

Where suitable and appropriate, ISEB is able to provide a quote for an editable pdf for some of the CE examinations on request. Please note, this is not possible for all question types, however, a hybrid approach to digital and paper completion may be an option.

For information about how to administer a test in this way, please contact common-entrance@iseb.co.uk.

ENLARGED PAPERS

The standard format for CE papers is as follows.

Paper	Font	Size	Exam	Format
Standard CE paper	Helvetica	12/13pt	All	A4 paper
Standard enlarged CE paper		Approx. 17pt (if scaled up and printed on A3)	All	Provided as standard pdf (for school to print on A3 paper)
Standard digital (editable) CE paper		Size can be increased on screen	English Reading Science Geography Latin French NB it may not be possible for some questions to be provided as editable PDFs and therefore a hybrid approach may be necessary	pdf



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ISEB CE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

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ENLARGED PAPERS CONTINUED

Where a candidate requires a question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3, it is recommended that a PDF copy of the standard question paper is ordered from ISEB well in advance of the examinations, to ensure the best print quality.

For security reasons, the PDF will be sent to you securely after 4 p.m. the day before the exam.

If a candidate has specific requirements for modification to the papers, these must be made clear to ISEB at least one year in advance of the examination to obtain a quotation.

DESPATCHING SCRIPTS WITH ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Ensure that a [Notification of Access Arrangements](#) form accompanies examination scripts, where appropriate, for those candidates granted access arrangements; this form can also be downloaded from the ISEB website and a copy must be included with the examination scripts for each subject.

Disclaimer: Please note that this guidance is for access arrangements for the ISEB CE examinations only. Any decisions made by the senior school or ISEB with regards to access arrangements are not valid for any other tests such as GCSEs or A level examinations.



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ISEB CE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

APPENDIX 1

A reader must not advantage or disadvantage the candidate, and must abide by the following, since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the candidate;

The reader

- **must** read accurately, and only read directly from the paper, without explanation or clarification;
- **must** only repeat the instructions of the question paper or questions when a candidate indicates a specific need for help;
- **must** have appropriate subject knowledge in order to act effectively as a reader in Maths and Science examinations, and decode symbols and formulae with accuracy;
- **must** only read the instructions/rubric of a paper testing reading and must not read individual questions or text;
- **may** enable a visually impaired candidate to identify diagrams, graphs and tables but without giving suggestions, or factual information, other than the information which would be available on the paper for sighted candidates;
- **may** read numbers printed in figures as words, (but when reading the number it should also be pointed to on the question paper). An exception would be when the question is asking for a number to be written in words (e.g. write the number 534 in words);
- **may** decode symbols and unit abbreviations (e.g. cm can be read as centimetres) in Maths and Science examinations reflecting the candidate's current and normal way of working;
- **may** read back, when requested, what the candidate has written without any emphasis on any errors;
- **must not** advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, nor the order in which questions should be answered.

i. Connections in mind, research commissioned by ISEB, Compiled by Victoria Bagnall, MA (Cantab), PGCE.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details about the ISEB Common Entrance examinations please visit the ISEB website where you will find the most up-to-date information as well as a range of helpful guidance and support resources.

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