



# Exams Policy

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## **1. Purpose of policy**

The purpose of this exams policy is to ensure:

- The planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates
- The operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff
- All exams and assessments are conducted in accordance with JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus ensuring “the integrity and security of the examination/assessment system is maintained at all times and is not brought into disrepute” [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres].
- Exam candidates understand the exams process and what is expected of them.

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

The exams policy will be reviewed annually

This policy, together with all other examination related policies will be made available on the school website; this will allow candidates and staff to access these documents.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

## **2. Associated policies**

In the management of exams, it is important that due regard is given to:

- Child protection policy
- Complaints policy
- Data protection policy
- Whistle-blowing policy

All policies can be found on our website: [Abbot's Lea School – School Policies](#)

## **3. Examination contingency plan**

This plan sets out how Abbot's Lea School will minimise disruption to examinations and assessments and ensure continuity in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

The plan complies with JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3 – Centre Management) and is informed by Ofqual and JCQ contingency guidance.

### **Key Roles**

- Head of Centre
- Examinations Officer
- Senior Leadership Team

Appropriate cover arrangements are in place should any key role be unavailable at a critical stage of the examination cycle.

## Potential Disruption and Response

- **Absence of key staff**  
An SLT member assumes responsibility and examination processes continue in line with JCQ requirements.
- **Centre unavailable (e.g. building closure)**  
Awarding bodies are informed immediately and guidance followed. Alternative arrangements are considered where permitted. Woolton High School remains a named alternative site
- **Exam paper delay, loss or security issue**  
The awarding body is contacted without delay and instructions are followed.
- **IT failure or cyber-attack**  
Secure systems are isolated. Examinations proceed using approved contingency methods where possible and awarding bodies are notified
- **Insufficient invigilation**  
Trained staff are deployed or awarding body guidance is followed
- **Disruption on results days**  
Senior staff are available to manage access to results and respond to candidate enquiries

## Communication with Awarding Bodies

The Head of Centre ensures awarding bodies hold up-to-date emergency contact details for a senior member of staff authorised to respond to urgent issues outside term time, in line with JCQ GR 5.3.

### 4. Internal appeals process

The school's internal appeals procedure for examinations and non-examination assessments forms part of the school's Complaints Policy.

Exam-related appeals are managed in line with JCQ General Regulations and awarding body requirements and may relate to:

- the administration of examinations
- access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- the internal management of non-examination assessments (NEAs)

The internal appeals process does not permit challenges to examination results themselves. Where an issue cannot be resolved internally, the school will clearly explain the next steps and will support families to escalate the matter to the relevant awarding body, in accordance with JCQ guidance.

The school recognises that awarding body procedures can be complex, particularly for families of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and will take reasonable steps to ensure families understand the available options and required timescales.

Information about awarding body appeals and post-results services is available via the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results/>

### 5. Management of malpractice

Abbot's Lea School takes all reasonable steps to prevent, identify and manage examination and assessment malpractice, in accordance with JCQ General Regulations and awarding body requirements. Malpractice may include, but is not limited to:

- unauthorised access to examination materials
- breaches of examination security or regulations
- maladministration in the conduct or administration of examinations and assessments
- candidate behaviour, including plagiarism and misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, that may compromise the integrity of an examination or assessment

All staff involved in the examination process are expected to be familiar with and follow JCQ regulations and school procedures.

Any suspected or alleged malpractice will be reported immediately to the Head of Centre and Examinations Officer and investigated in line with JCQ requirements. Where required, incidents will be reported to the relevant awarding body using the prescribed JCQ processes.

The school recognises that allegations of malpractice can be distressing for candidates and staff. Investigations will be conducted fairly, proportionately and confidentially, with appropriate regard to safeguarding, wellbeing and individual needs throughout the process.

Information on examination malpractice and awarding body procedures is available from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

## **6. Management of GCSE and GCSE non-examination assessments**

Abbot's Lea School manages GCSE and GCSE non-examination assessments (NEAs) in accordance with JCQ General Regulations, awarding body subject specifications and published NEA guidance.

The school ensures that:

- NEAs are conducted under appropriate levels of supervision, as specified by the awarding body
- assessment tasks are set, completed and submitted within published timescales
- marking, internal standardisation and authentication procedures are followed
- accurate records are maintained and securely stored

Staff involved in the delivery, administration or assessment of NEAs are provided with relevant guidance and training to ensure compliance with awarding body requirements.

