Elms Bank
School & College

Excellence for All

Examination Policy

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Part of the
Oak
Learning Partnership

Rationale

- *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 centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy. The exam policy will be reviewed annually*

Examination Responsibilities

Having overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre, the Head teacher and senior leadership team:

- Advise on appeals and re-marks.
- Are responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document - Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures – 2022-2023.

Details of other responsibilities are as follows:-

Exams Officer with the Exams administrator:

- Manage the administration of public and internal exams.
- Advise the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- Oversee the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicate regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- Ensure that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Consult with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Provide and confirm detailed data on estimated entries.
- Receive, check and store securely all exam papers and completed scripts.
- Identify and manage exam timetable clashes.
- Line manage the senior exam invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Submit candidates' coursework marks, track despatch and store returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Arrange for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forward, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests.
- Maintain systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- 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.
- The exams office and centre administration will ensure the secure storage of all despatch materials, exam materials and certificates. These will be kept in the safe in the dedicated Exams Storage Facility.

SENCO and Examination Administrator

- Administer access arrangements and make applications for special consideration using the JCQ publications Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration booklets for the current academic year.
- 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.

Teachers/Subject leaders

- 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 for entries.
- Ensure that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them.
- Submit candidates' coursework marks, track despatch and store returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- Being aware of exam board deadlines for their particular courses.
- Ensuring entries are made to meet exam board deadlines.
- Providing estimated grades/levels.
- Analysing exam results and acting on learning points made from these each year.
- Submission of course codes and specification details.
- Keeping up to date with national legislation and curriculum changes.
- Maintaining accurate, detailed and up to date records of pupil progression and achievement – this includes accreditation of prior learning. Records will be kept for 3 years after certification.

Lead invigilator/invigilators

- 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 their return to the exams office.
- Ensuring exams are run in line with JCQ guidelines (Yellow booklet – Instructions for Conducting Examinations).
- Completing attendance registers and seating plans for all exams and returning these with the exam papers.

- Ensuring that all JCQ front sheets are completed for access arrangements (e.g. for readers and scribes etc. Please note if a pupil has a reader only a front sheet is not necessary).
- Completing a written record of any incidents in the 'Exams incident log' book.

Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own
- Completion of Data Protection form (if relevant) to support access arrangements
- Recognition of Exams and Appeals Policy

What are the qualifications offered at Elms Bank?

- The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Subject leaders and Senior leadership team.
- The qualifications offered are GCSE, Entry level, BTEC, NCFE, Arts Award, Working Towards Independence (ASDAN), Functional skills, Unit awards (AQA), Ingots and City and Guilds.
- The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the main office and the exams office must be informed as soon as possible.
- Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Heads of subject.
- Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the Candidates/parents/carers, Subject teachers and Head of key stage.

How is the examination timetable organised?

- Internal exams and assessments are scheduled in November, January, February, March, May and June.
- External exams and assessments are scheduled in January, February, March, May and June.
- Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.
- The Heads of subjects decide which exam series are used in the centre.
- On-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the exams officer and the senior leadership team is the policy for offering on-demand testing.
- Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetable for External exams.

How are examination entries organised?

- Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Heads of subject and Subject teachers. Learners are recruited with integrity. Learner options choices at key stage 4 and 5 are mainly adult led due to the

nature of the pupils we have at Elms Bank. The entry and selection criteria for candidates at Elms Bank are very different to that of a mainstream setting. Parents and carers are consulted with their child and teacher advice is sought to help every student achieve their full potential.

- Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.
- The centre does not accept entries from external candidates
- The centre does not act as an exam centre for other organisations
- Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via Email, Briefing Meeting.
- Late entries are authorised by the Exams officer and Assistant Head teacher for exams.
- GCSE retakes are allowed.
- Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with Candidates, Subject teachers, Exams officer and Heads of subject.

How are examination fees managed?

- 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.
- Entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.
- Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the Departments and Centre.
- 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 without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances.
- Re-sit fees are paid by the Centre and the candidate as appropriate to each individual case.

Disability Discrimination Act

- All exam centre staff must ensure that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and the Disability Equality Duty (DED), introduced in 2006.
- The DDA introduced measures aimed at eliminating the discrimination often faced by disabled people. 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 DDA 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 centre will meet the disability provisions under the DDA and the Equality Act 2010, by ensuring that the exams centre is accessible and improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of centre, Deputy Head, Heads of department and Exams officer.

Access Arrangements

- See appendix 1

Overseas students

- Managing overseas students is the responsibility of the exams officer.

