Exams Policy

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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 adhering to JCQs 'Instructions for Conducting Exams'.
- To ensure the operation of an efficiently exams 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.

The Exams Policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

Exam Responsibilities

1. The Headteacher of the Exam Centre:

- Has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks;
- Is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ. document 'Suspected malpractice in exams and assessments;
- Ensures that the exam secure area meets JCQ regulations;
- Must ensure that there is a record of the qualifications of the external Specialist Assessor for Access Arrangements.

2. Exams Officer:

- Manages the administration of external exams;
- Ensures all exams store key holders are aware of responsibilities;
- Ensures the web site has current information;
- Makes sure all confidential papers are stored correctly in secure area;
- Advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors 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 are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams 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 exams;
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines;
- Checks question papers against centre timetable and arrange papers in secure area in date order;
- Administers access arrangements (with the support of Specialist Assessor/SENCo) and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publications for Access Arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration;
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes;
- Produces seating plans for all external exams;
- Ensures A3 JCQ warning posters are displayed outside exam rooms;
- Ensures all invigilators have training and know what to do in an emergency (see separate policy);
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges;
- Ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment marks are submitted and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies 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;
- Ensures exam papers are checked on the day of the exam with another person;
- Co-operates with visits from JCQ and Awarding Bodies Inspection team;
- Provides all written information to candidates in advance. (A copy of JCQ rules and regulations together with a copy of their exam timetable).

3. Teachers are responsible for:

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries;
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Officer;
- Accurate completion of coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets;
- Supplying information on estimated entries, entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the Raising Standards Lead and/or Exams Officer;
- Decisions on post-results procedures;
- Provide accurate exam course entry information via The Compass Accreditation Form.
- Providing the SENCo with all requested access arrangement evidence in a timely manner.

4. The Specialist Assessor/SENCo is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates' requirements in accordance with JCQs Access Arrangements and reasonable adjustment regulations.
- For access arrangements and notifying the Exams Officer in good time so that they are able to process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- Working with Exams Officer to input key data requesting Access Arrangements.
- Providing Exams Officer with access to the Application for Access Arrangements, Data Protection Form plus supporting paperwork according to JCQ Regulations.
- Working with the Exams Officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

5. Invigilators are responsible for:

- Collecting invigilation trays from the exams office/secure area.
- Arriving 15 minutes prior to exam start time to prepare the room, putting up posters and issuing exam equipment in the assigned room.
- Assisting the Exams Officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- Making sure candidates are instructed to write their names exactly as it appears on the attendance register.
- Making sure all collected scripts have names which match attendance register.
- Completing an accurate log sheet during the exam.
- At the end of the exam collect all exam papers and other materials and remain in the exam room until the Exams Officer or designated Lead Invigilator has collected live exam papers.
- To return all exam equipment to the exams office/secure area.

6. 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 exams according to the JCQ regulations.

7. Contingency Plan when Exams Officer is Absent

- There are three members of staff who have access to the exams key cabinet. (The Exams Officer, the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher).
- All confidential exams post received can be signed for by The Exams Officer, Deputy Headteacher and all confidential exam post must be given to Exams Officer (or Deputy Headteacher in Exams Officer's absence). In the absence of both, all post must be locked in the secure storage cabinet in the exams secure area.

- Deputy Headteacher will undertake full responsibility for exams, meeting Inspectors, running exams, training invigilators, placing confidential postage into secure area, putting exam papers into the safe in secure area.

Qualifications Offered

The qualifications offered at this school are decided by the Senior Leadership Team in partnership with the teachers.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSE, Functional Skills, AQA Award, NCFE (Vocational Qualifications) and BTEC.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found on the centre's website or similar documents for that year. If there is to be a change of qualification for the next year, the Exams Officer must be informed as soon as possible ideally by September for June/July Series.

Once the Exams Officer has been notified of the change, the qualification no longer in use will be withdrawn at the same time as registration of the new qualification that will be used.

Informing the Exams Officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the subject teachers.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by teachers in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

Exam Series

GCSE exams and assessments are scheduled in the summer series.
Functional Skills are on demand.
Entry Level Functional Skills are scheduled internally as appropriate.

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Exam Timetables

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

Entries, Entry Details and Late Entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to subject teachers via email and briefing meetings.

Subject teachers will provide estimated entry information to the Exams Officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation’s deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the Head of Centre.

Early entries are made for the best outcomes for our most vulnerable pupils. Liaison with home schools will be made in cases where the pupils are dual roll.

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 bodies.

The Exams Officer will publish the deadline for action well in advance for each exam's series.

GCSE, BTEC and Functional Skills fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre.

The Local Authority will reimburse the school for any Year 11 EHE pupil at an agreed rate per entry.

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

Access Arrangements

The SENCo 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 a suitably qualified Specialist Assessor (as commissioned by the Headteacher) ONLY. The Specialist Assessor will be supported by the SENCo and will have an established working relationship with the centre.

The SENCo will provide the Specialist assessor with a completed Part 1 of Form 8, in readiness to the candidate being assessed.

The SENCo will lead on the completion of a Part 1 Form 8 for pupils with and education, health and care plan, ensuring that it has been cross referenced with their individual plans.

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

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Specialist Assessor with guidance from Exams Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer and SAG.

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

Managing Invigilators

All invigilators follow information/guidance sheet issued during training by the Exams Officer when conducting all exams.

External staff could be used to invigilate exams. Securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre. Invigilator rates of pay are set by the Headteacher of the school in line with other local schools.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Officer.

Exam Days

The Exams Officer will make sure that JCQs Regulations in accordance to exam times (i.e. morning exams cannot start before 8.30am and no later than 9.30am. For afternoon exams no earlier than 1.00pm and no later than 2.00pm.) No candidate can leave exam/isolation area before 1 hour of the official start time. The Compass School's published start times are 9.00am and 1.30pm

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery, and materials are available for the invigilator.

