



# St. Gregory's Catholic High School

## Examinations Policy

### **Monitoring**

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Examinations Manager, Assistant Headteacher Pupil Progress and Assessment.

### **Evaluation**

The policy was reviewed by the Examinations Manager and Senior Leadership Team on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Standards Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

### **Key policy dates:**

**Ratified by the Full Governing Board:** 2nd April 2025

**Review frequency:** Annual

**Next policy review commences:** Spring Term 2026

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## **Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this Examinations Policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient examinations 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.

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

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Head of Centre (Headteacher):**

- has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre
- gives approval for appeals and reviews of marking
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, referring to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments
- has delegated responsibility for the administration of examinations in this centre to an appointed Examinations Manager
- will ensure that in the event of the Examinations Manager being absent that appropriate back-up measures are in place to maintain the integrity and smooth running of the examination systems within school
- ensures that relevant members of staff respond promptly to actions raised by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service
- ensures that relevant members of staff respond promptly to requests for information from awarding boards relating to the administration and conducting of examinations/assessments

### **Examinations Manager:**

- oversees all administration of internal and external examinations
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual examinations timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding boards.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre staff and candidates, of an annual calendar for all examinations 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 examinations timetable that will affect them
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines

- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication 'A guide to the special consideration process'
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all examination costs/charges
- line manages a team of examination invigilators responsible for the conduct of examinations
- ensures that practical examinations are carried out within the JCQ guidelines
- ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted by relevant teachers on time, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding boards correctly and on schedule
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned coursework / controlled assessments
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any post results service requests

**Heads of department are responsible for:**

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about examinations entries or amendments to entries
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Examinations Manager
- accurate completion of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets
- decisions on post-results requests

**Teachers are responsible for:**

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or Examinations Manager

**The (Deputy SENDCo)/specialist teacher is responsible for:**

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Examinations Manager in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required)
- working with the Examinations Manager to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in examination rooms

**Invigilators are responsible for:**

- assisting the Examinations Manager in the efficient running of examinations according to JCQ regulations
- collection of exam papers and other material from the examinations office before the start of the exam
- collection of all examination papers in the correct order at the end of the examination and ensuring their return to the examinations office

**Candidates** are responsible for:

- confirmation of entries
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all examinations according to the JCQ regulations

### **Qualifications offered**

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the SLT & Heads of Dept.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSE, Functional Skills, Entry Level, WJEC Level 1 and 2 Vocational Awards, Cambridge Nationals and BTEC qualifications.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the examinations office must be informed by the September of the next academic year.

Informing the examinations office of changes to a specification's requirements is the responsibility of the SLT and Heads of Department.

Decisions on whether a candidate is to be entered for a particular subject will be taken by Subject Teacher in consultation with the Subject Head of Department and subsequent approval by the Assistant Headteacher (Assessment).

### **Exam series**

External examinations and assessments are scheduled in the summer.

Internal examinations are held under external examination conditions.

### **Exam timetables**

Once confirmed, the Examinations Manager will circulate the exam timetables for internal and external examinations at a specified date before each series begins.

### **Entries, entry details and late entries**

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal, however, the decision as to whether this is appropriate is made by the SLT and HoD.

The centre does not accept entries from private candidates.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department/curriculum via email from the Examinations Manager.

The Examinations Manager will inform awarding boards of estimated entries at the beginning of each academic year.

Heads of department/curriculum will provide entry information to the Examinations Manager to meet JCQ and awarding board deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the parent/carer and need to be approved by the SLT.

### **Exam fees**

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 boards.

The Examinations Manager will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each examination series.

All examination fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre.

Fee reimbursements are not sought from candidates.

The projected cost for examinations is passed to the Business Manager at the start of the financial year and the cost approximation is produced by SIMs Exam Organiser.

Request for withdrawal or failure to attend examinations will incur a cost for parents.

### **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 that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding boards, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the SLT.

### **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/ examinations.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENDCo in discussion with Subject Teachers.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of SENDCo, CAMHs, Medical practitioner and Subject Teacher.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding boards is the responsibility of the Specialist Assessor. The candidate must have signed a Data Protection Notice giving their consent to the processing of the application.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Examinations Manager and SLT.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Examinations Manager, SENDCo and IONA lead.

Regulations concerning pupils entitled to use a word processor or reader software can be found in the school's Word Processor Policy (Examinations).

### **Contingency planning and resilience arrangements**

Contingency planning for examinations administration is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager, SENDCo and SLT.

Contingency plans are available in the school's Examination Contingency Plan and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisation.

St Gregory's Catholic High School follows the regulators' guidance on ensuring resilience in the qualifications system. Formal mock assessments are held for every subject before the summer examinations in order to gather evidence of candidate performance in line with the published guidance.

### **Invigilators**

External staff will be used to invigilate examinations. These invigilators will be used for internal examinations and external examinations.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager; however, due to the casual nature of the employment a formal interview is not appropriate. References are requested and contract paperwork is completed.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Headteacher's PA working with the DSL.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Director of Finance and Resources.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Examinations Manager.

### **Malpractice**

The Head of Centre in consultation with the awarding board is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice (see Malpractice Policy).

### **Security of exam materials**

#### **The Examinations Manager**

- Confirms appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential materials are only handed over to those authorised by the Head of Centre
- Ensures access to the secure room is restricted and staff approved by the Head of Centre are accompanied by a keyholder at all times. There must be between two and six keyholders only, each of whom must fully understand their responsibilities as a key holder to the secure storage facility

- Has a process in place to demonstrate the receipt, secure movement and secure storage of confidential exam materials within the centre
- Ensures a log is kept at the initial point of delivery recording confidential materials received and signed for by authorised staff within the centre and that appropriate arrangements are in place for confidential materials to be immediately transferred to the secure storage facility until they can be removed from the dispatch packaging and checked in the secure room before being returned to the secure storage facility in timetable order
- Carefully checks question paper packets when they are removed from the dispatch packing and keeps a log of the check
- Ensures the secure storage facility contains only current and live confidential material (ensuring that past examination question papers or mock examination papers are not kept in the centre's secure storage facility)
- Ensures that examination stationery, e.g. answer booklets and formula booklets are stored in the secure room
- Ensures the integrity and security of any electronic question paper is maintained during the downloading, printing and collating process (ensuring printing is carried out in an area that can be controlled to prevent unauthorised personnel accessing live assessment materials and ensuring only authorised members of centre staff have access to electronic question papers)

#### **Reception staff**

- Follow the process to log confidential materials delivered to/received by the centre to the point materials are issued to authorised staff for transferal to the secure storage facility

#### **Teaching staff**

- Adhere to the process to record the secure movement of confidential materials such as pre-release examination materials taken from or returned to secure storage throughout the time the material is confidential

### **Exam days**

The Examinations Manager will book all exam rooms after liaising with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management staff is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements one month in advance.

Subject staff are not permitted in exam venues for formal external examinations. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

There will be a card on each exam desk that will show a candidate's name and candidate number. This will assist invigilators and senior leaders in verifying the identity of candidates.

In practical examinations, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

The Examinations Manager will provide an exam room incident log in all exam rooms for invigilators to record any incidents or irregularities.



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 once all candidates have completed their exam and every paper has been accounted for by the Examinations Manager.

Food will not be allowed in an exam unless it has been pre-approved with the Examinations Manager (for example, for a diabetic pupil). Any drinks must be in a clear bottle with the label removed.

After an exam, the Examinations Manager will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding boards.

## **Candidates**

The Examinations Manager will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates is given by the Pastoral Head of Year in Collective Worship before the exam season begins.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

At St. Gregory's Catholic High School, the majority of candidates will sit their examinations in the Sports Hall. As per JCQ regulations, a candidate may only take their examinations in a smaller environment away from the main examination room where they have "an established difficulty".

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 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 at the discretion of the Examinations Manager (discretion may be given in the event of sickness or a family emergency for example)

Candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. If a candidate leaves an exam room unsupervised, they will not be allowed to return and it will be reported to the awarding board.

The attendance and pastoral teams will contact any candidates who are late for their examinations. Under JCQ regulations, a candidate will be considered very late if they arrive more than one hour after the awarding body's published starting time for an examination which lasts one hour or more (i.e. after 10.00am for a morning examination or after 2.30pm for an afternoon examination), or if they arrive after the awarding body's published finishing time for an examination that lasts less than one hour. The Examinations Manager has to notify the awarding board of a very late arrival, and will inform the candidate that their script may not be accepted.

If a candidate is absent for their exam, the Examinations Manager will explore the possibility of applying for special consideration if the reason for absence is genuine and meets special consideration criteria.

## **Exam Clashes**

In the event of exam clashes, the Examinations Manager will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision. Overnight supervision arrangements must only be applied as a last resort and once all other options have been exhausted.

## **Special consideration**

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's SLT and Examinations Manager to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 2 days of the exam.

The Examinations Manager will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding board within 2 days of the exam.

## **Internal assessment**

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Examinations Manager will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are submitted to the awarding boards by the Examinations Manager. The Examinations Manager will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure.

Teaching staff must not use artificial intelligence (AI) as the sole means of marking candidates' work.

## **Results**

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the SLT.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the SLT.

## **Enquiries About Results (EARs)**

Enquiries about results include clerical checks, reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals. EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a review or clerical check 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 SLT and Head of Department.

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

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Examinations Manager following the JCQ guidance.

### **Access to Scripts (ATS)**

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written examination papers within 28 days of the receipt of results.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Examinations Manager.

### **Certificates**

Candidates will receive their certificates:

- in person at the centre
- collected and signed for
- 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 for a minimum of 12 months from the date of issue. After 12 months certificates can be confidentially destroyed in line with JCQ guidance.

### **Escalation process**

In the event of the absence of the Head of Centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to examinations will be escalated to the Assistant Headteacher (Assessment) who will work closely with the Examinations Manager.