

# Sydenham School

# Exams Policy

Updated March 2016

To be reviewed March 2017



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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 *two years*.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the *Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for internal and external examinations*.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

## ***Exam responsibilities***

### **The Headteacher:**

- has overall responsibility for the school/college as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

### **Exams officer<sup>1</sup>:**

- 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 that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- line manages the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- ensures candidates' 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 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.

### ***Curriculum Leaders and Subject Leaders* 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 officer.
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

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

**Teachers** are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the subject leader and/or exams officer.

The **special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)** is responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

**Lead invigilator/invigilators (not including where staff are used as internal invigilators)** are responsible for:

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

### **Qualifications offered**

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the *Deputy Headteachers with responsibility for Curriculum and Achievement* in consultation with *Curriculum and Subject Leaders*.

The types of qualifications offered are *GCSEs, Level 2 and 3 BTECs (and other similar vocational qualifications), standalone AS and A-Levels*.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published list of qualifications, which is available in the Curriculum section of the School Website (and included as Appendix One to this policy).

If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by 30<sup>th</sup> June.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the *Subject Leader*.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by *Subject Leaders* in consultation with the *Head of Key Stage and the Deputy Headteacher(s) with responsibility for Curriculum and Achievement*.

### ***Exam series***

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in *December* and *March* for Year 11 pupils; in *June* for Year 7-10 pupils; and in *November* and *January* for SFH6 students.

External exams and assessments are scheduled in *May/June*.

Internal exams *are* held under external exam conditions, including those that are taken within normal lesson time.

The *Deputy Headteacher(s) with responsibility for Curriculum and Achievement* decides which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre *does not* offer assessments on an on-demand basis.

### ***Exam timetables***

Once confirmed, the exams officer 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 cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.*

*The centre does not accept entries from private candidates.*

*The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.*

Entry deadlines are circulated to Curriculum and Subject Leaders by the exams officer via *email and academic board meetings*.

Curriculum and Subject Leaders will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer 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 the ***Director of Strategy***.

*GCSE re-sits are not allowed, except where students are retaking GCSE English and/ or Maths during their SFH6 studies, or when students have underachieved in an examination for which they were entered early as part of a Key Stage 4 Intervention Strategy.*

*AS retakes are only allowed in exceptional circumstances.*

*A level re-sits/retakes are only allowed in exceptional circumstances.* Re-sit decisions will be made by the *Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Key Stage 5* in consultation with the *Exams Officer*.

## ***Exam fees***

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 officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series.

*GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the centre from the examinations budget.*

*AS entry exam fees are paid by the centre from the examinations budget.*

*A level entry exam fees are paid by the centre from the examinations budget.*

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the *department from curriculum budgets.*

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates:

- *if they fail to sit an exam without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances;*
- *if they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances;*

The centre will pay the costs of a re-take in the following circumstances:

- When a student has significantly underperformed due to a medical condition – this must be supported by evidence from a GP or hospital.
- When the re-take has been requested by a CL due to significant underachievement as the result of other factors beyond the candidates control.
- When students have been entered early for an examination as part of a KS4 Intervention strategy.

In Year 13, re-takes are paid for by the school if based on a teacher's and Head of Sixth's recommendation.

## ***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 to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the *Exams Officer.*

## ***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.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the *SENCo.*

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*.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the *Exams Officer* in consultation with the *SENCo*.

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

Where laptops/ tablets are used as part of access arrangements for a candidate, the *Exams Officer* in consultation with the *IT Support Team* is responsible for ensuring the equipment is correctly configured to meet specific exam requirements in terms of network/ internet access etc, and that candidate scripts are secured.

### ***Contingency planning***

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the *Exams Officer*.

Contingency plans are available via *the school intranet and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations*.

### ***Estimated grades***

*Teachers* are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

### ***Managing invigilators***

External staff will be used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for *external exams*.

Teaching staff and other school staff will be used to invigilate internal examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the *Exams Officer*.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the *Human Resources Manager*.

DBS fees for securing such clearance *are* paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the *Human Resources Manager*.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the *Exams Officer*.

## ***Malpractice***

The Headteacher, in consultation with *Senior Leaders*, is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice

## ***Exam days***

The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilators.

Premises staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements *at least 5 days* in advance.

The *Exams Officer* or *Senior Invigilators* will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff *may* be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

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 and no later than *48 hours* after candidates have completed them.

After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with *the school receptionist*.

## ***Candidates***

The exams officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the *Year Learning Co-Ordinator, Head of Key Stage* or *Deputy Headteacher responsible for that Key Stage*.

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. 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 Officer* or *Senior Invigilator*.



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

The *Head of Key Stage* is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

### ***Clash candidates***

The *Exams Officer* 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 Officer* to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 5 days of the exam.

The exams officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 10 days of the exam.

### ***Absence from Internal Exams***

Candidates are encouraged to ensure they attend all examinations, public or otherwise. Where students are unable to attend an internal exam, they will be given the opportunity to complete the exam at a suitable time outside of normal lesson time by their class teacher, e.g. lunchtime, afterschool.

Failure to attend a re-arranged session will result in a U (Unclassified) grade being entered in school tracking systems for that series.

### ***Toilet Breaks***

Candidates are encouraged to ensure they have been to the toilet prior to examinations. However, a candidate may request to go to the toilet during an examination, except in the following situations:

- The first 15 minutes of any exam, as per JCQ regulations;
- The last 15 minutes of any exam;
- During any exam which is scheduled to take 1 hour or less.

The centre will take all precautions to ensure that students are supervised during toilet breaks – an invigilator will escort one student at a time into the toilets, which will not be accessible to the general school population during examinations.

The lead invigilator will keep a running record of students who take toilet breaks during examinations.

## ***Internal assessment***

It is the duty of Subject Leaders to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The exams officer *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 provided to the exams office by the *Subject Leaders*. The exams officer 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***

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days,

- *in person at the centre*
- *by post to their home address - candidates to provide a self-addressed envelope before the end of the academic year if they wish to have their results posted in this way*

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 *Director of Strategy*.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the *Exams Officer and Director of Strategy*.

## ***Enquiries about Results (EAR)***

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. 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 cost of EARs will be paid by the *centre*.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by *Subject Leaders* in consultation with the *Exams Officer*.

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 Officer*, following the JCQ guidance.

## ***Access to Scripts (ATS)***

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 30 days of the receipt of results.

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

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the *centre*.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of *the Exams Officer*.

## **Certificates**

Candidates will receive their certificates

- *in person at the centre; or*
- *by post to their home address (candidates to provide a self-addressed envelope)*

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

The centre retains certificates for 2 years.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of *results may* be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Head of centre

Exams officer

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Date

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