

Exams Policy



Hollygirt

SCHOOL

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Exams Policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest 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 school's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy. The Exams Policy will be reviewed annually by the Examinations Officer and Head. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Exams Contingency Planning Policy and Word Processor Policy.

2. Exam Responsibilities

The Examinations Officer manages the administration of public and internal exams, including:

- advises SLT, subject, class teachers 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, trustees 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 exam timetable that will affect them;
- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with the JCQ and examination board guidelines (where appropriate to specific subjects and boards);
- Liaises with teaching staff for exam grades and moderation requirements;
- Reception receives and records papers. The Examinations Officer then checks and stores securely all exam papers. Completed scripts are securely stored and prepared for dispatch by the Examinations Officer or the Assistant Examinations Officer;
- administers access arrangements with the SENCO and other relevant staff and makes applications with the SENCO using Access Arrangements Online;
- applies for Special Consideration, where applicable after examinations series, using the online processes for each exam board in accordance with JCQ publication 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022/23' and 'A guide to the special consideration process 2022/23'. For qualifications which are not regulated by the JCQ, all exam board requirements shall be adhered to;
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes;
- liaises with the Bursar and Head regarding exams expenditure;
- ensures staff invigilators are trained and responsible for conduct in examinations;
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the Head and SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests;
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Notification of access arrangements requirements (as soon as possible after the start of the course)
- Submission of candidates' names to Heads of Department/school/curriculum
- Ensuring they have a clear understanding of the subject/course they are delivering and all appropriate requirements and deadlines.

The SENCO along with a trained person in access arrangements is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support - 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.
- Leading the access arrangements process within the Centre, with the full support of the teaching staff, SLT and the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- Following all JCQ regulations (or the examination board regulations where JCQ do not regulate the qualification) and school procedures for conducting exams.
- Adherence to Centre specific requirements for conducting and administering exams, as described in the invigilator training.
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the named examination staff for secure storage.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Abiding by all school and examination board rules and regulations.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

3. Qualifications

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head in conjunction with Heads of Departments. The qualifications offered may be tailored to the individual pupils each year and include all Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the Year 9 Options Booklet for the corresponding year group and are subject to minimum numbers and timetabling. Additional qualifications may be provided following discussions with pupils and relevant teaching staff, Assistant Head (Academic) and SLT.

If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the Examinations Officer must be informed as soon as possible.

Informing the Examinations Officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department. Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents, SENCO, subject teachers and Head of Department.

4. Examinations for Non-Taught Courses

Where a candidate wishes to be entered for an examination which is outside of the taught courses offered by the school, this shall be at the discretion of the Head. Parental/guardian requests are required and fees shall be confirmed with the Examinations Officer, Bursar and Head as required.

Where a candidate has transferred from another school, entries shall be discussed with the Head upon entry to the school to determine which examination boards and courses to enter with. Where external specifications vary to the taught content within the school, discussion and confirmation of teaching expectations must be confirmed upon entry to the school.

Where a candidate wishes to be entered for a language not taught at the school, then it is the responsibility of the candidate and their parents/guardians to ensure that a suitable tutor is found to provide the speaking component of the examinations as applicable. The school will provide invigilation for the written and listening components and support the tutor with preparation in school to conduct the speaking exam and a trained invigilator will be provided by the school to supervise the external tutor and pupil throughout the exam. A trained invigilator will be provided by the school to facilitate the listening, reading and writing exams.

In all cases, additional fees may apply to cover:

- Examination fees;
- Tutors paid time to conduct speaking exams;
- Other expenses relevant to the course, such as study materials.

Any additional fees shall be confirmed with the Examinations Officer prior to making the entry.

5. Exam Timetables

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the exam timetable for both internal and external exams. All external examination timetables will also be published on the school website. Individual timetables will be provided to all candidates.

6. Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Heads of Department and subject teachers. Candidates or parents can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The school does not accept entries from external candidates.

It is at the discretion of the Head whether to accept returning candidates, who have left the school, for re-sits.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Departments via email. Late entries are authorised by Heads of Department. GCSE re-sits are allowed provided this service is provided by specific exam boards. Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with candidates, subject teachers and Heads of Departments.

7. 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 Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring entries are made in a timely manner prior to these deadlines.

Examination fees are paid by parents but inclusive in the annual fees. Retakes are all chargeable to current individual pupils on receipt of a signed authorisation from parents. It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer, to ensure fees are paid prior to entries for all chargeable examinations. This information must be passed on to the Bursar. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments where there has been a subject change made by the school. Where personal pupil or parental requests have incurred fees, these will be chargeable to them.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates who:

- decide to sit an exam after the late entry/withdrawal deadline;
- fail to sit an exam;
- do not meet the necessary coursework requirements;
- where medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances is not provided.

