Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements

Handout 3

A video to accompany this document is available at:
www.communicate-ed.org.uk/parentguidance

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.

How will the process start?

- Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important.
- Students in Further Education should record their additional needs on the college's enrolment form.
- 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 or college's appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements such as 25% extra time.
- 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 school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams.
- 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.

What else needs to be done?

- The school or college will have to apply for some arrangements.
- If a student has complex needs, a school or college can discuss their needs with the exam board.

Finally

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

If you have any questions about access arrangements, please speak to the school / college / SENCo.