

Examinations Policy			
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Contact	Andy Vivian	Effective date	01.02.25

Rationale

Every student at Great Oaks is expected to achieve their personal best. In line with this students are offered a range of external accreditation and are encouraged to complete examination/course preparations and coursework to the best of their ability. The school is responsible for ensuring all students have the best possible chances of success in external examinations and that students are not disadvantaged by organisational or curricular failures. An examinations officer is appointed by the school, this is currently Andy Vivian.

Examinations Officer

The school's Examination Officer is responsible for the organisation of entries, examinations, dispatch of papers, correlation of results and certificates and all external returns or reports connected to the external examinations process at KS3, KS4 and 16+.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to organise the sitting of all external examinations in accordance with the regulations met by the awarding or organising bodies.

External examinations sat in school

All examination courses must be carefully monitored as follows:

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to:

- Distribute information about the continuing viability of proposed school courses. New information regarding excluded subject combinations must also be distributed.
- Distribute new information related to assessment requirements and required subject content.
- Ensure that the JCQ AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications Guidance is followed.

It is the responsibility of the subject lead to:

- Annually check the current viability and any altered requirements of their courses.
- To inform the Examinations Officer of any changes in examination boards or courses offered before the beginning of the academic year.
- Ensure that all staff delivering courses which are subject to change are clearly informed of the changes prior to planning course details.

It is the responsibility of subject/class teachers and the exams officer

- to ensure that adequate planning and development occurs to ensure the effective organisation of new/changed examination courses.

If errors occur which may adversely affect student performance it is the responsibility of the teachers to immediately inform the Examinations Officer. The school will then contact the relevant examination board and argue the case for the students concerned in an open manner and without delay.

The school Examinations Officer is responsible for taking steps to ensure that individual examination entries are accurate and fully understood by the students.

The outline for examination entries is as follows:

- Staff are issued with an accreditation spreadsheet. This is completed to indicate possible entries and returned to the Examinations Officer, who checks for anomalies and queries.
- The Examination Officer submits entries to the examination boards and provides teaching staff with entry lists. These are checked and amended if necessary.
- Once entries have been finalised a printed timetable of their exams is checked for the students for accuracy. Any errors are corrected by the Examinations Officer. Students are issued with new timetables when the amendments have been made.
- It is the responsibility of subject leads and class/subject teachers to ensure that accurate entry information is received by the Examinations Officer before the deadlines stipulated by the examinations board. Late entry or amendment fees will be charged to the relevant department.
- The school reserves the right to charge students late entry or amendment fees where the responsibility for entry omissions/amendments is judged to rest with the student/parent.

For each student / examination group the following routines should be followed:

- The examination officer will check access arrangements for each examination series and ensure that they are adhered to.
- Class/subject teachers are responsible for making every effort to ensure that coursework and other requirements for examination course are met by the students to the best of their abilities.
- The subject lead should ensure that students understand the assessment requirements of the course including the examinations papers and the role of any coursework in the process.
- The subject lead should ensure that students are aware of their level of entry for the subject and the particular examination papers that are appropriate
- The subject lead should ensure that students are aware of any deadlines for coursework and the importance of meeting these. Monitoring by teachers should provide early warnings concerning those who are falling behind with coursework. Where coursework deadlines are not met by students the subject teacher should inform the exams officer. It is an important departmental responsibility
- Parents/guardians are informed **as soon as possible** of a student's failure to meet an academic deadline or if it is felt that they will be unable to manage the exam conditions
- The subject lead should provide feedback on coursework and details of omissions or possible amendments as soon as possible.
- Students should not be disadvantaged by being confronted with further, last minute coursework requirements.
- Examination board requirements regarding the assistance of students with coursework must be known and adhered to.
- Exams officer and teachers should consult upon coursework deadlines in order to spread demands as far as possible at an early point.
- In judging the most suitable course for each student, a number of individual factors are considered, including the ability to cope under exam conditions and the amount of support allowed in the exam.

