

Birkdale High School



Birkdale
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

Exams Policy
November 2020 – 2021



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Birkdale High School **Exams Policy**

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Member of staff responsible: Assistant Headteacher
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Purpose of this policy

Birkdale High School is committed to ensuring that the exams management and administration process is run effectively and efficiently and in the best interests of candidates. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- All centre staff involved in the exams process clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, are well informed and supported
- All aspects of the centre's exam process is documented, supporting the exams contingency plan
- All exams and assessments are conducted in accordance with JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus maintaining the integrity and security of the examination / assessment system at all times

Key staff involved in the exams policy are as follows

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Gil Bourgade
Assistant Headteacher - Data & Exams Lead	Helen Duffy
Data & Exams Officer	Karen Williams
SENDCo	Jayne Weir

This policy will be communicated to all relevant centre staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand, and implement this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the ways of working in the centre are accurately reflected and that exams and assessments are conducted to current JCQ and awarding body regulations, instructions and guidance.

The Assistant Headteacher - Data and Exams Lead and The Data & Exams Officer (Referred to from here on as The Exams Office) are responsible for the annual review and any required update of this policy.

The Headteacher and Governors are responsible for the approval of this policy.

Qualifications Offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Senior Leadership Team.

The types of qualifications currently offered are:

- GCSE
- OCR Cambridge National Certificate
- WJEC Level 1 / Level 2 Vocational Award

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's options booklet for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the Exams Office must be informed by 30th September of each academic year.

Making changes to the qualification offered, is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and the subject Head of Department. The Head of Department is responsible for informing the Exams Office of any new specification.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be made by the subject Head of Department and must be agreed by the Senior Leadership Team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Centre

- Has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre.

“The Head of Centre is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements in order to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations / assessments at all times.

The Data & Exams Officer is the person appointed by the Head of Centre to act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in matters relating to the general administration of awarding body examinations and assessments.”

- Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:

[General regulations for approved centres](#) (GR)

[Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE)

[Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) (AA)

[Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments](#) (SMEA)

- Ensures the centre has appropriate accommodation to support the size of the cohorts being taught including appropriate accommodation for candidates requiring access arrangements for exams and assessments
- Takes responsibility for responding to the National Centre Number Register annual update (administered on behalf of the JCQ member awarding bodies by OCR) by the set deadline each year, confirming they are both aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ regulations and signs and returns the head of centre's declaration which is then kept on file for inspection purposes

- Ensures the Data & Exams Officer receives appropriate support from relevant centre staff and enables them to attend appropriate training and other events in order to facilitate the effective delivery of exams and assessments within the centre (as example, networking events, relevant events and training offered by awarding bodies, MIS providers and other external providers)
- Ensures centre staff are supported and appropriately trained to undertake key tasks within the exams process
- Ensures that centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by The Exams Office
- Ensures “that a teacher who teaches the subject being examined, or a senior member of the teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for the candidates preparation for the examination, is not an invigilator during the timetabled written examination or on-screen test...”
- Ensures confidentiality and security within the examination process is compliant with and managed according to JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions including:
 - the location of the centre’s secure storage facility in a secure room solely assigned to examinations for the purpose of administering secure examination materials
 - appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential materials are only delivered to authorised members of centre staff
 - access to the secure room and secure storage facility is restricted to the authorised 2-4 keyholders
 - the relevant awarding body is immediately informed if the security of question papers or confidential supporting instructions is put at risk
 - that arrangements are in place to check that the correct question paper packets are opened by authorised members of centre staff
- Takes all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during the course of, and after examinations have taken place
- Ensures irregularities are investigated and informs the awarding bodies of any cases of alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, are reported to the awarding body immediately
- Ensures risks to the exam process are assessed and appropriate risk management processes / contingency plans are in place (that allow the head of centre to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence)
- Makes the final decision on whether to agree a post results service request

The Exams Office

- Manages the administration of the external exams
- Understands the contents of annually updated JCQ publications
- Ensures the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations
- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, class teachers, SENDCO 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/carers are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them
- Checks with Heads of Department and / or teaching staff that the necessary coursework and / or non-exam assessments are completed on time and monitors the submission of coursework and / or non-exam assessments
- Maintains systems and processes to support timely learner registrations and exam entries, as requested throughout the year
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- Accounts for expenditure relating to all exam costs
- Organises the training, and monitoring of a team of exam invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- Administers access arrangements and supports the SENDCO in making applications for access arrangements
- Ensures candidates' coursework / non-exam assessment marks, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies, are submitted correctly and on schedule
- Dispatches and tracks coursework / non-exam assessment samples
- Securely stores returned coursework / non-exam assessment samples
- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates
- Processes, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, any post results service requests

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Guidance and pastoral support of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries
- Accurate completion of entry requirements, and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Office
- Ensuring that all staff follow instructions for conducting non-exam assessments and subject-specific information where provided by the awarding body
- Accurate completion of all coursework / non-exam assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
- Advising on decisions regarding post-results requests

Teachers are responsible for:

- Supplying information on entries, coursework / non-exam assessments as required by the Head of Department and / or the Exams Office
- Ensuring that appropriate instructions for conducting non-exam assessments are followed

- Accurate completion of coursework / non-exam assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets for the classes they teach
- Informing candidates of the mark they have been awarded for any internally assessed units / components, prior to submission to the awarding body

The Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinator (SENDCO) is responsible for:

- Identifying and organising testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements
- Making applications for special consideration, following JCQ regulations, and notifying the Exams Office in good time so that they are able to put in place any necessary arrangements for candidates
- Working with the Exams Office to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms

Exam Timetables

Once confirmed, the Exams Office will circulate exam timetables for the external exams at a specified date before each series begins.

Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

The centre does not accept entries from private candidates.

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

Heads of Department can request a subject entry or withdrawal.

Candidates and / or parents / carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

Any requests for withdrawal, whether from Heads of Department, candidates or parents / carers, must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

Entry deadlines will be circulated to Heads of Departments by the Exams Office.

Heads of Department will provide estimated entry / entry information to the Exams Office by the set deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding body deadline require the authorisation, in writing, of Heads of Department.

Exam Fees

Candidates / Departments will not be charged for changes of tier or withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding body.

The Exams Office will publish the deadline for action well in advance.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid for by the centre from the Examinations budget. However individual departments may be charged for any errors made in their entry requirements.

Fee reimbursements may be sought from candidates:

- If they fail to sit an exam
- If they do not meet the necessary coursework/non-exam assessment requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances

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 candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

Access Arrangements

The SENDCO 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 SENDCO.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding body is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Office.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENDCO and Exams Office.

Contingency Planning & Fire Evacuation Procedure

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team with the Exams Office.

In the event of a fire and full evacuation, all persons evacuate the exam venues and assemble in the designated area at the back of the diploma building and media hall.

The Exams Office will ensure that all invigilators are made aware of the Emergency Evacuation procedures during the Invigilator training.

The Exams Office will ensure that there is a written copy of the Emergency Evacuation procedure in each exam venue.

Managing Invigilators

A team of Invigilators will be used to invigilate examinations.

Invigilators are used for all external exams.

Invigilator rates of pay are set by the Headteacher.

Invigilators are timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Office.

Malpractice

The Head of Centre, in consultation with the Exams Office, is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice in line with the schools Malpractice policy.

Exam Days

The Exams Office will book all exam rooms after liaison with other staff and will make the question papers, other exam stationery, and materials available for the invigilators.

Site Management Staff are responsible for setting up appropriate seating in the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements in advance.

Invigilators, with support from the Exams Office, will ensure that all exam rooms meet the requirements set out by JCQ.

A named invigilator 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 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, no earlier than the official finish time or after all candidates have completed the exam.

After an exam, the Exams Office, working in conjunction with Invigilators, will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies.

Examination scripts are dispatched using awarding body envelopes and the Parcelforce yellow label service. The consignment number for each package sent, is written on the duplicate attendance register, which is retained by the Exams Office. Packages awaiting dispatch are stored in the secure storage until the arrival of Parcelforce. The driver collecting the exam papers signs and dates the dispatch log.

The Parcelforce dispatch log and all attendance registers are kept by the Exams Office until all results and EARs are received.

Candidates

The Exams Office will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series.

Candidates must adhere to the school's published rules on uniform and behaviour 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, watches 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. Candidates who leave an exam room early must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

The Exams Office, working in conjunction with Invigilators, is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

Clash Candidates

The Exams Office will arrange, as necessary, a secure venue and arrangements for supervising candidates with a timetable clash.

Special Consideration

The Exams Office will:

- Process all appropriate requests for special consideration to awarding bodies
- Gather evidence which is provided by candidates and / or other staff in the centre
- Submit requests to awarding bodies by the external deadline

Internal Assessment

It is the duty of the Head of Department to ensure that all internal assessments are ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Office will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the Exams Office by the Head of Department / subject teacher.

Any appeals against internal assessment decisions will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Appeals against Internal Assessment Decisions policy.

All sample requests are sent to the moderators via royal mail, with proof of posting kept by the Exams Office.

Results Day

Candidates will receive an individual results slip, in person at the centre. The school reserves the right not to allow a candidate on the premises to collect their results. In these circumstances, an alternative means for providing results will be agreed with the candidate.

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document.

Results will not be issued to any other person or by any other method without prior permission from the candidate. Prior agreement must be provided by completion, by the candidate, of the *“Exam Results Collection Candidate Consent Form”*

Results will not be given out over the phone.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Site Manager. The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. Key information regarding EARs will be included with the results.

A request for a clerical re-check or review of marking 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.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by the Senior Leadership Team.

The cost of EARs will be paid for by the candidate, unless it has been requested by the Senior Leadership Team.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the centre will respond by following the process set out in the Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Office, following the JCQ guidance.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask for the return of written exam papers before the final date for enquiries about results and other result enquiries as stated by JCQ key dates.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes; the consent of candidates must be obtained first.

A review of marking cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost of ATS will be paid for by the candidate unless it has been requested by the Senior Leadership Team.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Exams Office.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates in person at the centre on Awards Evening. If candidates do not attend, certificates may also be collected in person, at a later date, from the Exams Office.

All certificates must be signed for, on collection.

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 until collected by the candidate in secure conditions, for a minimum of one year from the date of issue, as required by JCQ. The certificates can then be destroyed by the centre after this time.

Exams Policy Addendum

This addendum applies until further notice.

Unless covered in this addendum, our normal Exams Policy continues to apply.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2021 Exams

As a school we need to be prepared for the possibility that we may be asked to make changes to our exam provision in some form for the 2021 cohort, in case of any long term school closures or disruptions, which necessitates changes to the Summer exams.

The Exams Officer, will be responsible for monitoring updates from Ofqual so that we are aware of any changes to the exam season. The Exams Office, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, will be responsible for implementing any changes and ensuring compliance with any new procedures.

We need to prepare for the possibility that formal national mock exams may be introduced. If this is the case, the Exams Office will be responsible for organising these exams with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, ensuring that they take place in line with the procedures detailed by Ofqual.