Contingency planning

- See appendix 2

Inclement weather conditions

- If there are inclement weather conditions and the centre will be closed, a text message will be sent out and local media informed of the closure. A message will also appear on the school's website.
- If it is an early exam series: the 'free' (provided the awarding body had been informed of the situation so they would not charge) re-sit route. In extreme circumstances, they would consider a special consideration application at the time of the re-sit if the teaching programme had been designed to deliver that module earlier in the year
- If a final series: then the enhanced grading route (JCQ booklet A Guide to the Special Consideration Process General and Vocational Qualifications **Chapter 4 Candidates who are absent from a time-tabled component/unit for acceptable reasons)** would be recommended, providing the minimum assessment requirements have been met (**GCSE: 40% of the total assessment must be completed)**
- Make reference to the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan Joint Contingency Plan (jcq.org.uk)
- Make reference to the JCQ Disaster Recovery Planning document http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/728/Disaster%20Recovery%20_Website_.pdf

Fire alarm procedure during an exam

- A common sense approach should be taken and no unnecessary risk placed on pupils or staff if there is a real fire.
- When the fire alarm sounds: the lead invigilator should await instructions from the Assistant Head teacher for exams or the Deputy Head teacher or the Head teacher. Do not leave the exam venue unless a clear instruction has been given.

In the event of an evacuation:

- candidates should be reminded that they remain under exam conditions and should not attempt to talk or communicate with any other candidate as this could lead to disqualification
- They should be escorted by an invigilator or member of staff out of the exam room, following the fire exit route.

- Candidates should remain in seating/candidate number order and 2 meters apart at all times.
- Exit the building following the fire exit route.
- Candidates should be kept apart from the rest of the school population and asked to line up (2 meters apart) at the far end of the yard (nearest the railings facing Ripon Avenue).
- An attendance register should be taken once outside and absences reported to the exams officer.
- A full report will be sent to the exam board and a request for special consideration for the disturbance will be submitted.
- Please also see Appendix 3 Emergency Evacuation Procedure for Examinations

How are examination invigilators managed and trained?

- Support staff and the examination administrator are used to invigilate examinations.
- These invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.
- Invigilators carry out annual training to ensure they are up to date with the procedures.
- Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams office.

How is malpractice managed?

- **See Appendix 4 – for further information**

- The senior leadership team is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.
- If it is an incidence of pupil malpractice, the exam invigilator of that particular exam will be required to complete form JCQ/M1 'Suspected Candidate Malpractice' and then senior management will investigate the matter.
- If it is an incidence of staff malpractice, the Head teacher will lead the investigation to explore the matter fully and draw out a conclusion and the learning points that can be carried forward. If necessary, disciplinary action will be taken depending on the nature of each individual case.

How are examination days organised and executed?

Exams Officer and Examination Administrator will ensure:

- 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 invigilator.
- Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.
- The lead invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions or sections are to be attempted.
- In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

- 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 at the end of the exam session.
- A relevant subject teacher may be available to read out any subject-specific instructions and start the exam, if required.
- Where the Exams Officer is a subject teacher, they will temporarily delegate their duties to the Head of Centre on exam days featuring their own subject.

Candidates:

- The centre'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 centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.
- 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 may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. The Subject teacher is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day or subsequently.
- The exams officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays (clash candidates)

How is special consideration managed?

- 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 centre, the exams 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 by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.
- The exams officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam

How does Elms Bank support prior learning?

- If a student should transfer to Elms Bank School once a course has started, their prior learning and achievement will be recognised and where it can contribute to accreditation this will be followed up.
- Their unique learner number records and records from any previous school(s) will be used as evidence for prior learning. Where learning is evidenced only through a national examination e.g. for GCSEs, the learner is required to sit this examination.
- Recognition of prior learning is a method of assessment, leading to the award of credit that considers whether students can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge,

understanding or skills they already possess. Evidence of learning must be current, valid and reliable to count as recognition of prior learning (RPL).

How are controlled assessment managed?

Controlled assessments are the responsibility of Subject leaders:

- All controlled assessments should be run in line with the relevant awarding body's regulations.
- The member of SLT responsible for examinations and Examinations Officer should be informed of the running of all controlled assessments at least two weeks prior to their commencement.
- Subject Leaders will ensure that the Examinations Officer and the curriculum support department are informed of all students requiring special consideration or access arrangements for their controlled assessments at least two weeks prior to their commencement.
- Subject Leaders will complete and pass relevant mark sheets and samples to the Examinations Officer.
- The Examinations Office will dispatch mark sheets, controlled assessment samples and keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.
- Subject Leaders provide the Examinations Office with marks for all internally assessed work

Subject Leader responsibilities

- All coursework should be completed in line with the relevant awarding body's regulations.
- Students should submit coursework before the deadlines provided by Subject Leaders.
- Subject Leaders will complete and pass relevant mark sheets and samples to the Examinations Officer.
- The Examinations Office will dispatch mark sheets, coursework samples and keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

How are internal assessments managed and quality assured?

