



## **School-based Support Team and Accommodations Policy**

### **1. Definitions**

#### **1.1 School-Based Support Team (SBST)**

Is responsible for determining the support needs of the school, teachers and learners and coordinating the provision of support. The team consists of the HOD for Academics, the Grade Heads, the Social Workers and a Teacher Liaison.

#### **1.2 Accommodation**

May be granted when there is a significant learning barrier present. Accommodations offered at the school include: extra time (between 10 to 20 minutes per hour), use of a laptop, use of a digital reader, use of a scribe, and/or a spelling dispensation. The time accommodation is granted based on the diagnosis: 10 minutes p/h for a learning barrier, 15 minutes p/h for mental health diagnosis, 20 minutes p/h medical diagnosis.

#### **1.3 Internal Accommodation**

An accommodation sanctioned only by the school, usually used to determine whether or not such an accommodation will be of benefit to the learner.

#### **1.4 External Accommodation**

An accommodation that has been formally applied for with the WCED, which the WCED has sanctioned and is valid leading up to and including the NSC Examinations, as well as the rewriting of NSC Examinations in June of the following year. External accommodations can be applied for from the start of the Grade 10 year and the closing deadline is June of the Grade 11 year. It is important that families and educators understand that an internal accommodation does not guarantee the granting of the external accommodation.

### **2. Procedures**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

- a) Groote Schuur High School is a public mainstream secondary school which endeavours to accommodate learners with specific barriers where possible. The latest an application to the WCED can be made is June of the Grade 10 year.
- b) The only accommodation the school will implement before a formal application has been made to the WCED is additional time. Thus, in Grades 8 learners will internally only be granted additional time. Grade 9 learners will be granted extra time only until their Term 4 final assessments/examinations. In the Grade 9 Term 4 examinations accommodations have to be applied so to generate evidence to submit with their application.
- c) The school cannot implement any other accommodations until the WCED has processed an application made by the school on behalf of the learner. The school can only implement other accommodations sanctioned by the WCED. This is to avoid any



conflict occurring between internal and external accommodations granted, and to encourage the learner to develop their cognitive skills.

## 2.2 Internal Accommodations

- a) In the GET phase, internal accommodations will be decided upon by the school's support team in conjunction with educators. The school's support team will only consider suggestions made by educators who observe that additional time is required.
- b) Under specific circumstances the school will consider requests from families. Such circumstances include enlarged scripts where there is a sight difficulty or an emergency scribe when there is a physical injury.
- c) Additional time will be provided internally until the Term 4 assessments of grade 9, as in the fourth term learners need to write with all accommodations in place, after which time families will be expected to have begun the process of applying to the WCED for the external accommodation.
- d) Thus, as a result of (c) above, the internal accommodation of extra time will only be provided until the end of term 3 of the Grade 9 year.

## 2.3 External Accommodations

- a) A full assessment by an Educational Psychologist is a basic requirement for any application for external accommodation as granted by the WCED. Such assessments are costly; however, some medical aid plans do help to cover the cost. The WCED requires a specific battery of tests and the school will refer the family to the Educational Psychologists who administer the required tests. If the family chooses not to use one of the recommended professionals, they may find that they are requested to return to a professional who will complete the necessary tests, which will result in additional cost.
- b) In the case of a chronic illness or condition, a full medical report is required by the WCED in order for an application for accommodation to be submitted. The WCED will then assess whether or not the illness or condition will impact on the learner's ability to complete assessments.
- c) Since the earliest an application can be made is in Grade 10, the school actively discourages the taking of the tests in Grade 8 or 9, as these assessments will not be valid in the FET phase (Grades 10 to 12). Similarly, families must bear in mind that because the latest an application can be made is June of the Grade 10 year, an assessment needs to be done by Term 2 of the Grade 10 year at the very latest, and the result of the assessment submitted by the end of May. The department requires 6 months of learner work evidence with accommodation measures in place, to support any such application. However, in the case of chronic illnesses or conditions, applications may be made earlier.



