



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

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 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 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities may require additional support to understand examination expectations. Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged and that behaviour related to SEND needs is considered appropriately when concerns arise.

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 Non-Examination Assessments, Coursework and Internally Assessed Components

Abbot's Lea School manages non-examination assessments (NEAs), coursework, portfolio evidence, practical assessments and other internally assessed components in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation, published qualification specifications and applicable JCQ regulations and guidance.

This section applies to all qualifications, accreditations and award programmes delivered by the school that include an assessment component completed wholly or partly outside an externally invigilated written examination.

The school recognises that non-examination assessments measure knowledge, understanding and skills which cannot always be validly assessed through written examinations alone. Assessment arrangements will therefore reflect the requirements of the specific qualification or accreditation being delivered.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate arrangements are in place for the management of all non-examination assessments and internally assessed components;
- staff comply with awarding organisation and JCQ requirements;
- assessment evidence is stored securely;

- assessment records are maintained;
- suspected malpractice is investigated and reported where required.

Staff involved in the delivery, supervision, assessment or quality assurance of non-examination assessments must ensure they are familiar with the requirements of the relevant qualification and any associated JCQ guidance.

Assessment Management

The school will ensure that:

- assessment tasks are completed within published deadlines;
- assessment activities are conducted under the level of supervision required by the relevant awarding organisation;
- assessment evidence is retained in accordance with awarding organisation requirements;
- internal standardisation, moderation or verification arrangements are carried out where required;
- candidate work is appropriately authenticated;
- assessment records are accurate and complete.

Authentication of Candidate Work

The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own work.

Authentication may be established through:

- direct supervision of assessment activities;
- observation of practical activities and candidate performance;
- teacher knowledge of the candidate's level of attainment and typical performance;
- review of drafts, progress records and classwork;
- questioning of candidates about work submitted;
- witness statements and observation records;
- photographic, video or audio evidence where permitted by the awarding organisation.

Where required by the awarding organisation, candidates and teachers will complete the relevant authentication declarations confirming that submitted work is authentic and that any sources used have been appropriately acknowledged. Authentication records will be retained in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

Where a member of staff has concerns regarding the authenticity of candidate work, the work will not be submitted until those concerns have been investigated. Suspected malpractice will be managed in accordance with Section 5 of this policy and relevant awarding organisation procedures.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Candidates may only use artificial intelligence (AI) tools where explicitly permitted by the awarding organisation and qualification requirements.

Where AI tools are used appropriately:

- candidates must acknowledge their use where required;
- submitted work must remain the candidate's own work;
- candidates must not present AI-generated content as their own work.

The misuse of AI may constitute malpractice and will be managed in accordance with awarding organisation and JCQ procedures.

Reasonable Adjustments and Access Arrangements

Candidates with special educational needs and/or disabilities, medical conditions or temporary injuries will be supported through access arrangements and reasonable adjustments where permitted by the awarding organisation and supported by appropriate evidence.

Any support provided during an internally assessed component must not compromise the validity of the assessment or give an unfair advantage to the candidate.

The school recognises that some learners may demonstrate achievement through practical participation, communication, observation or supported activities. Assessment arrangements and evidence collection methods will therefore reflect individual learner needs whilst maintaining the integrity of the qualification or accreditation.

Storage and Retention of Evidence

Assessment materials and candidate evidence will be stored securely with access restricted to authorised staff.

Evidence may include:

- written work;
- portfolios;
- digital submissions;
- observation records;
- witness statements;
- photographs;
- audio recordings;
- video recordings;
- practical assessment records;
- teacher assessment records.

Assessment evidence will be retained for the period specified by the relevant awarding organisation and in accordance with the school's data protection procedures.

Internal Appeals

Any concerns regarding the conduct, administration or internal management of non-examination assessments or other internally assessed components will be considered through the school's Internal Appeals Procedure.

Assessment outcomes, reviews of marking and post-results services remain subject to awarding organisation regulations and procedures

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. Cyber Security

Abbot's Lea School recognises that cyber security is essential to maintaining the integrity, confidentiality and availability of examination and assessment materials, candidate information and awarding organisation systems.

The school is committed to protecting examination-related information from unauthorised access, loss, theft, corruption, misuse or disruption and will comply with relevant JCQ

regulations, awarding organisation requirements, data protection legislation and school information security procedures.

Responsibilities

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that appropriate cyber security arrangements are in place to protect examination and assessment processes.

The Examinations Officer, Network Manager and other authorised staff will work together to ensure that examination systems, awarding body accounts and assessment information are managed securely.

Staff Training

All staff who access awarding organisation systems or examination-related information will complete annual cyber security awareness training.

Training will include:

- creating strong and unique passwords;
- maintaining the confidentiality of account details;
- the use of multi-factor authentication (MFA);
- recognising phishing and social engineering attacks;
- reporting suspicious activity promptly;
- secure handling of examination and candidate information.

Records of completed training will be retained and made available for inspection where required.

Account Security

The school will implement appropriate security controls for examination-related systems and accounts, including:

- use of strong passwords;
- secure storage of credentials;
- multi-factor authentication where available;
- prompt removal of access when no longer required;
- review of user accounts and permissions on a regular basis;
- secure account recovery arrangements.

Staff must not share passwords or login credentials with any other individual.

Protection of Examination Information

Examination materials, candidate data and assessment records held electronically will be stored on secure school systems with appropriate access controls.

Only authorised staff will be permitted access to awarding body systems, examination entries, assessment information and candidate data.

The school will maintain appropriate backups and recovery arrangements for examination-related information.

Device and System Security

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that devices and systems used for examination administration are secure.

This may include:

- security updates and patch management;
- antivirus and malware protection;
- web filtering and monitoring;
- restricted administrator access;
- management of connected applications and third-party services;
- maintenance of records of devices and accounts used for examination administration.

Reporting and Responding to Cyber Incidents

Any suspected cyber security breach, phishing attempt, unauthorised access, loss of examination data or other cyber incident affecting examinations or assessments must be reported immediately to the Head of Centre and relevant IT staff.

Where an incident may affect examination delivery, candidate data, assessment materials or awarding body systems:

- immediate action will be taken to secure systems and minimise further risk;
- awarding organisations will be informed where required;
- relevant JCQ guidance will be followed;
- the incident will be recorded and reviewed to identify lessons learned and further protective measures.

Review

Cyber security arrangements relating to examinations and assessments will be reviewed annually and following any significant incident to ensure continued compliance with JCQ requirements and emerging best practice.

10. 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