- **See appendix 5 – management of internal moderation**

GCSE Controlled Assessments

SLT Responsibilities

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments. Ensure assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.

- At the start of the academic year, begin coordinating with heads of department/subject to schedule controlled assessments. (It is advisable that controlled assessments be spread throughout the academic years of key stage 4).
- Map overall resource management requirements for the year. As part of this 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.)

- Subject coordinators should ensure they have checked exam board deadlines and inform SLT of any issues or concerns.
- The internal appeals section of the current exams policy is applicable for controlled assessments as well.

Subject Leader responsibilities

- Decide on the awarding body and specification for a particular GCSE.
- Ensure that at least 40% of overall assessment (controlled and/or external assessment) is taken in the exam series in which the qualification is certificated, to satisfy the terminal assessment requirement in accordance with the awarding body specification.
- 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 assessment
- 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 contextualize sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.

Teacher responsibilities

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*
- 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 exams office 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.
- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows
- Ensure that students 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 through the exams office to the awarding body when required, 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 centre.

Exam officer/administrator responsibilities

- Enter students for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment, external exam or on-screen test, before the deadline for final entries.
- Enter students' 'cash-in' codes for the terminal exam series.

- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in media or hard copy format.
- Download and distribute mark sheets for teaching staff to use, and collect and send mark sheets to awarding bodies before deadlines.
- 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 the senior leadership team.
- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Appeals against internal assessments

In accordance with the Code of Practice for the Conduct of External Qualifications produced by the QCDA, Elms Bank is committed to ensuring that:

- internal assessments are conducted fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned
- subject leaders will ensure that moderation takes place to maintain consistency
- subject leaders will maintain accurate and up to date records of learner progression and achievement
- assessments are conducted by staff who have been trained in this activity and have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills
- assessment evidence provided by the candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the relevant specification for each subject
- the consistency of internal assessment is assured through internal standardisation as set out by the awarding bodies
- staff responsible for internal assessments and/or internal standardisation attend any compulsory training sessions

Appeals against internal assessment marks will be investigated fully by the senior management team. The appeal applies only to the procedures used in arriving at internal assessment decisions and does not apply to the judgement themselves; you cannot appeal against the mark or grade only the procedures used. The parent or carer must make the appeal in writing to the Assistant Headteacher for exams. The enquiry into the internal process will normally be led by the Assistant Headteacher for exams and the exams officer providing the Assistant Headteacher has not played a part in the original internal assessment process. If this is the case, the Deputy Headteacher will lead the enquiry instead. The teacher marking

the assessment will be able to respond to the appeal in writing. The enquiry will consider whether the procedures used for internal assessment were in conformity with the published requirements of the awarding body and the code of practice. The candidate involved will be informed of the outcome of the appeal in writing. This will include relevant communications with the awarding body and any steps taken to further protect the interest of candidates. If the candidate is unhappy about the response in writing, he/she can ask for a personal hearing, where the panel will consist of two persons not previously involved, normally the Headteacher and a member of the Governing body.

Each awarding body specifies detailed criteria for the internal assessment of work. In addition, the awarding body must moderate the assessment and the final judgement on marks awarded is that of the awarding body. Appeals against matters outside the school's control will not be considered in the school's appeals procedure.

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

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at the centre or by post to their home addresses, candidates to provide self-addressed envelope. Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Head of centre. The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of centre. The accessibility of senior members of staff will be available immediately after results.

EARs (Enquiries about results)

- EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidates consent is required before any EAR is requested.
- If a result is queried, the exams officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.
- When the centre does not support a candidate's or parent's request for an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged.

ATS (access to scripts)

- After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.
- 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 a script has been returned.

Certificates

Certificates are Presented in person at Awards evening.

- Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have been authorised to do so and can provide appropriate identification.
- Certificates are withheld from candidates who owe fees.
- The centre retains certificates and assessment documents for three years.
- A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Certificates are stored in the safe in the dedicated Exams Storage Facility. Certificates received in school are checked off against the estimated grades information provided by subject leaders so that any inconsistencies can be spotted immediately. The safe claiming and distribution of certificates is managed by the exams officer and centre administration.

Who is the policy for?

- Head Teacher
- Assistant Head Teacher responsible for Examinations
- Examination Administrator
- Subject Leaders
- SENCO
- Candidates