



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2021-2022

Access arrangements allow students with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND), additional learning needs (ALN) or temporary injuries to access an assessment. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments.' The aim of an access arrangements is to remove disadvantage, never give an advantage.

All access arrangements are arranged following the guidelines of the examination bodies (JCQ for GCSEs and Cambridge/Pearson for iGCSEs). We follow these guidelines for students taking internal as well as external exams, for example 11+, end of year tests, internal assessments and mocks.

The College aims to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial SEND/or ALN which fall into the following four categories:

1. Communication and interaction
2. Cognition and learning
3. Social, emotional and mental health
4. Sensory and/ or physical needs

We will do this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines and the guidelines issue by Cambridge and Pearson for iGCSEs. We believe it is important to abide by the boards' regulations, so that there is parity in how access arrangements are awarded throughout a student's secondary schooling. For every exam access arrangement a comprehensive body of evidence must be gathered to clearly show the student's need, and this must include evidence from the

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classroom/teachers to back the application. This will paint a 'picture of need', and this evidence will be inspected by the exam boards.

We will use every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the College. Professional reports can be submitted to request access arrangements for 11+ and first to third years, but these are usually no longer accepted by the boards for GCSEs, iGCSEs or A levels. Exam access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working.' Therefore, exam access arrangements must be in place for a substantial period of time prior to the assessment.

The decision to apply for access arrangements is the College's, based on evidence of a history of need, current need, history of provision, a student being disadvantaged compared to his/her peers and a specialist teacher's access arrangements report or medical report from a specialist doctor. Subject teachers are also involved in the decision as to whether an exam concession is necessary, this is in line with the regulations mentioned above.

Use of a laptop

The use of a laptop in exams reflects the student's normal way of working at the College and has been agreed as appropriate to the student's needs. The use of a laptop cannot be granted to a student simply because this is their preferred way of working. As with every other exam access arrangement, the provision to use a laptop is put in place to address an underlying difficulty such as speed of handwriting, medical condition, physical disability, sensory impairment, planning and organisational difficulties or poor legibility. The spellcheck and punctuation and grammar check will be turned off in line with JCQ, Cambridge or Pearson regulations.

Rest Breaks/Separate Room

The exam concessions of rest breaks can be awarded to students, in line with the advice above. Rest breaks are a suitable concession for a student with a medical condition, this can include mental health. A signed specialist doctor's report or letter would be required to award a concession of rest breaks, this must be on headed paper. A GP's letter would not be sufficient. A student can take exams in a separate room (not necessarily alone but in a smaller room than the main hall) if the criteria above is met.

25% extra time

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25% extra time is an exam access arrangement that can be granted for learning needs or medical reasons. For learning needs, this would have to be two speed of working test score below standard score 85 (or one below average and one low average score) or two low average test scores, between 85 and 89, in some exceptional cases. In both cases, additional evidence would be supplied by the teachers, as mentioned above, however in the case of two low average scores a larger body of evidence would be required. Results of memory tests can be submitted. Please be aware that external reports are no longer accepted by the examination boards.

An application for 25% extra time can be made for medical reasons, however, it is often difficult to prove that a medical condition is causing the student to work more slowly (requiring 25% extra time) and so rest breaks are often considered a more appropriate arrangement. Please see the section on rest breaks above.

Prompter

For students who lack focus and/or concentration, the access arrangement of prompter may be available. This is sometimes suitable for students with ADHD. As with all access arrangements, classroom based evidence is required.

Other access arrangements

There are other access arrangements available which are less widely used, please refer to the guidelines issued by the boards or speak to the Academic Support Teacher.

Special Consideration

Please note that access arrangements and special consideration are separate and distinct. Special consideration can be requested on the day as an emergency measure, for example an emergency at home such as a fire, a sudden bereavement or a medical emergency. It cannot be considered for minor or trivial reasons such as coughs and colds, minor noise outside the hall or long standing illnesses.

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Schedule

Below is a rough guide to timings for making application for access arrangements. This can vary from case to case.

| Year Group | Initial Enquiry | Tests and gathering evidence | Final deadline | Confirmation | Comments |
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| Year 6 (11+) | Parents to enquire about access arrangements prior to submitting application. | External assessment or in-house assessment at Junior School, primary school or prep school from a specialist teacher with a suitable qualification. | November 30th | 10 th December | Parents please liaise with admissions department. |
| 1 st , 2 nd and third years | Academic Support Teacher. | Testing and gathering of evidence normally takes about 6-8 weeks in most cases. | Easter for end of year assessments. | Should be within 10/12 weeks of initial enquiry in most cases | Concern can be raised at parents' evening or via tutor. Please note that access arrangements awarded for year 6, 1 st , 2 nd or third years do not automatically carry over to external exams from 4 th years upwards. We advise that some assessments are carried out with no arrangement in place for the purpose of gathering evidence. |
| 4 th year | Academic Support Teacher. | Two-three terms from initial enquiry. | End of 3 rd year for English | Most enquiries are dealt within two terms. | Concerns can be raised at parents' evening via teachers/tutors. |

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| | | | language reading mock. End of Christmas term for English language writing mock. End of January for English language finals. | | |
| 5 th year | Academic Support Teacher. | All access arrangements should be in place in 4 th year. In extreme cases, consideration may be given to a new access arrangements in the first half term of 5 th year. | | | |
| Lower 6th | Academic Support Teacher. | Up to 2 terms for gathering of evidence. For students who had access arrangements previously at St. George's College, there is no need to retest. Students who did not have access arrangements previously will have to take tests with the Academic Support Teacher, | Easter for end of year assessments. July for U6 assessment week. | January onwards. Once an arrangement is confirmed, it will become valid for mocks about 6 weeks later. | There will be no access arrangements in place for Christmas term, as a way of gathering evidence that there is still a need. Concerns can be raised at parents' evening with tutors/teachers. |

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| | | as will students who had access arrangements at a different school. | | | Please note that 25% extra time cannot be trialled in a mock. |
| Upper 6th | Academic Support Teacher. | All access arrangements should be in place in lower 6 th , no new cases will be considered for Upper 6 th except in rare and exceptional cases. | | | |

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6th Form

All access arrangements have to be considered anew for 6th form. Although it will be taken into consideration that a student had an access arrangement for GCSEs/iGCSEs, that does not automatically mean that these will be put in place for 'A' levels.

Gathering of evidence/History of need

The JCQ and Cambridge requirements are that evidence should be gathered over a period of years (not months) for access arrangements. The need should be apparent for a substantial period of time.

Please be aware that if a concern is not raised at GCSE level, it is very difficult to prove retrospectively that there was a need during that time.