Examinations Conduct

- It is the responsibility of the class teacher (reinforced by the exams officer) to inform students of the overall code of conduct required in exams.
- It is the responsibility of subject teachers to ensure students are aware of the requirements of the examination and the equipment/resources required.
- Students should be familiar with the format of the examinations via their subject teachers.

Malpractice

The Head of Centre, in consultation with Andy Vivian, is responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected malpractice are thoroughly investigated and managed in accordance with JCQ guidance. Malpractice does not necessarily involve an intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage but includes any activity that compromises the integrity of the examination process. Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or internet-enabled device during examinations.
- Copying or allowing another candidate's work to be copied.
- Posting examination-related content on social media prior to an exam.
- Collusion or unauthorised collaborative working.
- Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (see AI section below).

Informing and Advising Candidates: Candidates are provided with clear guidance on what constitutes malpractice and how to avoid it through pre-exam briefings, written notices, and the distribution of JCQ information for candidates. During these briefings, students are reminded of key examination rules, including the prohibition of unauthorised materials and the use of AI tools in assessments. Regular PSHE sessions and tutor time discussions reinforce this understanding throughout the year.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Great Oaks School recognises the increasing accessibility of AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Google Bard, which can support learning but also pose risks related to academic integrity.

Use of AI by Pupils:

Prohibited Use:

- Pupils must not use AI tools during any form of assessment, including internal and external assessments and coursework. Presenting AI-generated content as their own work in homework or class assignments is strictly prohibited.

Permitted Use:

- Pupils may use AI tools for research purposes, such as exploring new topics or ideas. In contexts where AI is being studied, for instance in IT lessons or projects involving AI-generated content, its use is allowed provided that all AI-generated material is properly attributed. Pupils must retain and submit a record of their queries and the AI-generated responses alongside their assessments.

Staff Responsibilities:

- Staff must remain vigilant about the evolving nature of AI tools and their potential to produce inaccurate or biased content.
- They must educate pupils about the risks associated with AI, the importance of appropriate referencing, and the implications of AI misuse on the integrity of assessments.

Escalation of Suspected Malpractice: If malpractice is suspected, it must be immediately reported to the Examinations Officer. The Examinations Officer will conduct an internal investigation in consultation with the Head of Centre. The findings will be documented, and if malpractice is confirmed, it will be escalated to the relevant awarding body following JCQ procedures. The school will cooperate fully with the awarding body to ensure a fair and transparent resolution.

AI Misuse: The misuse of AI tools will be treated as a form of malpractice. This includes any unauthorised use during assessments or the failure to acknowledge AI-generated content properly. For further details, refer to JCQ's 'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications'.

Conflict of Interest

Great Oaks School recognises the importance of identifying and managing any conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity of the examination process. In accordance with the latest JCQ guidance, the following procedures are in place:

Identification and Declaration of Potential Conflicts

- All staff involved in the delivery, administration, and assessment of examinations must declare any potential conflicts of interest at the start of each academic year, or as soon as they arise. This includes relationships with students or other staff that may compromise, or appear to compromise, the fairness of the examination process.
- The Examinations Officer will maintain a confidential register of declared conflicts of interest, which will be reviewed regularly.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

- Any staff member with a declared conflict of interest will be removed from any duties that could be affected by the conflict, such as invigilation, marking, or access arrangement decisions, where applicable.
- Where it is not possible to reassign duties, measures will be put in place to ensure impartiality, such as double-marking, external oversight, or additional invigilation.

External Candidates and Staff Involvement

- Staff members who have family members or close personal relationships with students sitting examinations will not be involved in the administration, invigilation, or assessment of those examinations.
- Any external individuals involved in the examination process will also be required to declare potential conflicts of interest.

Reporting and Monitoring

- Any concerns regarding conflicts of interest should be reported to the Head of Centre or the Examinations Officer.
- The school will ensure that all declared conflicts of interest and the actions taken to manage them are documented and available for inspection by awarding bodies or JCQ as required.

These measures are in place to ensure the fairness and integrity of all examinations conducted at Great Oaks School.

Use of Word Processors in Examinations

At Great Oaks School, the use of word processors in examinations is guided by JCQ regulations. For entry-level qualifications, the use of a word processor is permitted without the need for prior approval from the examination board or JCQ.

