



Biddulph High School

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 students
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

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

Exam responsibilities

The Headteacher:

- has overall responsibility for the school/college as an exams centre .
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams Manager:

- manages the administration of all examinations
- advises the leadership group, subject and form 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 students will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- ensures that students 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 students for their exams.
- 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 exam costs/charges.
- line manages the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- 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 students and forwards, in consultation with the LG, any post results service requests.

Heads of faculty are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of students who are unsure about exams 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.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or exams officer.

The special educational needs team are responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the exams officer 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 exams officer to provide the access arrangements required by students in exams rooms.

Lead invigilator/invigilators are responsible for:

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

Students are responsible for:

- confirmation and signing 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.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the school's published prospectus.

Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams manager will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams at a specified date before each series begins. Heads of Faculty 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 Headteacher

Equality Legislation

All exam staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The School will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that that they provide to students in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Exams Manager

Access arrangements

The SENCo/specialist teacher will inform subject teachers of students with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual students will need during the course and in any assessments/exams. Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the Exams Manager. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Exams manager. Rooming, invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Exams manager

Contingency planning

Contingency plans are available via email, noticeboard, briefing meetings, pigeon hole and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

Managing invigilators

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the school and securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the school. Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the NJC school role(s). Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Manager

Malpractice and Maladministration

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates.

It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the assessment process;
- the integrity of a regulated qualification;
- the validity of a result or certificate;
- the reputation and credibility of Biddulph High School; or,
- the qualification or the wider qualifications community.

Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems, to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

Examples of maladministration

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from Biddulph High School
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission

Examples of malpractice

- Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with our requirements
- Deliberate failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Deliberate failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Fraudulent claim(s) for certificates
- Intentional withholding of information which is critical to maintaining the rigour of quality assurance and standards of qualifications
- Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made
- Plagiarism by learners/staff
- Copying from another learner (including using ICT to do so).

Process for making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify the Headteacher. In doing so they should put them in writing/email and enclose appropriate supporting evidence. The Whistle blowing Policy must also be considered and adhered to when reporting a member of staff.

- All allegations must include (where possible):
- Learner's name and registration number
- Biddulph High School staff members name and job role - if they are involved in the case
- Details of the course/qualification affected or nature of the service affected
- Nature of the suspected or actual malpractice and associated dates details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by the centre or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances

The Headteacher will then conduct an initial investigation prior to ensure that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

In all cases of suspected malpractice and maladministration reported we'll protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with our duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

Sometimes a person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous. While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those the allegation relates.

Responsibility for the investigation

In accordance with regulatory requirements all suspected cases of maladministration and malpractice will be examined promptly by Biddulph High School to establish if malpractice or maladministration has occurred and will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect from the occurrence as defined by Ofqual.

We will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to external parties within 48 hours.

The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy and will allocate a relevant member of staff to lead the investigation and establish whether or not the malpractice or maladministration has occurred, and review any supporting evidence received..

Notifying relevant parties

Where applicable, the Headteacher will inform the appropriate regulatory authorities if we believe there has been an incident of malpractice or maladministration which could either invalidate the award of a qualification or if it could affect another awarding organisation.

Where the allegation may affect another awarding organisation and their provision we will also inform them in accordance with the regulatory requirements and obligations imposed by the regulator Ofqual. If we do not know the details of organisations that might be affected we will ask Ofqual to help us identify relevant parties that should be informed.

Investigation outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place we will consider what action to take in order to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future.
- Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications.
- Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration.
- Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

The action we take may include:

- Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice/maladministration and to prevent it from reoccurring
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform the Awarding Organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they're invalid and any action to be taken for reassessment and/or for the withdrawal of the certificates. We'll also let the affected learners know the action we're taking and that their original certificates are invalid and ask – where possible – to return the invalid certificates .
- Informing relevant third parties (e.g. funding bodies) of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the school.

In addition, to the above the Headteacher will record any lessons learnt from the investigation and pass these onto relevant colleagues to prevent the same instance of maladministration or malpractice from reoccurring.

If the relevant party (ies) wishes to appeal against our decision to impose sanctions, please refer to our Complaints Procedure.

Exam days

The exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison 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 in advance. All exams will start and finish in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Subject staff may present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. 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. 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 heads of faculty in accordance with JCQ's recommendations. After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies.

Students

In an exam room students 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 students are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Students are expected to stay for the full exam time.

Note: students who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

The Exams Manager is responsible for handling late or absent students on exam day.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special consideration

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the Learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not compromise the assessment process or the assessment objectives and may involve:

- changing standard assessment arrangements, for example, allowing Learners extra time to complete the assessment activity
- adapting assessment materials
- providing access facilitators during assessment, for example a sign language interpreter or a reader.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the Learner access to the assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a Learner's work.

Awarding Organisations and Centres are only required by law to do what is reasonable in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

All Awarding Organisations and Centres have a responsibility to ensure that the assessment process is robust and fair and allows the Learner to demonstrate his or her full potential.

Adjustments to assessments should:

- not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- not give Learners an unfair advantage
- reflect the Learner's normal way of working
- be based on the individual need of the Learner.

