



Examinations Policy

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The purpose of this Examinations 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 exam 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.

This Examinations Policy will be reviewed every two years.

This Examinations Policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, the Examinations Officer and the Curriculum and Standards Governors' sub-committee.

1. Examination responsibilities

Head of Centre

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

- Advises on appeals and re-marks
- The Head of Centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document 'JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures'

Examinations Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams:

- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, Subject Leaders, class teachers and tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- Oversees the production and distribution to 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 that candidates and their parents/carers are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework/controlled assessment is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts.
- Administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the JCQ guidance and using the JCQ forms.
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- Line manages the exam invigilators and organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of the team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Submits candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework/controlled assessment and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and in accordance with awarding body deadlines, requirements and regulations.

- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with their SLT line manager, any appeals/re-mark requests.
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- Ensures there are enough invigilators present in the exam venue and JCQ regulations are followed.
- Liaises with caretakers to ensure the rooms are available and there are enough desks for students.
- Ensures that the room meets the JCQ requirements regarding the presence of a working clock and correct signage.
- Ensures the students enter into the rooms in the appropriate manner and they have the correct examination papers and any other guidance material, as required by the awarding body.
- Ensures that registers are taken and students easily identified, extra students dealt with.
- Ensures students are made aware they are under exam conditions, all watches and mobile phones are handed in. Any erratum notices are read out at the start of exam.
- Ensures that start and end times of exams are clear to all students.
- Ensures that queries are dealt with and the awarding body contacted if necessary.
- Ensures that errors on exam papers are clarified with the awarding body. Contact with Subject Leader if clarification is needed from a query from a student.
- Posting of examinations papers//scripts.

Deputy Head Teacher (line manager to Examinations Officer)

- Identification of appropriate externally accredited courses of study for students to form part of the School's curriculum.
- In conjunction with Subject Leaders and other staff, ensuring that students are aware of awarding body regulations regarding coursework/controlled assessment and the conduct of examinations and investigating cases of suspected or alleged malpractice.
- Advice and guidance to the Examinations Officer regarding the organisation and conduct of internal and external examinations.

Subject Leaders

- Setting of appropriate examination papers for internal examinations

Subject Leaders, Class Teachers and Progress Leaders

- Advice and guidance to candidates about appropriate courses of study and tiers of entry.
- Involvement in post-results procedures e.g. identification of possible candidates for re-marks, being available to offer advice to students.
- Accurate completion of coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Examinations Officer.

CPSHEE Co-ordinator

- Co-ordinating the provision of appropriate careers advice and guidance.

SENDCO

- In conjunction with the Examinations Officer, administration of access arrangements.
- Identification and testing of candidates, who may be eligible for or in need of special access arrangements, such as with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims.
- Notification of access arrangements to teaching staff.

Invigilators

- Ensure that students have the correct paper for the exam and the students are easily identified.
- Ensure that the room meets with JCQ regulations throughout the examination. If not, notification to the Examinations Officer is required.
- Ensure that students enter the room in the appropriate manner.
- Announce to students they are under exam conditions and any mobile phones and all watches need to be handed in.
- Ensure erratum notices are read out at the start of exam.
- Ensure that start and end times of the exam are recorded clearly for all students to see.
- Ensure the attendance register is completed correctly.
- Inform the Examinations Officer of any concerns regarding any candidate during an examination.
- Contact the Examinations Officer or a teacher (if one is present for internal exams) if a concern regarding the exam paper has been brought to their attention.
- Collect all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and return them to the Examinations Office.

Candidates

- Check that examination entries are correct.
- Arrive at the correct exam venue at the prescribed time on the correct date.
- Ensure that they are properly equipped for each subject.
- Ensure that they understand coursework/controlled assessment regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates the controlled assessment/coursework as their own.
- Comply with awarding body rules and regulations regarding the conduct of exams.

2. Qualifications offered

Qualifications offered at this Centre are decided by the Deputy Headteacher in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders.

The qualifications offered at the school are A-levels and GCSEs and other level 2 qualifications, although occasionally other qualifications may be offered at entry level, level 1 and level 3.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the School's options booklet or Post-16 prospectus. If there has been a change of qualification or awarding body from the previous year, the Examinations Officer must be informed by the middle of March prior to the qualification starting.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be withdrawn from an individual subject or all subjects will be taken in consultation with the candidate, parents/carers, Progress Leader, class teacher(s), Subject Leader(s) and the SLT line manager for examinations.