8. Disability Discrimination Act

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The main provisions of the act give protection to disabled people in the areas of employment and education. A person has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The school will meet the disability provisions under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that the Exams Centre is accessible, and candidates are fully supported with all arrangements as required. This is the responsibility of the Head, SLT, SENCO and Examinations Officer.

Our Equality Policy is an integral part of our teaching and learning across the curriculum and as such is applied to all examinations. All pupils have full access to all examination rooms they are assigned to. Candidates are consistently monitored to ensure suitable access arrangements are provided.

9. Access Arrangements

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam. The SENCO will then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam. A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCO in conjunction with a trained Access Arrangements person, responsible for testing, as required with JCQ Regulations. Applying for access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of both the SENCO and Examinations Officer. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer and SENCO. Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO with the Examinations Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the Examinations Officer.

10. Overseas Pupils

Managing communications and documents for overseas pupils, who may travel after the examination series has ended, is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

11. Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of SLT, who may coordinate with the Examinations Officer, following the Exams Contingency Planning Policy.

12. Estimated Grades

Where estimated grades, or Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are required by examination boards, Heads of Department are responsible for submitting these to the Examinations Officer. This does not refer to grades which may be provided as part of school reporting cycles, which are separate to this requirement.

13. Managing Invigilators

External Invigilators are used as required, in discussion with the Head, SLT and the Examinations Officer.

All external invigilators are required to complete safeguarding checks, including DBS and training for safeguarding and invigilation, which may be provided online, in liaison with the school's DSL and Examinations Officer.

Teachers may also be used to invigilate examinations where they are not the subject teacher of the examination, or, where possible, do not form part of the department.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer. Regular training takes place for all staff and is part of the whole school INSET programme and online training is provided.

A record of training is held by the Examinations Officer.

14. Malpractice

The Examinations Officer is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice and contacting the relevant Exam Board.

Where malpractice is investigated against the Examinations Officer, the Head is responsible for investigating and reporting to exam boards. The Head may choose to assign another member of staff to investigate, though final communications must be through the Head in this case.

15. Exam Days

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

The Caretakers are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms on written instruction from the Examinations Officer.

If the packet of question papers is to be split, the question paper packet must be opened in the secure room and not in the examination room. This must be done in the presence of a member of staff, who should be the Examinations Officer and/or Assistant Examinations Officer and/or relevant invigilator, where possible. Subject teachers may be used in the absence of relevant staff mentioned previously, so long as they are not a subject teacher for the examination. The question paper packet must always be re-sealed and placed back into the centre's secure storage facility until it is required. The question papers extracted from the packet will be taken to the allocated room in a sealed envelope. An invigilator must be present in the room at all times. Question papers must never be left unattended.

The Examinations Officer, Assistant Examinations Officer or Invigilator will start all exams in accordance with current JCQ guidelines, a copy of which must be in the main examination room.

No member of staff is allowed in the examination room for their own subject's exam or near any of their subject's examination materials except where specifically authorised by the board (or as permitted in the JCQ guidelines) via the Examinations Officer.

Exam papers and any spare copies must not be read by invigilators or removed from the exam room before the end of a session.

At the end of the exam, the invigilator is responsible for gathering all papers which may be across multiple rooms, into the exam paper box and delivering them to the Examinations Officer, or other secure storage keyholder. They must not be handed to any other individual or left unattended. Where papers are not processed for dispatch immediately, the Examinations Officer, or other secure storage room keyholder, must place them into the secure storage room to be processed for dispatch as soon as is possible.

Once papers have been processed by the Examinations Officer in accordance with examinations board guidance, the sealed envelopes are to be passed to the main reception, or to the Bursar where DfE Yellow Labels are not applicable, and stored in a locked cupboard to await courier collection (Yellow Labels only), or taken to the Post Office for delivery (other qualifications). Reception will retain confirmation of the collections, and the Bursar shall retain evidence of postage, as applicable.

Unused papers will be distributed to Heads of Departments or subject teachers at the end of the exam session.

16. Candidates

The school's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the school accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Any disruptions by candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time, though may choose to leave early at the discretion of the Invigilator present, in accordance with JCQ regulations.

On entering the school for an external examination, all candidates must be identified by photograph. This must be through the photographs held on the school's electronic records or via photo ID where no photo exists on the record.

The school does not accept external candidates. However, any returning candidates must present a valid copy of photo ID for approval by the Examinations Officer and Head prior to the start date of the examinations. This must then be presented each time to confirm identification on entry to the school when taking examinations.

