

Cardinal Allen Catholic High School  
A Specialist Maths and Computing College

# Examinations Policy

April 2011



## Essential reading for all KS4 pupils & their parents



The purpose of this exam policy is:

1. To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
2. 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. This exam policy will be reviewed annually. This exam policy will be reviewed by the head of centre, deputy head, senior leadership team and the exams officer.

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### 1. Exam responsibilities

#### Head of centre

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the head of centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*.

#### Exams office manager / exams officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams and analysis of exam results:

- advises 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 exam boards.
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors 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 JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ *Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and *Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages the senior exam invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- prepares and presents reports to the SLT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made
- submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

### **Deputy Head**

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16.

### **Curriculum Leaders**

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

### **Assistant Headteacher responsible for Careers Information**

- Guidance and careers information.

### **Teachers**

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to heads of department/school/curriculum.

### **SENCO**

- Administration of access arrangements.
- 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.

### **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.

### **Candidates**

- Confirmation and checking of entries on receipt of timetables.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Ensuring pupils are present for all exams and properly equipped.
- Involvement in checking procedures with pupils on receipt of timetables.

## **2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered**

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the head of centre, deputy head, heads of curriculum and the senior leadership team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Adult Literacy and Numeracy tests and BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate & Diploma. The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject or all NCTs will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, SENCO, subject teachers, curriculum leaders and the deputy head.

### **At Key Stage 4**

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

### 3. Exam seasons and timetables

#### 3.1 Exam seasons:

Internal exams are scheduled in December, January, March and April.

External exams are scheduled in November, March and May/June.

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the curriculum leaders in conjunction with SLT.

#### 3.2 Timetables:

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal exams and external exams.

Candidates will be asked to check their statements of entry and individual candidate timetables in advance of the exam, and bring any errors to the attention of the Exams Officer immediately.

### 4. Entries, entry details and late entries

#### 4.1 Entries:

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the curriculum leaders, subject teachers in conjunction with SLT.

Candidates, or parents/carers, can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. A decision to accept such a request will be made after discussion with teachers and curriculum leaders.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates.

#### 4.2 Late entries:

Entry deadlines are circulated to curriculum leaders via internal email/telephone. Late entries are authorised by the curriculum leaders, deputy headteacher and exams officer.

### 5. Exam fees

The centre will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by departments, or candidates if the late entry is a re-sit.

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 cost of initial examination entries is borne by the school, the only exception to this being if a pupil is studying a subject outside school and wishes to be entered for the examination in that subject through school. In this instance, the pupil/parents would be asked to pay the entry fee.

GCSE subjects are now widely assessed through modular examinations. Previously, syllabus structures meant that pupils would sit their final examinations at the end of Year 11. The assessment and examination process now continues throughout Years 10 and 11. Many of you will already be familiar with the idea of modular exams through Science and Maths.

Re-sitting modules has become more widespread. At Cardinal Allen our need is to determine which pupils are deserving of re-sit opportunities. This decision will be made in consultation with the Governing Body, Headteacher, Curriculum Leaders, Subject Staff and Examinations Officer. The decision will be based on the pupil's work ethic, target grade, performance in recent assessments, personal circumstances etc.

***Realistically, the school's examination budget cannot stretch to fund re-sits for every pupil who underachieves in a modular examination. We feel that it is fair to ask parents to make a contribution towards the cost of re-sits for their child, if the re-sit request is accepted. There may be individual student exceptions in the case of demonstrable financial hardship.***

The Department for Education informs us that parents can be charged for the cost of an examination entry if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement of a syllabus. An example of

this would be a failure to complete coursework that is a requirement for the assessment of that exam. This is particularly relevant to BTEC subjects which are coursework based and have no examined units. If a pupil registered on a BTEC course fails to meet the criteria to pass any unit of the specification by the deadline for submission of marks, meaning the award for which the pupils was originally registered cannot be achieved, parents will be asked to pay the original entry fee. If the pupil is able to certify for a lesser award, parents will be asked to pay the difference in cost of registration for the two awards.

### Other charges - Enquiries About Results

It is often the case that pupils do not achieve their target grade in examinations. If parents, pupils or teachers feel that an enquiry into a pupil's mark or grade may result in the grade or mark being increased, a results enquiry can be submitted. These services can include a review of marking, clerical re-check, or access to the original examination scripts.

An enquiry can only be made if all three parties agree and consent forms must be signed. If a parent or pupil is requesting the enquiry, any resulting charges will be passed on to parents. If a member of staff requests an appeal, their department will usually fund any costs. If an enquiry results in the overall mark or grade being increased, there is no charge.

### Under Performance in Examinations

If a pupil's performance in an examination could have been affected by factors such as illness at the time of the exam, recent bereavement, family illness, circumstances at home or for any other reason, it is essential that Miss McGovern is informed of this, preferably by the pupil's parent/guardian **at the time of the examination**. In some cases we may be able to apply for Special Consideration. If a pupil is ill, a medical note will be required to support the claim.

## 6. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements

### 6.1 DDA:

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

### 6.2 Special needs:

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

### 6.3 Access arrangements:

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO and the exams officer. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the exams officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO with the exams officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the exams officer.

## 7. Estimated grades

Estimated grades: Curriculum Leaders will submit estimated grades to the exams officer when requested by the exams officer.

## **8. Managing invigilators and exam days**

### **8.1 Managing invigilators**

External invigilators will be used for external exams.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the exams office.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the exams office. CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre. Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the exams office. Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

### **8.2 Exam days:**

The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator. Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms. The lead invigilator or exams officer 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 and discipline, but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted, nor should they attempt to access the exam papers. In practical exams subject teachers may be present.

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.

## **9. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration**

### **9.1 Candidates:**

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all 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 may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The exams officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

### **9.2 Clash candidates:**

The exams officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

### **9.3 Special consideration:**

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 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.

## **10. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments**

### **10.1 Coursework:**

Candidates who have to prepare coursework should do so by the end of the course.

Curriculum Leaders will ensure all coursework is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The exams officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the exams office by the subject teachers and the heads of curriculum.

### **10.2 Appeals against internal assessments:**

The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the exams office.

The main points are:

- appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- appeals should be made in writing by 30 June to the head of centre (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- the head of centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the exams officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

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

### 11.1 Results:

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days either in person at the centre or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae).

Arrangements for the school 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.

### 11.2 EARs:

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

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 uphold 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.

### 11.3 ATS:

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.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

## 12. Certificates

Certificates are presented in person on Presentation Evening in the Autumn Term.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so.

Replacement certificates can be obtained from the awarding bodies, and are only issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

The centre retains certificates for five years.

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**Head of centre**

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**Exams officer**

Mr Philip Mooney

Miss Catherine McGovern

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**Date**

April 2011

The policy is next due for review in April 2012.