Elms Bank
School & College

Excellence for All

Exam Appeal and Complaints Policy

Part of the
Oak
Learning Partnership

Key staff involved in Exam Appeals and Complaints

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Catherine Dent
Exam Lead	Jo Pagliuca
Exam Officer	Alexa Schagen
SENCO	Emma Farnworth
Senior Leader(s)	

Statement of Intent

Elms Bank School understands that it is the responsibility of everyone involved in the exam process to read, understand and implement this policy.
The school is committed to ensuring that:

- Internal assessments are conducted by members of teaching staff who have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to complete the duty to a consistently high standard.
- Assessment evidence provided by the candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the awarding body for the subject concerned.
- The consistency of internal assessment is maintained by internal moderation and standardisation.
- All student work being assessed by teaching staff for external qualifications is carried out fairly, consistently and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the specification relating to the qualification.

With the implementation of this policy, the school aims to ensure the:

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

Roles and responsibilities

The exams officer is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy throughout the school and ensuring the relevant staff understand its impact. Responding to queries in regards to this policy.
- Liaising with candidates when an internal or external appeal is submitted.
- Liaising with awarding bodies when an external appeal is submitted.
- Ensuring moderating standards are maintained and effective.
- Processing all Internal Appeals Forms and establishing the next course of action from each.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing the marking of all new internal markers, to ensure standards are satisfied.
- Reviewing this policy in liaison with the exams officer and SLT.

Heads of departments are responsible for:

- Ensuring that markers within their department are familiar with the grade boundaries, marking criteria and high standards of consistency that they are expected to use when internally marking work.
- Offering guidance and training to internal markers as required.
- Monitoring the effectiveness and consistency of marking within their departments and addressing any issues promptly.

Internal markers are responsible for:

- Marking internal work against the correct marking criteria and grade boundaries.
- Ensuring their marking is consistent and fair.
- Being unbiased when completing their marking.
- Participating in reviews and monitoring activities of marking data, to ensure it remains consistent across the school.

Acceptable grounds for appeal

- Appeals will only be deemed valid when based on procedural irregularity in terms of the conduct of the examination or determination of the result.
- Appeals will be deemed invalid and not upheld if based purely on the following:
    - Academic judgement of examiners
    - Extenuating circumstances affecting performance

Internal appeals process

- The school will ensure that candidates are informed of their centre-assessed marks prior to them being submitted to the awarding body, so that candidates may request a review.
- Candidates will be informed that they may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether they wish for a review to take place.
- Any requests for copies of materials will be returned to the candidates within seven days and candidates will have seven days to review the materials.
- If a candidate, or their parent, wishes to appeal against the procedure used in an internal assessment, they should write to the school's exams officer using the Internal Appeals Form.
- The deadline for appeal applications is 10 days prior to the start of the written exam series.
- Internal appeals will be resolved by the date of the last externally assessed paper of the series (e.g. by the end of June for the summer series).
- On receipt of a written appeal, an enquiry will be conducted by the exams officer, a member of the SLT and a head of department who is not involved in the internal assessment decision.
- The school will ensure that those completing the review have the appropriate competence and are unbiased.
- This enquiry will consider whether the procedure used in the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body and the JCQ Code of Practice.
- Consideration will be given to whether the original mark awarded is fair and just.
- If necessary, comparisons will be made to other students' work to help determine a correct and appropriate mark.
- A written response to the appeal will be sent to the candidate and their parents within 10 working days of the school receiving the appeal.

- A written record of the appeal and the outcome will be kept on file at the school, with the awarding body being informed of any amendments.
- Candidates should note, after their work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency – this moderation process may lead to marks being altered and the school has no control over this.