Candidates may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be visible to the invigilator, or else be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. The Examinations Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

For candidates with clashes in their timetable, the supervision of candidates, including identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision, where necessary, is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer 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 school, the Examinations Officer, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

Where it is deemed appropriate to apply for Special Consideration, the candidate must support any application with appropriate evidence within the required time period set out by the exam boards, for example by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Examinations Officer will then complete the Special Consideration form for the relevant awarding body or bodies before the deadline set by the exam boards for that exam series. Without sufficient evidence to satisfy that Special Consideration applies, the school is unable to support a claim.

17. Non-Examined Assessment and Appeals

Non-Examined Assessment replaces the largely discontinued term coursework. It is the duty of Heads of Departments to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for submission to the examination board, either by post or online, at the correct time and maintains a record which should be made available to the Examinations Officer.

17.1 Student Appeals Procedure for Internal Assessments

Internally Assessed Components for External Qualifications are conducted in accordance with the Awarding Body regulations for the subject specification of the qualification concerned, together with the School Policy and Procedures.

If a pupil feels that requirements, policies and procedures may not have been followed in relation to the assessment of their work, they may use the Appeals Procedure outlined below. Appeals may be made regarding the process, which led to the award of the mark, or to the mark awarded, or both.

17.2 Appeals Procedure

1. Candidates will receive their marks in internally assessed components once authentication statements have been signed and all marking and internal moderation procedures have been completed. Marks will be given to pupils before the appeals window opens or in some cases much earlier.
2. Appeals can only be made with the pupil's written consent and will only be accepted through email communication with Examinations Officer.
3. Appeals (using the route in paragraph 2 above) should give full details of the grounds for the appeal and clearly indicate whether the appeal is in relation to the mark awarded or the process which led to that mark being awarded, or both. It is not possible to operate a staged process of first appealing one aspect and then in the event that the appeal is not successful appealing the other.
4. Hollygirt School will make a charge to cover the cost of administration incurred for dealing with each appeal. These charges will depend on the examination board charges at the time of the appeal and will be communicated prior to the appeal. Requesting an appeal constitutes an acceptance of the charges. The appeal procedure will only begin on receipt of the relevant fees and must be paid within the appeals window to allow sufficient time for review of marking. Fees must be paid via BACS through the Bursar, with the payment headed "APPEAL FEE" so the Examinations Officer can be alerted to start the appeal process.
5. Candidates are advised that as with Ofqual requirements for an enquiry about results on written papers, as a result of an appeal of the mark for a coursework/controlled assessment component (i) the mark may be lowered as well as raised and (ii) if the original mark is considered reasonable in the view of the reviewer, it must stand.

6. Candidates must also be aware that non-examined assessments for external qualifications are moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation may change the marks awarded for internally assessed work. This is outside the control of Hollygirt School and is not covered by this procedure. Pupils cannot request a 'review of marking' from the examination boards for coursework based units on receipt of their results.
7. All appeals will be administered by the Examinations Officer, in liaison with other relevant staff as required.
8. Where the appeal relates to the mark awarded, the Examinations Officer will liaise with the Head of Department in the subject concerned. In the first instance, a review of the mark awarded will be carried out either by a member of staff with appropriate competence who has had no previous involvement in the initial assessment and has no personal interest in the review or an external assessor of comparable competence.
9. In the event that there is no member of staff with appropriate competence who has not had involvement with the initial assessment available, Hollygirt School will liaise with the Head of Department in the subject concerned to identify a reviewer with appropriate competence, which may be at another centre. In both cases, the reviewer will ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
10. Where the appeal relates to the process, the Examinations Officer will conduct the investigation, reviewing the process used in the department for internal assessment and decide whether it conformed to the requirements of JCQ, the awarding body, and the school and departmental policies and procedures regarding Internal Assessment of components for external qualifications.
11. The Examinations Officer will report the outcome of the appeal to the candidate as soon as practicable.
12. Where an appeal relating to the mark awarded is upheld, the candidate and awarding body will be informed of the new mark (which could be lower, the same or higher and cannot be re-appealed).
13. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Head, and a written record of the appeal kept and made available to the awarding body at their request.
14. In the event that the Examinations Officer is unable to administer an appeal or conduct an investigation into process, the Deputy Head will undertake these duties.
15. There is no further right of appeal, but in the event that a candidate has concerns about any aspect of the conduct of the appeal, he/she must raise these with the Head who will investigate as appropriate under the school's Complaints Procedure.

17.3 Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at school or by post to their home address. Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Head. The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head.

17.4 Post Results

If component marks are not reported on candidate results slips, then to obtain further details, candidates must contact their subject teacher who may be in on results day. If they are not in, then they can be contacted when back in school in term time.

Subject teachers should also be consulted before requesting a review of results. Reviews of results are inadvisable as most do not result in a change of grade and are expensive. The examination boards have careful checking procedures and particular attention is paid to those marks on the borderline of grade boundaries.

