LSE/KH
17th November 2026

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Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the Year 9 examination period, we would like to provide an update regarding exam access arrangements.

For the Year 9 exams, students who received exam access arrangements during their Year 8 examinations will continue to receive the same arrangements. This approach allows us to maintain consistency and ensure that students can access assessments in a manner that reflects their normal way of working in school.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) sets the regulations that schools must follow when applying for exam access arrangements. JCQ states that access arrangements are intended to be reasonable adjustments that remove a substantial disadvantage experienced by a student due to a learning difficulty, disability or other identified need. Any arrangement must be supported by evidence and must reflect the student's normal way of working in the classroom and during internal assessments.

It is important for parents and carers to understand that a diagnosis, medical condition, parental request, private assessment report, or previous access arrangement awarded in primary school or earlier years does not automatically entitle a student to exam access arrangements for GCSE examinations. JCQ regulations require schools to hold robust evidence that an arrangement is both needed and routinely used by the student.

This evidence must demonstrate a clear and continuing need and is gathered over time from a range of sources, including:

- Classroom assessments and examination performance.
- Teacher observations and feedback.
- Examples of classwork and assessed work.
- SEND records, support plans and intervention information.
- Evidence that the arrangement is the student's normal way of working across subjects.
- Specialist assessment evidence, where required under JCQ regulations.

As students move through Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, schools are required to build a clear evidence base that supports any future application for exam access arrangements. The Year 9 examinations form an important part of this process.

Formal assessments and reviews of access arrangements for GCSE examinations will therefore take place towards the end of Year 9 and into Year 10. During this period, we will review a range of evidence, including performance in Year 9 examinations, classroom practice, teacher feedback and any existing SEND information. The evidence gathered from these examinations will help us determine whether an arrangement continues to be appropriate and whether it can be supported under JCQ regulations for GCSE examinations.

Please note that receiving an arrangement in Year 8 or Year 9 does not automatically guarantee that the same arrangement will be approved for GCSE examinations. JCQ regulations require schools to demonstrate a current and ongoing need, supported by evidence, before an application can be made.

Our aim is to ensure that every student receives the support they need while ensuring that all arrangements meet the requirements set out by JCQ. Maintaining arrangements during Year 9 allows us to continue gathering evidence of normal way of working and enables students to demonstrate whether the arrangement remains necessary and effective.

We will communicate with families if further assessment or evidence is required during the Year 9 and Year 10 review process.

The deadline for additional information and diagnostic reports is **Monday 30th November 2026**. No additional information will be accepted after this date for Year 9 examinations.

If you have any questions regarding exam access arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact the EAA co-ordinator - Sarah Edwards – **Edwards.S@sco.svmat.uk**

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S Edwards
Exam Access Co-ordinator