

Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are 'reasonable adjustments' which allow pupils with identified needs to have fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills during timed assessments (both in class and in external examinations). For example, if a pupil's handwriting is extremely difficult to read, we might allow them to type their responses, so that an examiner will be able to value their work on quality of content rather than being distracted by the illegibility of handwriting. There is a wide range of access arrangements which we can put in place for many different needs, such as: extra time, reader pen/computer reader, supervised rest breaks. These must all be evidence-based.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) oversees the regulations around reasonable adjustments and access arrangements. Whilst each different arrangement requires different types of evidence and level of application, there are two critical aspects which underly **all** access arrangements in external examinations. These are:

- access arrangements should be a **normal way of working** (that's to say, any arrangement that is in place for an examination must happen regularly in the classroom, too)
- access arrangements should only be given where there is a **history of need** (that's to say, any arrangement should be based on needs which have been carefully identified over time, not at the last minute in the lead up to exams)

The types of evidence required are detailed and only the school SENCO can decide which access arrangements can be facilitated, as it demands regular training and additional qualifications to do so. The SENCO will consider recommendations made by external specialists and review internal teacher feedback as well.

At the start of this academic year, I wrote to parents and carers of Years 11 and 13, to explain that I would be facilitating additional specialist testing for some pupils to evaluate their needs for access arrangements. These tests have now been completed and so all access arrangements are now finalised for all pupils in these year groups. There is no further opportunity for changes to a pupil's examination arrangements from now on.

For eligible Years 11 students, **a confirmation of examination arrangements will be sent out at the start of December 2025**, detailing where and how they will be sitting their internal and external examinations in 2026.

Hannah Clarke, Assistant Headteacher (SENCO)