Students are supported to access NEAs fairly and appropriately. Where students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements are applied in line with JCQ regulations and the awarding body's published guidance. Support is carefully managed to ensure that it does not compromise the validity or integrity of the assessment.

Any concerns relating to the administration or internal management of NEAs are managed through the school's Internal Appeals Procedure. Matters relating to assessment outcomes are subject to awarding body regulations and post-results services, where applicable.

## **7. Use of word processors in examinations**

Abbot's Lea School follows JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) guidance regarding the use of word processors in examinations and assessments.

A word processor may be provided where it is:

- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, and
- appropriate to the candidate's needs, to prevent them being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The use of a word processor is a centre-delegated access arrangement. Evidence is held to confirm that the arrangement reflects normal classroom practice and does not compromise the integrity of the assessment.

In line with JCQ regulations:

- spelling and grammar check facilities, predictive text and internet access are disabled
- word processors are used in accordance with awarding body rules
- use in examinations mirrors usual classroom and assessment practice, except where a sudden injury applies

Where a candidate uses a word processor, appropriate supervision and checks are in place to ensure examination security.

Further information about access arrangements and the use of word processors can be found on the JCQ website: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>

## **8. Conflict of interest**

The school recognises its responsibility to ensure that the integrity of examinations and assessments is maintained, and that any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest are identified, declared, recorded and managed effectively.

A conflict of interest occurs when a member of staff involved in the delivery, administration, assessment or quality assurance of examinations has a personal interest that could compromise, or be seen to compromise, their impartiality or the security of the examination process.

This section applies to all school staff, including:

- teaching staff
- examinations office staff
- invigilators
- senior leaders
- support staff who may have access to examination materials or assessment decisions

## Examples of conflicts of interest (non-exhaustive)

Conflicts may include:

- a member of staff teaching, assessing or supporting a close family member or close friend entered for an examination at the school
- a member of staff entering a qualification themselves at the school
- examinations or administrative staff having family members or close friends entered for examinations at the school or another centre
- any other situation where access to confidential information or decision-making could give, or appear to give, an unfair advantage

## Declaration and recording

All staff are required to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest relating to examinations as soon as it arises.

Declarations are made to the Exams Officer, who maintains a conflicts of interest log.

The Head of Centre reviews declared conflicts and determines appropriate mitigating actions.

## Management and reporting

Where required, awarding bodies are notified of conflicts of interest by the published entry deadlines, in line with JCQ regulations.

Appropriate arrangements are put in place to manage conflicts, which may include:

- reallocation of teaching, assessment or examination duties
- restricted access to examination materials
- additional oversight or quality assurance measures

## 9. Equality, Access Arrangements and Fair Treatment

The school is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly, equitably and in line with statutory duties during the administration of examinations and assessments.

The school complies with the **Equality Act 2010** and is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations for candidates with protected characteristics.

### Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

- Candidates with special educational needs, disabilities, medical conditions or temporary injuries are supported through **access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**, where appropriate.
- All arrangements are applied in line with **JCQ regulations**, are supported by evidence, and do not compromise the integrity of the assessment.
- The SENCo and Exams Officer work together to ensure arrangements are applied consistently and communicated clearly to relevant staff.

## **Fair treatment**

The school ensures that:

- all candidates have equitable access to examinations
- no candidate is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged
- staff involved in examinations act impartially and professionally at all times
- exam rooms and procedures support dignity, inclusion and wellbeing

### **10. Identification of candidates**

The centre ensures that all candidates are correctly identified prior to the start of each examination in line with JCQ requirements. The exams officer, who is familiar with all students, verifies that the correct candidates are present and entered for the examination. In the event that the exams officer is unavailable, a member of the Leadership Team will undertake this responsibility to ensure that candidates are appropriately identified. A register is taken at the beginning of each session to confirm attendance. In addition, candidates are seated according to an official seating plan and invigilators confirm that candidates are in the correct place. Where further identification is required, candidate photographs held on the school's management information system (Arbor) are used to verify identity. Any uncertainty regarding a candidate's identity is resolved before the examination commences, with support from relevant staff where necessary.

Review date: June 2026

Next review date: June 2027