For all other examinations, the use of a word processor is only permitted once the relevant access arrangements have been applied for and approved. This ensures that the use of word processors is granted where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and is a necessary adjustment to meet their individual needs. All applications for access arrangements are made in accordance with JCQ guidelines to maintain the integrity of the assessment process.

Identification of all students at the time of the examination or assessment

- All internal candidates are known to staff and are pre-registered before the exam by relevant teaching staff and heads of departments during warm up session outside of exam room
- All internal candidates have candidate slips on desks for each exam
- Candidates are seen into exam rooms by members of staff
- Invigilators check attendance at start of each exam and complete register as required

- Vigilance is undertaken at start of exams and throughout the process to ensure candidates are correct and valid.

Examination Entry Policy and Charging

- All students will have the opportunity to sit all tests appropriate to their level of study. Programmes of Study will identify the sequence of tests appropriate for each year group.
- Opportunities to maximise the possible chances of success should be built into the programme.
- All examination fees are to be paid for by the school. **Only re-sit** examinations will be paid for by the student/parent. In exceptional circumstances the cost of re-sit examination and payment will be considered by the Exams Officer.
- The dates of examinations are to be shared with students and parents.

Management of Non-Examination Assessments, Including Controlled Assessments and Coursework

Great Oaks School is committed to managing non-examination assessments (NEAs), including controlled assessments and coursework, in line with JCQ guidelines to ensure fairness, consistency, and integrity.

Procedures:

Planning and Communication:

- All departments are responsible for ensuring that NEA requirements are clearly communicated to students at the start of the course. This includes deadlines, assessment objectives, and the criteria for marking.

Supervision and Authentication:

- Staff will supervise students' work to ensure it is their own and provide guidance on avoiding malpractice. Each student must sign a declaration confirming that the work submitted is their own.

Storage of Work:

- NEA materials, including coursework, will be securely stored in line with JCQ requirements to prevent unauthorised access.

Deadlines and Submission:

- Clear deadlines for submission will be provided, and students are expected to meet these deadlines. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Feedback and Marking:

- Teachers will keep NEA materials marked up-to-date and will provide appropriate feedback during the process, following JCQ guidelines on the type of feedback permitted. NEAs will be internally moderated through spot checks or moderation meetings to ensure consistency.

Access Arrangements:

- Any access arrangements for students with special educational needs or disabilities will be applied in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Handling Malpractice:

- Any suspected malpractice will be investigated thoroughly, and appropriate actions will be taken in line with the school's malpractice policy.

Appeals Against Internal Assessment of Work for External Qualifications

Great Oaks is committed to ensuring that all internal assessments for external qualifications are carried out fairly, consistently, and in line with the relevant awarding body specifications.

- Assessments are carried out by staff who have the necessary knowledge, understanding, and skills, and who are trained for the role.
- The school ensures that assessment evidence is produced and authenticated in line with subject-specific requirements. Where assessments are divided between multiple staff, internal moderation and standardisation procedures ensure consistency.

If a student believes that the internal assessment process was not followed correctly in relation to their work, they may use the following appeals procedure. Please note that appeals can only be made against the process that led to the assessment, not the mark or grade submitted for moderation by the awarding body.

Appeals Procedure:

- Appeals should be submitted in writing by the candidate's parent/guardian to the Examinations Officer as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks before the last externally assessed paper in the exam series.
- The Examinations Officer will investigate the appeal in consultation with at least two other staff members who were not involved in the internal assessment decision.
- The appeal will be reviewed to determine whether the process used for internal assessment adhered to the awarding body's published requirements and the Examinations Code of Practice (JCQ).
- The outcome of the appeal will be provided in writing, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and details of any changes made to the internal assessment procedure.
- If the candidate is dissatisfied with the written response, they may request a personal hearing before the appeals panel. This request must be made within two working days of receiving the written response to the original appeal.
- The appeals panel will consist of a senior member of staff and a school governor. The candidate will be given at least two days' notice of the hearing date, along with a breakdown of the marks awarded. The candidate (and their parent/guardian, if requested) and the teacher(s) involved will be present at the hearing.
- The outcome of the appeal will be reported to the Headteacher, and a written record of the appeal and outcome will be maintained. This will be made available to the awarding body on request. If the appeal reveals any significant irregularity, the awarding body will be informed.

