**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.
* They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam.
* No arrangement can be given which would put the student at an advantage to their peers.

**How will the process start?**

* Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Information will also be provided by the primary school in the first instance.
* The SENCo will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements.
* Various access arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working and concentration.
* Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. It depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

**Who will make the assessment?**

* If a student has learning difficulties, the school’s appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements such as 25% extra time. This will take place at the end of year 9 and the start of year 10.
* If an external assessor diagnoses a learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for access arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school or college in advance and received the necessary access arrangements paperwork.
* Specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements. The centre can take the evidence into account, but the SENCo has overall decision making based on all the evidence they possess.
* The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams. The decision of the school is based on the JCQ regulations and parents should not try to influence the decision.
* Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

**Finally**

Schools and colleges must follow the JCQ rules and regulations. They are inspected and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice.