Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements	
What are access arrangements?	• Access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities to access an exam. • Access arrangements should reflect a student's normal way of working. This means that the access arrangements should reflect the support already provided, based on the difficulties presented and the regulations • Under the regulations, having a diagnosis or additional needs alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements automatically.
The Purpose of Access Arrangements	• They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam. • Access arrangements provided should not give a student an advantage but instead create a level playing field. • Schools are advised to start the process at the start of the GCSE course.
The regulations and what they mean	• Access arrangements for examinations are governed by strict rules and regulations which all exam centres (our school) **must** adhere to • The regulations are revised every year • Granting or providing access arrangements **without** the required supporting evidence will constitute malpractice • Under the regulations, access arrangements **must** reflect how the student (candidate) works in school and what is needed to support the difficulties they demonstrate in school. • Under the regulations, access arrangements are not provided to students on the basis of parental preference or because they have a diagnosis.
The Process	• Organising access arrangements is a long process with many steps • Information needed to make decisions about access arrangements are gathered towards the end of year 9 so they can be processed at the end of year 10 • Most schools try to process access arrangements during year 10 so that students have the opportunity to use them in mock exams before they are used in the final exams • The SENDCo and people responsible for access arrangements will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements based on the regulations • Teachers must provide evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed • The evidence helps the SENDCo or staff responsible for access arrangements to make an informed decision • Parents and carers should let the SENDCo know as soon as possible about their child's additional needs, medical conditions or if they have a query. This should be **before** year 10 • Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. It depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams and normal way of working • If the SENDCo decides that assessments are needed, these will be organised by the school • Decisions about which access arrangements to award are based on the rules, regulations and supporting evidence from teachers • Access arrangements are granted on a subject by subject basis

	• The key principle is that the SENCo, or the assessor working within the centre, can show a history of support and provision. The arrangement is not suddenly being granted to the candidate leading up to or at the time of their examinations. • Access arrangements will be finalised by the end of year 10 and 12 to ensure that students have the opportunity to use them for their mock examinations.
Other important information	• Specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements. Although professionals from other organisations may make recommendations, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual student's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. • Only the SENDCo and staff responsible for access arrangements can make appropriate and informed decisions based on the regulations. • Letters from a GP recommending access arrangements for a student **will not** be accepted. • Only the educational setting or school can decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams. • Teachers must provide evidence of the normal way of working in the classroom and in tests to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school will monitor how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams. • Special consideration can **only** be awarded where a candidate has been fully prepared for assessments and covered the entire course but their ability to demonstrate their subject knowledge and understanding is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control **at the time** of the assessment(s).
Finally	• **Schools must follow the rules and adhere to the regulations.** • **Schools are inspected during the year and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice and may impact the results of the student/s concerned or the school could lose their ability to conduct exams.**