Enquiries about External Assessment Marks:

If a candidate is unhappy with the mark awarded for an exam unit (e.g. written exam, coursework, practical assessment), they may request a clerical check or re-mark through the Exams Office. The candidate must acknowledge that their grade may be confirmed, raised, or lowered. If the school does not support the enquiry, the candidate will be responsible for the relevant fee. The decision to support or reject the enquiry will be made by the school based on several factors, including professional judgment and knowledge of the exam system.

Access to Post-Result Services:

Candidates have the right to request access to post-result services, including clerical checks, re-marks, and reviews of moderation. The process for requesting such services is as follows:

- Candidates must submit their request through the Exams Office, and the request will be handled according to the awarding body's procedures.
- Where the school does not support the request, candidates will be responsible for paying the relevant fees.
- Candidates will be informed of the decision regarding their request and any subsequent action taken.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration:

If a student wishes to appeal decisions related to access arrangements or special consideration, they should follow the internal appeals process outlined above. The Examinations Officer will investigate whether the correct procedures were followed in the application of access arrangements or the granting of special consideration, in accordance with the awarding body's policies.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Examinations Officer, with oversight from senior school staff to ensure fairness and adherence to JCQ regulations. If the appeal is upheld, appropriate action will be taken to correct any identified issues.

Contingency plan

The table below sets out examples of scenarios where a contingency plan may be needed to minimise risk to examination administration. These are based on the JCQ’s joint contingency plan, and are consistent with Ofqual’s current contingency planning guidance.

- Absence of exam officers, teaching staff and/or invigilators
- Lack of appropriately trained invigilators
- Failure of IT systems
- Lack of appropriate exam rooms
- Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)
- Markers unable to mark papers according to schedule

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre is closed for an extended period	When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning, e.g. if the centre is forced to close due to increasing rates of coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek advice from relevant awarding organisations and JCQ ➤ Exams will be sat at the alternative venue on our South Site ➤ Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series ➤ Communicate any changes to your plans with parents, carers and pupils 	Andy Vivian / LMT

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal, e.g. sickness bug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue ➤ Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at the alternative South Site venue ➤ Communicate any changes to the plans with parents and pupils ➤ Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series ➤ Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements 	Andy Vivian / LMT
Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period	In the event that the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, e.g. a fire at the centre, or increasing rates of coronavirus forces it to close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible ➤ Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate ➤ Head of centre will decide whether the centre is safe to open, based on advice or instructions from relevant local or national agencies ➤ Exams will be sat at the alternative venue on our South Site ➤ Communicate any changes to your plans with parents, carers and pupils ➤ Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements ➤ Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible 	Andy Evans (Head of Centre) Andy Vivian / LMT

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Find out from the awarding organisation if they're able to organise an alternative courier and time to deliver hard copies ➤ If the above isn't possible, electronic access to papers via a secure external network ➤ Safes are on both sites to store papers under secure conditions ➤ As a last resort, your awarding organisation may consider rescheduling the examination 	Andy Vivian / LMT
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If your examinations are part of the national 'yellow label service' or where your awarding organisation arranges collections, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection ➤ Only make alternative arrangements after approval from the awarding organisation and make sure papers are securely stored until collection ➤ Ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection ➤ If your centre makes its own transportation arrangements, investigate alternative arrangements that comply with the JCQ's instructions for conducting examinations 	Andy Vivian / LMT

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, e.g. a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s), candidates and their parents or carers ➤ Where possible, the awarding organisation will generate candidate marks based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement ➤ Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series 	Andy Vivian / LMT
Centre is unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	In the event that the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contact awarding organisations about alternative options ➤ Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site ➤ Share facilities with other schools/colleges if possible ➤ Co-ordinate access to post results services from an alternative site ➤ Contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible 	Andy Vivian / LMT