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REVIEWED BY GOVERNING BODY – NOVEMBER 2020

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The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the Centre's exam processes to read, understand, and implement this policy.

The exams policy will be reviewed every year.

The Exams Manager and their Line Manager will review the exams policy.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

Adaptations to the policy in the result of exceptional circumstances

In the summer of 2020, external examinations were suspended and grades were awarded on the basis of evidence initially submitted by schools and colleges, validated by exam boards and Ofqual. Owing to restrictions put in place as a result of Covid, results were issued electronically, rather than as described in this policy.

Should unusual circumstances arise this year, we may need to adjust elements of our practice. These changes will be decided by the Head in consultation with the leadership team and the exams officer. Where there is any significant variation from our policy, changes will be discussed with the chair of governors, and other governors as appropriate.

Exam responsibilities

The Head of Centre (or Head)

- has overall responsibility for the school/college as an Exams Centre and advises on appeals and reviews of marking
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice -

refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*. <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>

Exams Manager¹:

- manages the administration of internal and external exams
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies
- oversees the production and distribution to all Centre staff and candidates, of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- ensures candidates' non examination assessment /coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned non examination assessment/coursework / controlled assessments
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any post results service requests

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Manager
- accurate and consistent marking of coursework/ controlled assessment /non-examination assessment (NEAs) across the department
- accessing appropriate exam board training and standardisation activities
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment/non examination assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
- decisions on post-results procedures

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework /controlled assessments and NEAs as required by the Head of Department and/or Exams Manager

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) is responsible

- leading on access arrangements, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the SLT: identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Exams Manager in good time so that they are able to process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required)
- working with the Exams Manager to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms

¹This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of exams in their centre.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- assisting the Exams Manager in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations
- collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring their return to the exams office

Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation of entries
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment/ NEA regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own
- ensuring the conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations

Qualifications offered

The Head of Centre and members of Leadership Team decide the qualifications offered at this Centre. The types of qualifications offered are *GCSE, GCE, Functional Skills, Extended Project, VCerts and BTECs*.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the Centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by July.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.

Subject leaders in consultation with their Head of Department and Head of Learning will advise the Curriculum Deputy and the Head (who will make the final decision) whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject.

Exam series

Internal exams (pre-public exams) and assessments are scheduled in November, January, February and June (subject to the discretion of the head of centre and may change in line with school business priorities)

External exams and assessments are scheduled in November and June (Functional Skills exams and BTEC online assessments are available at other times).

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

The Head decides which exam series are used in the Centre.

The Centre does offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the Head of Department Head of Learning, Head and Exams Manager.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the Exams Manager will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal but this must be agreed with subject leader, Head of Department, the Head of Learning, the Curriculum Deputy and Head. . Only the deputy and Head can sanction the withdrawal from a subject.

The Centre accepts entries from private candidates if no coursework element is involved in the subject they wish to take (see separate policy). The Centre does not act as an exams Centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department/curriculum via email, noticeboard, briefing meetings, internal post/pigeon hole.

Heads of Department/curriculum will provide estimated entry information to the Exams Manager to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of Head of Department.

Following the switch from modular to linear exams, A/AS, GCSE and Functional Skills re-sits/retakes are currently only available for some qualifications and year groups.

Subject leader in consultation with Head of Department will make re-sit decisions.

Exam fees

A charge will be levied for the cost of entering a student for an examination where the student has not submitted the necessary completed coursework, fails to attend or sit the examination, or whose parents wish them to sit the exam against the advice of the school.

A charge may be made for all students re-sitting an examination unless this is necessitated by an error on the part of the school or exam board.

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

The Exams Manager will publish the deadline for action well in advance for each exams series.

The Centre pays entry fees.

The Centre or department, depending on the reason, pays late entry or amendment fees.

Fee reimbursements will be sought from candidates if they fail to turn up for an exam without advising their subject teacher/Exams Manager.

Depending on the reason, re-sit fees are paid by the Centre, department or candidate.

Equality Legislation

All exam Centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The Centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

In deciding whether the school will pay for a re-sit (or an appeal or re-mark) centre staff will take account of the individual circumstances of the student to ensure that they are not disadvantaged for medical or social reasons, when a decision to re-sit or appeal is being taken.

Access arrangements

The SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

The SENCo determines a candidate's access arrangements requirement.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of SENCo.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo and Exams Manager.

The SENCo and Exams Manager will arrange rooming for access arrangement candidates.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENCo and Exams Manager.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Exams Manager, Line Manager and Head.

Contingency plans are available on request and are in line with guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding bodies

JCQ now advises a day for the summer exams contingency.

Private candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the Exams Manager

Estimated grades

The exam board no longer requests estimated grades; however, our reporting system collects predicted grades (PGs) for the end of the course, several times per year: if requested by the exam board we have evidence of our predictions on our system.

Managing invigilators

External staff will be used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for external exams and formal internal exams, apart from those conducted within classrooms as part of normal lessons.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Head, the Personnel Manager and the Exams Manager.

Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Personnel Manager/PA to the Headteacher.

Disclosure and Barring Service check fees for securing such clearance are paid by the Centre.

The Head sets invigilators' rates of pay.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Personnel Manager and Exams Manager.

Malpractice

The Head in consultation with subject teachers, Head of Department and Exams Office is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

Exam days

The Exams Manager will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery, and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements one month in advance of the first exam. Site management staff will be updated twice weekly whilst exams are running.

The Exams Manager will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Senior members of centre staff approved by the head of centre, who have not taught the subject being examined, may be present at the start of the examination(s).

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to Heads of Department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

After an exam, the Exams Manager will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with invigilators and receptionist.

Candidates

The Exams Manager will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. The Heads of Learning and Exams Manager may give a formal briefing session for candidates.

The Centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the Centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam, room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities, including watches. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Exams Manager and Line Manager/on call member of staff.

Note: an appropriate member of staff must accompany candidates who leave an exam room at all times.

The Exams Manager is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

Clash candidates

The Exams Manager will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Centre's Exams Manager to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within seven days of the exam.

The Exams Manager will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within deadlines issued by each awarding body.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Manager will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are entered online by the Head of Department. The Exams Manager will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the Centre's Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

Results

In normal circumstances, candidates will receive individual result slips on results days,

- in person at the Centre
- by post to their home address
- via email (with written consent)
- via a third party (with written consent)

The results slip will be in the form of a Centre produced document.

Arrangements for the Centre to be open on results days are made by the by the Head.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head. During the period of adjustment to working practices in response to Covid-19, results may be issued only electronically.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers (subject to exam deadlines).

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

Review of Marking cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Exams Manager.

Enquiries about Results (EAR)

Centre staff or the candidate following the release of results may request EARs. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate. A request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates.

The student will pay the cost of EARs unless the Head of the Department agrees to pay from their budget. All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Head of Department. All EARs must have a student signature before being processed.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the Centre will respond by following the process in its Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Manager following the JCQ guidance.

Certificates

Subject to Covid restrictions, candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the centre
- by post to their home address (with written consent and only if not able to collect themselves or ask a third party to do so)
- collected and signed for by a third party providing written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are

If candidates lose certificates, then the candidate must contact the awarding body themselves for replacements. The Exams Manager can provide exam information, where available.

Withdrawal from a Public Examination

Once a student has started a course leading to a public examination, it is their right to complete the course and sit all relevant papers and complete any required controlled conditions coursework.

We aim for all student to leave with as high grades as they can in their statutory and chosen subjects. Students' long-term life chances will depend on completing examinable courses.

Only in very exceptional cases will this not be the case and only if the school cannot reasonably offer support to the student.

Examples might include:

The student has had very long periods of absence.

The student's medical condition is such that it would be harmful to take a particular examination. In cases such as this, parents/carers will have been advised by their child's doctor that entry for an examination is likely to be harmful. Parents may request withdrawal of an entry based on written medical advice.

The student has been permanently excluded during their course of study. In this case, the school will work with the student's new provider to ensure, wherever possible that the terms of a permanent exclusion are not breached that a student completes an examinable course.

Requests by a teacher to withdraw a student from an examination course should follow this protocol:

Where a teacher proposes the withdrawal of a student, they must first discuss this with their Head of Department. If the Head of Department agrees with that proposal then he or she must discuss that student with their leadership team link.

If the LT link agrees with that proposal then he or she must discuss it with either Guidance Team Leader KS4 or 5 as relevant, who proposes the withdrawal to the Curriculum Deputy and the Head.

The Curriculum Deputy and Head must make a decision based on an overview of that student's overall education, including the impact of sitting one less subject.

At this stage, any final decision must be in the best interests of the whole child and therefore the Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 5 team must look at the overall impact of withdrawal on the student's education and their overall results before referring cases to the curriculum Deputy Head and the Headteacher. The Guidance Team Leader will communicate the final decision back to each subject team and the LT link.

Where it is agreed to withdraw a student, conversations with the student and family must take place to secure their agreement. Guidance Team Leader KS4 or 5 as relevant and the subject team leader should then meet with the student and family.

At each stage, the following questions must be asked before any student is withdrawn:

- Is the reason for withdrawal in line with this policy?
- What interventions have already taken place to support the student? How does the student feel about the proposal?
- How does the student's family feel about the proposal?
- If withdrawn, how will the student use the time in their class? (We do not have additional facilities to supervise withdrawn students)
- Will the student continue studying the subject but not take the examination?

Requests by a parent/carer to withdraw their child from a public examination will be considered by the school based on the criteria set out above.

Requests should be made to the student's class teacher in writing and with any supporting medical evidence it would be appropriate to include.

The student's class teacher in consultation with the Head of the Subject Department, the relevant Guidance Team Leader, a Deputy Headteacher and the Head will consider requests.

Parents will be informed in writing of the school's decision within five working days of any request.

The school will use this policy to guide the decision.

A parent/carer has the right of appeal to the school's Governing Body against the school's decision to withdraw or continue an entry.

The decision of any such appeal will be regarded as final.