External appeals process Enquiries about results (EARs)

- EARs can be submitted throughout the academic year.
- Candidates should be aware that EARs can result in the marks/grades being raised, confirmed or lowered.
- Any candidate who wants to query a mark/grade awarded by an awarding body should adhere to the following procedure:
    - Contact the exams officer and the subject teacher as soon as possible in person to discuss the mark/grade.
    - The exams officer will advise on the options available to query the mark/grade and any costs involved in doing so.
    - Candidates must sign a consent form to confirm that they understand the consequences of an EAR; these forms will be issued by the exams officer.
    - Consent forms must be returned before an EAR can be valid.
    - The subject teacher will review the candidate's grades and discuss them with the head of department to agree on the appropriate action, considering the breakdown of marks, the grade boundaries and the candidate's predicted grades.
    - If the EAR is supported, the department will make a request, together with the student's consent form, to the exams officer before the deadline for EARs.
    - The cost of the enquiry will be met by the departmental budget.
    - If the EAR is successful, the fee will be refunded.
    - If the department does not agree to support the EAR, a candidate may appeal against the decision not to support an EAR by doing the following:
        - Appeals should be made in writing to the exams officer, at least five working days before the published deadline for EARs
        - The appeal should state the reason(s) for the appeal
        - This appeal must be signed, dated and include the contact number and email address of the student and their parent
        - The appeal information will be reviewed by the exams officer and a member of the SLT
        - The outcome of the appeal will be communicated either by telephone, email or first-class post, as appropriate, within 24 hours of receipt
        - The decision that is reached is final

- If the department does not agree to support the EAR, the fee will be paid by the candidate at the time the EAR is made. No enquiry will be processed until the correct fee is paid.
- Requests must be made to the exams officer before the published deadline for EARs.
- If the department does not agree to support the EAR and the enquiry is successful, the fee will be refunded to the candidate
- Outcomes following EARs will be forwarded by the exams officer to the student as soon as they have been received from the awarding bodies.

Appeals against outcomes of post-results services

- Post-results services refer to clerical re-checks, reviews or marking and reviews of moderation.
- In instances where the school is dissatisfied with an assessment result, the school will apply for a clerical re-check, review of marking or review of moderation.
- If an appeal application is accepted, an investigation into candidates' or the school's results will follow – this will generally not involve a review of a candidate's work.
- As internal candidates are not entitled to appeal directly, the school will do it on their account, if the school agrees.
- Appeals will be made within 30 calendar days of the awarding body issuing the outcome.
- The appeal will either be rejected or upheld in full or in part.

Appeals against malpractice decisions

- The headteacher may appeal against a finding of malpractice and/or the sanction imposed on the school, and on behalf of candidates.
- Appeals will be based on reasonable grounds that relate to the incidents in question.

Appeals against decisions made in respect of access arrangements and special consideration

- The school must make appeals on candidates' behalf.
- The exams officer will discuss the matter with the relevant awarding body prior to undertaking the appeal.
- The appeal request will be made within two calendar weeks of receiving the original decision and will set out clearly and concisely the grounds for the appeal.

Disputes over appeals Internal

- If, after appealing an internal mark, candidates are dissatisfied with the decision, a letter requesting a personal hearing should be made to the exams officer.
- Following this:
    - A date for a hearing must be given to the candidate and any teachers involved in the assessment.

    - A hearing panel should be established. The panel must consist of a least two individuals who have not previously dealt with the particular case.
    - The school will make a written record of the hearing, which should include the outcome of the appeal and the reasons for that outcome.
    - A copy will be sent to the candidate, their parents and teacher(s) within 10 working days of the hearing.

- If, after this, candidates are still dissatisfied, candidates will compile a written explanation of the situation and pass this to the headteacher.
    - The exams officer will pass the following details on to the headteacher within 24 hours of the headteacher receiving the candidate's letter:
    - An explanation and confirmation of the assessment decision
    - Assessment record sheets
    - Any written comments
- Candidates will be given an opportunity to speak to the SLT.
- The assessor who marked the work originally will be asked to attend the meeting and answer any questions.
- The matter will be discussed in private by the SLT and the candidate will be given a written response within five working days.
- This decision will be final.

Appeals against school's decision to not support a clerical check, review of marking, review of moderation or an appeal

- Where the school does not support a decision to appeal for a clerical check, review of marking, review of moderation or an appeal, the candidate is at liberty to pay the appropriate fee and a request will be made to the awarding body on their behalf.

If the candidate (or their parent) believes there are grounds to appeal against the school's decision to not support an enquiry, an internal appeal can be submitted to the school using the Internal Appeals Form at least one week prior to the internal deadline for submitting an EAR