

# Featherstone High School Policy

Curriculum Committee

Next review due: September 2012

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## **Featherstone High School Exam Policy**

Exams are set to find out what knowledge and understanding students have and to allow them to demonstrate the skills they have developed.

Exam results are used to hold schools and teachers accountable, as well as for monitoring standards over time.

However, teachers have also used exams diagnostically, analysing the responses to explore how teaching and learning can be improved.

Increasingly, particularly at Key Stage 3, exams will be used to take a snapshot of standards in schools and as a way of moderating teacher judgements.

This policy primarily addresses the oversight and management of the exam process so that everyone involved can access information and advice in one place. To summarise the purpose of the policy is to:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam 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.

This exam policy will be reviewed annually.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre, AHT and the Exams Officer.

There is a glossary at the end of the policy to help cope with the many acronyms that seem to be a constant feature of the educational landscape.

### **1. Exam responsibilities**

Head of Centre / Headteacher

Overall responsibility for the school/college as an exam centre:

- advises on appeals and re-marks
- the Head of Centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams:

- advises the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures
- as set by the various exam boards
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors 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 exam timetable that will affect them

- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ Access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a senior exams invigilator and a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.

#### Assistant Headteacher

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16.

#### Heads of department

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Selection of suitable specification.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

#### Head of careers

- Guidance and careers information.

#### Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidate names to heads of departments.

#### SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

- Submit applications for access arrangements.
- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support and equipment for students with special needs to help them achieve their course aims.

#### EAL Co-ordinator (English as an Additional Language)

- Identification of candidates with English as a second language

#### Lead invigilator/invigilators

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- Setting up the exam room
- Entering students into the exam room
- Starting and finishing the exam
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office.

#### Candidates

- Confirmation of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

#### Administrative staff

- Support for the input of data.
- Posting of exam papers.

### 2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre, Assistant Headteacher, heads of curriculum, heads of subject and the heads of department.

We use all three main examination boards (generally referred to as either AQA, Edexcel or OCR). The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is the body that represents the exam boards.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are Functional Skills tests, GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education), A levels (Advanced Level), OCR Nationals and BTEC (both of these are vocational types of qualifications offered by OCR and Edexcel).

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the exams office must be informed.

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

Decisions on whether candidates should not take an individual subject will be taken by the Headteacher in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher, Heads of Departments, and the SENCO.

### 3. Exam seasons and timetables

#### 3.1 Exam seasons

- External exams are scheduled in November, January, March, May and June.
- Internal exams are set throughout the year.

#### 3.2 Timetables

- The Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams once these are confirmed.

### 4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

#### 4.1 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the heads of sixth form, heads of subject, heads of department and the Assistant Headteacher.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. This request should be made in writing to Assistant Headteacher.

In some instances, the centre accepts external entries from former candidates. An exam service for external candidates is not provided.

#### 4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and internal post.

Late entries are authorised by the Head of Sixth Form, heads of subject, heads of department and the Assistant Headteacher.

#### 4.3 Retakes and re-sits

Candidates are allowed 1 re-sit per subject in GCSE.

Candidates in the sixth form may be permitted to

- retake GCSEs in English and /or Mathematics at the discretion of the Director of Sixth form
- re-sit AS or A2 units.

Students who are persistently late for exams may not be entered for re-sits.

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers, head of post-16, heads of department and the heads of subject.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

#### 5. Exam Fees

The School will pay for:

- GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees
- AS initial registration and entry exam fees
- A2 initial registration and entry exam fees
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Late entry or amendment fees are paid by either the centre or the candidate depending on who is responsible for the late entry.

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.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

Reimbursement will not be sought from candidates who sit extra language examinations in their home languages.

Retake fees are paid by the students or parent/carer.

(See also section 4.3: Retakes)

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should the centre not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insist on pursuing the enquiry.

(See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

## 6. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Special Needs and Access Arrangements

### 6.1 DDA

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

### 6.2 Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO and the educational psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may be granted during the course and in the exam.

### 6.3 Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENCO and Exams Officer

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCO with the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the Exams Officer.

## 7. Estimated Grades

The heads of department and the heads of subject will submit estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested by the exams officer.

## 8. Managing invigilators and exam days

### 8.1 Managing invigilators

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

### 8.2 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 is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The lead invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted.

In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical

difficulties.

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/available to staff 24 hours after the exam session.

## 9. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

### 9.1 Candidates

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive behaviour by candidates is dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

The Exams Officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

### 9.2 Clash candidates

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

### 9.3 Special consideration

Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Exams Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

## 10. Coursework, Controlled Assessments and appeals against internal assessments

### 10.1 Coursework/ Controlled Assessments

Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the end of the course or centre-defined date.

Heads of department will ensure all coursework/controlled assessments are ready for despatch at the correct time and the exams officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the subject teachers, heads of subject and the heads of department.

### 10.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The centre is obliged to publish a procedure on this subject, which can be found in

section 13 below.

The main points are:

- appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework/controlled assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- appeals should be made in writing by 30 June to the Head of Centre (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- the Head of Centre's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the Exams Officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

## 11. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

### 11.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre. Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Head of Centre.

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

### 11.2 Enquiries about results (EARs)

Enquiries may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

When the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged. However, if the EAR results in a change in grade the fee will be reimbursed.

(See section 5: Exam fees)

### 11.3 Access to scripts

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

If a result is queried, the Exams Officer, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark at the centre's expense.

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

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

## 12. Certificates

Certificates are collected and signed for by arrangement.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

The centre retains certificates for two years.

## 13. Internal appeals about internal assessment decisions

13.1 The Headteacher has nominated the Assistant Headteacher (assessment) to manage any appeals. This person is responsible for disseminating information to all candidates and their carers about the appeals procedure and for informing the Headteacher about the existence and outcome of such appeals.



13.2 An appeal should be made in writing and this should state the details of the complaint and the reasons for the appeal. This should be done within five working days of the candidate receiving the result of an internal assessment decision.

13.3 The teacher concerned in making the assessment, which is subject to the appeal, should see a copy of the appeal and be able to respond in writing within two working days, with a copy sent to the candidate.

13.4 The Assistant Headteacher must respond in writing to the candidate within two working days of receiving the response from the teacher concerned, or four working days from receiving the original appeal.

13.5 The candidate can seek a personal hearing if he or she is unhappy with the written response. He or she must indicate a desire to have a hearing within two working days from receiving the written response. A hearing date must be set to take place not more than ten working days after receiving a request for a hearing. A candidate must be given at least three days notice of a hearing. All relevant documents must be made available to the candidate in advance of the hearing.

13.6 At the hearing the candidate should be allowed to be accompanied by a single carer or friend. The Assistant Headteacher (assessment) will present the case explaining the decision reached after the original complaint. The candidate will then present the case for the appeal. The evidence will be heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and a Governor (who may be a member of staff).

13.7 The outcome of the hearing and appeal will be communicated in writing to the candidate with reasons given for the outcome within five days of the hearing. The School will keep a record of all appeals.

13.8 The School will inform any Awarding Body if there is any change to an internally assessed mark as a result of an appeal.

#### 14 Glossary

JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications

SENCO Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

EAL English as an Additional Language

GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education

A Level Advanced Level

DDA Disability Discrimination Act

CRB Criminal Records Bureau

EAR Enquiries about results

ATS Access to scripts

The policy is next due for review on 10/09/2012