For example:

If a candidate was estimated a grade 7 and gained a grade 2 but had worked effectively and had no concerns after the exam, then an error may have occurred.

If that candidate gained a grade 6, it is highly unlikely that any error was made and the grade is likely to be a true reflection of how they performed in the examination relative to the other candidates across the country.

If a school/college place depends on it, then an urgent review can be placed with the Examinations Officer on the morning of results day or by 4.00pm the same day. The Examinations Officer must receive the correct consent form signed by the candidate, with correct payment, no later than 4.00pm on the day of results. Any later queries or reviews must first be discussed with the subject teacher. This will usually be during term time at the start of the academic year.

17.5 Reviews of Results (RORs)

RORs include clerical checks, post results reviews of marking, and electronic copies of scripts. A post results review of marking is a review of the original marking to ensure that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly. It checks the totalling of marks and the correct application of grade thresholds. It is different to a remark which boards do not offer. A clerical check is just a review of mark totalling for all parts of the script and that grade boundaries etc. have been applied correctly.

RORs may be requested by candidates or staff if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidate's consent is required before any ROR is requested. Candidates must sign the appropriate consent form, which will be provided by the Examinations Officer. It is important to note that grades can go up or down and therefore candidate consent is required for a clerical check or a review of marking.

For candidate RORs, payment of the relevant fee is required together with the correct consent form before the request is placed. This must be made via BACS bank transfer, with a notification email to confirm that the transfer has been made via BACS to the school.

Requests for RORs will not be accepted without payment in advance and a consent form signed by the candidate.

Deadlines and costs may be discussed with the Examination Officer on results day, or through email out of school opening times. As a general guide, consents and fees are typically needed by mid-September.

Boards will complete a clerical check within 10 days and a review of marking within 20 days of receiving the request.

A clerical check or review is refunded if the grades are altered up or down. An altered grade is **final and cannot revert**.

18. Access to Scripts

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request an electronic copy of their marked script. School staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. In all cases, the **consent of candidates** must be obtained. Reviews of marking may also include a copy of the script, subject to the individual exam board policy.

19. Certificates

Certificates are presented to pupils in person at the school reception once they have been received by the school. Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have been authorised to do so in advance. Photographic proof of identity is required for collection by a pupil or their pre-agreed person.

The school keeps certificates for a minimum of one year. Where certificates remain uncollected after this time, the school may return them to exam boards, or destroy them confidentially, in line with examination board regulations. Access to certificates after the period of one year may therefore need to be applied for through each exam board, who may issue “certifying statements of results” opposed to replacement certificates.

20. Cancellation of Exams

Where examinations are cancelled by the governing bodies and/or examination boards, official guidance from these bodies should be followed for the process for examination replacements. Refer to the Exams Contingency Planning Policy.

21. Controlled Assessments

Applies only to subjects where assessment of work is done within the school and then external moderation processes apply.

22. Senior Leadership Team

The SLT responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments;
- Ensure assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding body’s subject-specific instructions;
- At the start of the academic year, begin coordinating with Heads of Departments to schedule controlled assessments;
- Map overall resource management requirements for the year. As part of this, they are required to resolve:
 - clashes/problems over the timing or operation of controlled assessments;
 - issues arising from the need for particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc.);
- Create, publish and update an internal appeals policy for controlled assessments, in conjunction with the Examinations Officer.

23. Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Deciding on the awarding body and specification for a particular qualification and course;
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component;
- Ensure that individual teachers understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessments;
- Ensure that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes, and any other subject specific instructions;
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or contextualise sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.

24. Teaching Staff

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the current JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*, applicable at the time of assessment;
- Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any subject specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website;
- Supply to the Examinations Officer details of all unit codes for controlled assessments;
- Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times through liaison with the Examinations Officer;
- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to pupils as the specification and approved arrangements allow;
- Ensure that pupils and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment;
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark schemes provided by the awarding body. Submit marks to the awarding body when required, liaising with the Examinations Officer as necessary;
- Keeping a record of the marks awarded;
- Retain candidates' work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one);
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates' work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the school;
- Discuss with the SENCO, Approved Access Arrangements Person and/or Examinations Officer regarding any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

25. Examinations Officer

- Enter pupils for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment, external exam or on-screen test, before the deadline for final entries;
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office: to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format;
- Remind staff of deadline dates for entering marks online as applicable;
- On the few occasions where controlled assessment cannot be conducted in the classroom: arrange suitable accommodation where controlled assessment can be carried out, at the direction of SLT.

26. SENCO/Additional Learning Support

- Ensure access arrangements have been tested for and applied for, in conjunction with the Examinations Officer;
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met;
- Ensure that all teaching staff are kept up to date with candidate Access Arrangements.