Learner Appeals

This section of the policy aims:

- To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision.
- To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity.
- To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body, where appropriate.
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

In order to do this, Biddulph High School will:

- Inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and procedure
- Record, track and validate any appeal
- Forward the appeal to the awarding body when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted
- Keep appeals records for inspection by the awarding body for a minimum of 18 months
- Have a staged appeals procedure
- Will take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results
- Monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

Appeals Procedure for Learners

Biddulph High School often has to take decisions that affect you personally, perhaps to do with an

application for exceptional assessment arrangements or an award of a course result. If you think that your case has not been properly considered or that a decision is unfair, you have the right to query and then to appeal against it.

There are three stages to our appeals procedure:

Stage 1 – Query

When you first query a decision it is usually referred back to the person that told it to you. In your query, you should say what you are concerned about and what has happened so far, including talking about earlier communication. Please provide any supporting evidence that is relevant. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to put your query in writing, please contact us so that we can discuss alternative arrangements.

We are only able to accept queries made in writing and this ensures that we have an accurate record of your concerns. We will confirm that they have received your query within five working days of receiving it, and send a response to your appeal within ten working days of the date that we received it. We will respond to your query using the method by which it was made i.e. by post or email, unless otherwise agreed.

If when you receive a full answer, you remain dissatisfied and either you have additional information that has not previously been taken into consideration or you have evidence that there has been a procedural irregularity you might want to escalate your query to a stage 2 appeal.

Stage 2 – Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your query and you think that you have grounds, you can make a formal appeal. To make a formal appeal you should write to the Headteacher within 28 days of the date of the response to your stage 1 query.

You should explain the grounds for your appeal and attach any information or correspondence that you consider relevant. We will send an acknowledgement of your appeal within five working days of receiving it and tell you who within the school has been asked to consider your appeal. Assessment outcome appeals will investigate the procedures followed and will not include a review of learner's work. The learner's documentation will be retained during the Appeal procedure.

The person who is asked to consider your appeal will look at:

- Whether there are grounds for upholding your appeal
- Whether the decision was taken fairly and correctly in accordance with the schools procedures
- Whether all the appropriate information was taken into account

Biddulph High School will

Make sure that all the points you raise are properly and impartially considered, and that there is no potential conflict of interest

- Explain the outcome clearly, and ensure that you know what further steps are open to you
- Allow a friend to accompany you to any hearing
- Respect confidentiality by disclosing only the information that is necessary to consider and respond to your appeal, and only to staff who need it for those purposes

We may rule that there are no grounds for the appeal to be considered, and you will then be advised accordingly. Once your appeal has been considered you will be sent a reply directly from the person who has considered your case.

Stage 3 – Review

Following the outcome of your appeal, if you remain dissatisfied you can ask the partnering Awarding Body to review your case

For Automated Assessment the requirements are:

- Learners who are unhappy with any aspect of the assessment process should first discuss the problem with the Examinations Officer or representative within 5 working days of receiving their result.
- The Learner must make the reasons clear at this time.
- Assessments are undertaken using automated testing software which has been approved by the ECDL Foundation. In the event of a Learner raising a complaint the assessment report that will have been produced by the system will be fully discussed with the Learner.

- An action plan will be agreed and a further assessment date scheduled. In some circumstances the Learner may be offered a free re-test (e.g. if there had been hardware or software problems)
- If the Learner is unhappy with the decision of the Examinations Officer the Learner must write to the named representative within 5 working days who will fully review the complaint and attempt to find a solution.
- The Centre will keep a written record of each stage of the process with dates and outcomes
- If a Learner is not able to resolve an appeal at the approved centre then he/she has the right to appeal to BCS. This may be done via the Examinations Officer or direct to the BCS Quality Team in writing. Learner appeals must be made to BCS within 90 days of the date of the assessment together with the appeal fee. This fee will be refunded if the Learner's result improves following the appeal. The address will be supplied on request.
- BCS will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and advise the Learner or centre of the timescale for a decision.
- The BCS Representative will investigate the circumstances of the appeal and make a report to the appeals panel. In very exceptional cases, the appeals panel may request the Examinations Officer possibly accompanied by the Learner, to attend a meeting of the panel to provide further explanation of the circumstances of the appeal.
- Appeals panel decisions will be given in writing to the Examinations Officer and the Learner and are final.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of heads of faculty to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The exams 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 provided to the exams office by the exams manager who will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by.

Quality Assurance:

- Biddulph High School is committed to Quality Assurance and believes it is an integral part of the Centre's processes.
- The focus of the Centre is on Learners with the provision of relevant and flexible quality training programmes and assessment to suit their needs and lifestyles.
- The provision is regularly monitored and reviewed by your named quality assurance representative.

The overall purposes of the school's quality assurance mechanisms within the examinations and assessment process are:

a. to guarantee that we follow school's agreed marking policy appropriately across the range of modules they teach;

b. to guarantee that departments maintain an overall consistency of standards across their various modules;

2. to have robust mechanisms for marking and for the moderation of marks. The role of the external examiner is especially significant in assuring the quality of the assessment process, in respect of the standards of the awards made and the integrity of the assessment process. The following additional mechanisms may also be used.

Quality Assurance of automated assessment:

- All new invigilators are required to be observed during the first six months and annually thereafter to ensure assessment regulations are being followed.
- Existing invigilators should be observed conducting an assessment at least once a year.
- Internal Verification is recorded on Learner work and records and on central recording systems.
- Information from the awarding body is disseminated to all members of staff involved in assessing.
- The organisation's policy for Equal Opportunities is followed and monitored.

Results

Students will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the school
- collected and signed for at a later date

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days and the provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Certificates

Students will receive their certificates as soon as is reasonably possible and third parties may collect, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.