To avoid potential breaches of security an additional member of centre staff must check the time, date and any other paper details before a question paper is opened.

Where candidates sit in different rooms, question paper packets must be opened in the secure area with an additional member of staff and papers must be placed securely in signed sealed envelopes until the exam starts. This may be carried out within 60 minutes of the published start time.

A reader or scribe may have access to papers within the 60 minutes in order to prepare for the exam.
The Exams Officer will ensure all exam rooms have a working clock visible to all candidates.

The site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms and will be advised of requirements well in advance. (exam desks must be 1.25 metre apart.)

Subject specialists MUST not enter the exam room, however, may be present outside to assist with the 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.

Subject specialists are not allowed to be a collegiate. (Outside invigilator)

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 subject teachers in accordance with JCQ's recommendations. (24 hours after the set exam.).

After an exam, the Exams Officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed exam scripts to awarding bodies.

The Exams Officer will provide all written information to candidates in advance a copy of JCQ Rules and Regulations together with a copy of their exam timetable for each exam series.

Identification of Candidates

Process to check candidate identity

The identity of students on roll at Compass School is checked as part of the initial registration process through formal notification from the Local Authority.

Candidates at Compass School are not permitted to carry any personal items whilst on the school site therefore are not able to provide photographic identification as verification themselves.

A procedure is in place that a senior member of centre staff (approved by the head of centre, who has not taught the subject being examined) will be present at the start of the examination to assist with the identification of candidates.
The use of candidate desk cards.

Where it is impossible to identify a candidate due to the wearing of religious clothing, such as a veil, the candidate will be approached by a member of staff of the same gender and taken to a private room where they will be politely asked to remove the religious clothing for identification purposes.

Private/Transferred Candidates

Compass School does not accept private or transferred candidates.

Late Arrival Candidates

Candidates who arrive over 50 minutes late may be entered, however a very good reason must be made to JCQ regarding this late arrival. Candidates arriving after this time will need a JCQ late arrival form stating that security has not been breached and that the candidate has been under supervision. Candidates must be made aware that their exam may not be accepted. The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam days.

A Candidates who arrives late and is permitted by the centre to sit the examination must be given all pre-examination information and warnings before they start the examination. The candidate must be allowed the full time for the examination.

The school'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.

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/smart watches and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room. Watches and not permitted and must not be worn or placed on exam desks.

Absent Candidates

A candidate will be considered absent from an exam if not present on completion of the attendance register once candidates have been seated and the examination has started.

The candidate will be contacted immediately and as far as possible arrangements will be made to ensure their immediate arrival.

Exam Clash Candidates

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

Overnight Supervision Arrangements
Overnight supervision is unlikely to be necessary in our setting, however, in the event that it is needed the following points needed to be taken in to account:

- Overnight supervision can be considered when a candidate is entered for multiple exams (3 or more) which are all timetables for the same day and the total duration of those papers is:
  1)more than 6 hours for GCE examinations, including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks
  2)more than 5 and a half hours for GSCE examinations including approved extra time and/or supervised rest breaks
- Overnight supervision should be arranged as a last resort and the Head of Centre must be satisfied with the arrangements and take full responsibility for the security of the examination
- In the event that a pupil requires overnight supervision, please refer to the JCQ guidelines for further information.

Food and Drink in Exams

Food and drink may be allowed in examinations at the discretion of the Head of centre. However, any food and drink bought in to the examination room by the candidate or the centre must be free from packaging and all labels removed from containers.

Managing Behaviour in Examinations

Invigilators must supervise the candidates throughout the whole time the examination is in progress, always giving their full attention to this duty. They must be vigilant and be aware of any emerging incidents, situations or tensions in the examination room and for any malpractice. They also need to be aware of candidates who may be feeling unwell or need a toilet break. Candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. Any incidents must be recorded on the incident log and lost time compensated appropriately.

Disruptive candidates will be dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Exams Officer. However, the centre will offer a supervised isolation area for those candidates who do not wish to continue and therefore may cause disturbance in the exam. These pupils will NOT be allowed re–entry into the exam room.

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 Exams Officer to that effect.

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

The Exams Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

Internal Assessment

It is the duty of the Exams Officer to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer will keep records of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exam's office by the teachers. The Exams Officer 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 (IAP) document.

Internal Appeals Procedure

Appeals are accepted from the Head of Centre on behalf of a candidate, or group of candidates.

Stage 1

A written request must be made by the Exams Officer and authorised by the Head of Centre to the appropriate awarding body within two calendar weeks.

The appeal must be clearly set out and JCQ 'Appeals Form' (JCQApp1) after an investigation and fall in line with JCQs 'Code of Practice'. In the case of malpractice, malpractice documentation should be completed.

Stage 2

If the Head of Centre is dissatisfied with the outcome for Stage 1 Appeal, using JCQApp1 should be sent to the relevant awarding body. A request for Stage 2 must be within 2 calendar weeks. Many Stage 2 Appeal results are final and therefore a Stage 3 option is not available.

Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days:

- All candidates will be encouraged to download the 'DFE Education Record app' for the option to access the results currently available
- Posted (first class) on results release date to their home address

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document or exam board result statements.

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

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

Enquiries About Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a remark 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.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the centre.

All decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by the Head of Centre.

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 Exams Officer, following the JCQ guidance.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates:

- In person at the school 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 3 years, despite official recommendations being reduced to one year. The certificates will be stored/archived securely for the period of this time.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results will be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Return of Coursework/Controlled Assessments

Once certificates have been received all GCSE Coursework/Controlled Assessments can be collected.

Coursework will be available for collection and any uncollected work will be retained for three years.