At Key Stage 3

All students will undergo ongoing Teacher Assessments throughout years 7 & 8. These may take the form of an exam or other assessed work.

At Key Stage 4

All candidates will be entitled, and supported, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

At Key Stage 5

All candidates will be entitled, and supported, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

3. Examination seasons and timetables

3.1 Examination seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in the autumn, spring and summer terms, depending upon the year group.

External exams (A-levels and GCSEs) are scheduled in May and June, although GCSE resits may be offered in November. Some vocational and functional skills exams are scheduled in March, November and January.

Which exam series are used in the Centre is decided by the Head of Centre, in discussion with Subject Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team.

3.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal exams and external exams.

4. Entries, entry details and late entries

4.1 Entries

Candidates' entries are determined by Class Teachers in discussion with their Subject Leaders, where appropriate.

Requests from parents/carers, for a particular subject entry, change of tier or withdrawal will be considered by the Subject Teacher and the Subject Leader for the subject concerned, and where appropriate the Progress Leader for the year group concerned in discussion with parents/carers and will only be granted when it is felt by the school to serve the best interests of the candidate concerned. Withdrawal from a particular subject can only be granted by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in charge of the curriculum.

The Centre may accept entries from external candidates at its own discretion. Only former Higham Lane students, with exceptional circumstances, will be considered.

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Subject Leaders via email.

Late entries can only be authorised by the SLT line manager for examinations based upon clear and detailed information as to the circumstances. Where entries are late or inaccurate due to poor administration on the part of a department, the Department's budget may be charged with the cost of the late fees incurred.

4.3 Re-sits

The School only offers examination re-sits to students currently on its roll, unless otherwise directed by JCQ or the DfE. Where the opportunity to re-sit an examination is available from the exam board, decisions about which students to enter for re-sits are made by Subject Leaders in consultation with teaching staff and parents/carers and students.

5. Examination fees

The Centre will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the Centre apart from when the amendment has been requested by the parents/carers.

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 timescales provided by the Examinations Officer.

Where examination re-sits are offered by the School, any re-sit fees must be payable by the parent/carer and are chargeable by per unit or award. This fee includes administration time and staff costs. The school will pay exam fees for any student who has not achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English or Maths upon entry to Higham Lane Sixth Form

6. The Equality Act (2010), special needs and access arrangements

6.1 Disability Discrimination Act (2017)

The Disability Discrimination Act 2017 extends the application of the Equality Act to general qualifications.

6.2 The Equality Act (2010)

All exam Centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

6.3 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENDCO and/or educational psychologist/specialist teacher.

The SENDCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam. The SENDCO will inform subject teachers

and parents/carers of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam. The SENDCO will also inform the Examinations Officer who will then inform invigilators.

6.4 Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer. Both follow the JCQ regulations when determining whether a candidate qualifies for special arrangements, as outlined in the JCQ document entitled 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'.

The SENDCO will assess whether students qualify for special access arrangements.

Submitting completed access arrangement or special consideration applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENDCO using the awarding bodies' published procedures.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Examinations Officer based on the information received from the SENDCO.

Invigilation for access arrangement and special consideration candidates will be organised by the Examinations Officer and support for the candidates during the exams will be arranged by the SENDCO.

7. Estimated grades

Where it is an awarding body requirement to submit estimated grades, the Subject Leader will submit the relevant marks/grades to the Examinations Officer as requested in accordance with the School's own internal deadlines.

8. Managing invigilators and exam days

8.1 Managing invigilators and exam days

External invigilators will be used for all external exams and some internal exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Director of Corporate Services.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the Centre.

Invigilators are trained and updated on changes of regulations by the exams officer annually.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Headteacher.

8.2 Examination days

The Examinations Officer will book all venues for examinations after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilators.

The caretaking staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The Examinations Officer or an experienced invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with the identification of candidates for external examinations, but must not be in the venue once the examination begins.

In practical exams class teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Examination papers must not be read by invigilators, teaching staff or Learning Support Assistants or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Spare papers will be distributed to Subject Leaders 24 hours after the exam session.

9. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

9.1 Candidates

The Centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the Centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage. The School may also take disciplinary action against any students who disrupt an examination.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines, details of this are on the 'Warning to candidates' posters situated outside of the exam room. Details can also be found in the 'Information for students and parents/carers about exams' which is given to students with their Statement of Entry and which is also available on the School website

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine reason requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff or invigilator must accompany them.

The Examinations Officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

9.2 Clash candidates

The Examinations Officer will be responsible, as necessary, for identifying students with clashes on their timetables, supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays for any students who have two or more external examinations due to take place at the same time on the same day. The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the security of the examination is not compromised.