**No internal accommodations will be granted after Term 2 of the Grade 10 year if the Educational Psychologist assessment has not been submitted to the school.**

- d) The WCED might not grant the accommodations that are recommended by the Educational Psychologist. The Education Department reserves the right to make the final decision, and from the second half of the Grade 10 year, the school can only implement what the WCED, as our Examining Body, endorse.
- e) The school needs to provide the WCED with evidence that the learner requires the accommodations. The school will thus require work samples that demonstrate the need for the accommodations.
- f) The learner's teachers will also need to provide comments, additional reports and sometimes evidence that provide further input on the necessity of the accommodations. The teachers and the School Based Support Team reserve the right to not endorse particular accommodation requests. Indeed, there are circumstances under which it is difficult for an educator to provide definitive support for an application.
- g) If the WCED endorses the learner's use of a reader and/or scribe (the use of both is described as having the use of an amanuensis) the school will arrange the use thereof for examinations only. In Term 4 of Grade 9, Grades 10 and 11 the role will be fulfilled by an educator and a financial cost will be decided on annually that will be paid directly to the school. Educators are not allowed to be used in final examination, so if a learner has been granted the use of a scribe, families will need to source someone who will be vetted and trained by the school's support team.
- h) If the use of extra time is granted, this extra time will be always be allowed for in examinations, and will be allowed for where possible in class tests. Class tests take place during lesson time and it is not always possible for the endorsed amount of extra time to be granted, as both learners and teachers have lessons that they need to move on to. When the test period is followed by a break, teachers will do their best to accommodate learners who require extra time to complete their assessment during the break. Because the maximum extra time granted ranges from 10 to 20 minutes per hour, using break time will not be a common occurrence.

## 2.4 Educator Staff Guidelines

- a) Teachers will not directly recommend accommodations to learners or to their families. If in an educator's professional judgement an accommodation may be necessary, the prescribed form needs to be completed and submitted to the grade head in order to start the process. The SBST may ask the teacher to provide further input where necessary. The school's social worker will then follow up with the learner and her/his family.
- b) If parents require further information about the accommodations process, they must be referred to the SBST for a meeting.



- c) The process is lengthy and costly and the learner's family must be provided with a copy of the information regarding the procedures of the accommodation's application process as well as the costs involved so that an informed decision can be made.

### 3. Reading and Scribing during Examinations

#### 3.1 Procedure

- a) The SBST will establish a pool of educators to avail themselves for reading and/or scribing. These educators will need to be able to scribe across a range of subjects. Training for scribes and readers will be provided by the WCED, or a qualified educator until such training is offered by the WCED.
- b) Once the examination timetable has been set, the learners' families with this accommodation, may opt to choose all or some of the approved subjects subject to affordability. In Grade 12, if learners choose to not use a reader or scribe as indicated on their accommodations letter, they waive the right to request an exam remark. They need to make use of the accommodations indicated on their letter or an application needs to be made to the WCED to adjust the letter, prior to the commencement of the NSC examinations.
- c) Only scribes will be provided with separate venues - readers will be replaced by the software and learners requiring this accommodation will all be in one venue.
- d) A reading/scribing timetable is set up for the learners before the invigilation timetable is developed with the scribing/reading teachers allocated slots in venues.
- e) Families are then invoiced for the total number of slots they have.
- f) The teachers acting as scribes/readers have this load considered before they are put on for extra invigilation responsibilities. Each scribing/reading slot is the equivalent to two invigilation slots due to the rigorous nature of the work.

#### 3.2 Accountability – roles and responsibilities

- a) Contacting parents to establish exams to be scribed/read for: **Grade Head**
- b) Generation of the reading/scribing timetable: **HOD Academics**
- c) Allocation of teacher scribes/readers: **HOD Academics**
- d) Ensuring equity on invigilation timetable: **HOD Academics**
- e) Invoicing of parents: **Finance office**
- f) Ensuring that two copies of the exam are printed for learners with scribes/readers, which are packed separately and clearly marked with the learner's name: **Subject educator**



- g) Organisation of exams from packs into folders on the day of the exam: **Designated faculty head**