9.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer a bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Centre, the Examinations Officer, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor, copy of a prescription or appointment card. Applications can also be supported by signed evidence from a member of the Senior Leadership Team in lieu of other evidence.

The Examinations Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

10. Non-examination assessments and appeals against non-examination assessments

10.1 Non-examination assessments (i.e. coursework or controlled assessments)

With regard to the expectations of candidates and candidates conduct during nonexamination assessments (i.e. coursework or controlled assessment), please refer to the separate Non-examination assessment policy.

The Subject Leaders will ensure that all candidate evidence for non-examination assessments is ready for despatch at the correct time. The Examinations Officer will keep a record of what has been sent, when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Examinations Office by the class teachers and the Subject Leaders. It is the Subject Leader's responsibility to ensure that these marks are accurately recorded and returned to the Examinations Office by the relevant deadline.

It is the Subject Teacher's responsibility to ensure that non-examination assessments are stored securely. Any loss of non-examination assessments needs to be reported immediately to the Subject Leader who needs to then consult with the Examinations Officer and their SLT link in order to determine how best to proceed.

10.2 Appeals against non-examination assessments

The Centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure relating to appeals, which is available from the Examinations Office.

The main points are:

- Appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded.
- Candidates may appeal if they feel their non-examination assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification.
- Appeals need to be made in writing by before 1st May to the Head of Centre (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements.

- The Head of Centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the Examinations Officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

11. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

11.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days either in person at the Centre or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide a sae).

Results will not be given over the phone and may only be collected by someone other than the candidate providing a letter is brought into the Centre by the nominated individual and verified by Centre staff. The nominated individual also needs to provide photographic identification. Arrangements for the School to be open on results days are made by the Head of Centre. Results are only sent by email under exceptional circumstances, i.e. medical.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

Results and certificates may be withheld by the Centre where the candidate has money owing to the Centre. This includes amounts owed to our external catering contractor relating to purchases from the canteen.

11.2 Enquiries about Results (EARs)

EARs may be requested by Centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at either the Centre's expense or the candidate's own expense. The decision as to who meets the cost of any remark will lie solely with the Centre.

When the Centre does not support an EAR, a candidate may still apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged.

11.3 Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers. This needs to be done within the timescales published by the awarding body and is normally requested through the Exams Officer by completing the form found in the candidates' results envelope on results day.

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

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned. This doesn't apply to a digital copy.

Any costs associated with requests for marked scripts made by parents/carers (rather than the School) must be met by parents/carers.

(See also section 5: Examination fees)

12. Certificates

Certificates are presented in person or collected and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party providing a letter is brought into the Centre by the nominated individual and verified by Centre staff. The nominated individual also needs to provide photographic identification.

The Centre retains certificates for five years after which time they are destroyed.

13. Artificial intelligence (AI)

AI is Artificial Intelligence, examples include:

- ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/auth/login>)
- Jenni AI (<https://jenni.ai>)
- Jasper AI (<https://www.jasper.ai/>)
- Writesonic (<https://writesonic.com/chat/>)
- Bloom AI (<https://huggingface.co/bigscience/bloom>)
- Gemini (<https://gemini.google.com/>)
- Claude (<https://claude.ai/>)
- Gauth (<https://gauthmath.com/>)
- Question AI (<https://questionai.com/>)
- Brainly (<https://brainly.com/>)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Higham Lane School recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Students may not use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Students may use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed
- Where a student uses an AI tool, the student should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated responses. Students must submit this along with the assessment.

Students should consider the risk of AI use (JCQ, AI Use in Assessments, Section 2):

The use of AI tools may pose significant risks if used by students completing qualification assessments, not least the risk of committing malpractice, for which serious sanctions can apply. As also noted above, the tools have been developed to produce responses based upon the statistical likelihood of the language selected being an appropriate response and so the responses cannot be relied upon. AI tools often produce answers which may seem convincing

but contain incorrect or biased information. Some AI tools have been identified as providing answers to questions that can prompt inappropriate actions, and some can also produce fake references to books/articles.

Staff should:

- Be aware that AI tools are still being developed and should use such tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate or biased content
- Make students aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments
- See our Home Learning Policy for more information on how students can and cannot use AI for their assignments.

For more information on AI misuse, see guidance from JCQ on AI use in assessments (https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AI-Use-in-Assessments_Apr25_FINAL.pdf).

Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.