

THE ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL

Academy Trust - Special School

Mountdale Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 4AW

Headteacher: Mr D Woodman

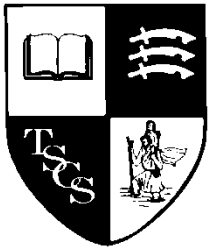
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SEN Trust Southend



The St. Christopher School Academy Trust Exams Policy

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The purpose of this exams policy is:

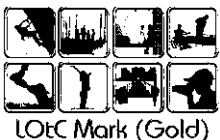
- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

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

The exams policy will be reviewed annually.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the Exams Officer

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



Learning Outside the Classroom



Southend-on-Sea



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Exam responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre and advises on appeals, re-marks and oversees the Exams Officer.
- has a duty to maintain the integrity of the examination and to ensure that fully trained invigilators are in place for examinations and on-screen tests
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.
- Including cyber security oversight and staff training

Exams Officer:

- manages the administration of internal exams and/or external exams
- 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.
- administers access arrangements 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.
- 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 candidates and forwards, in consultation with SLT, any post-results service requests.
- Identify and test candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notify the Exams Officer in good time so that they are able to process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).

Secure Storage of Materials (Exam Officer responsibility):

In the event that the secure room and secure storage facility cannot be accessed in an emergency situation and contingency arrangements need to be invoked, the JCQ Centre Inspection Service must be contacted immediately. Materials must always be kept in the secure storage facility once checked upon receipt.

The secure room must be solely dedicated to examinations and accreditations with between two and six keyholders who must be permanent staff members. Spare keys must be stored securely in a separate location. All access must be logged and the facility regularly checked for fitness for purpose. Electronic materials require specific security protocols including monitored downloading and immediate deletion after printing

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the Exams Officer.

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.

Candidates 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 the conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by SLT and subject leaders.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSEs (English, Mathematics & Art & Design), Entry Level Certificate (Mathematics, English, Art & Design, PE & Science), OCR IT User Skills (at an appropriate level), BTEC Home Cooking Skills (Level 1 & 2) and BTEC Art & Design (Level 1-3), Duke of Edinburgh(Bronze), Arts Award and ASDAN Courses.

If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by September 1st.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the Exams Officer in consultation with the class teacher and pupil.

Exam Series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled throughout the year.

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

The Exams Officer decides which exam series are used in the centre.

Exam Timetables

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

While timetable variations are generally not permitted for school transport arrangements, the school will work proactively with parents/carers and transport providers to accommodate examination schedules. Where transport presents a potential barrier to examination attendance, we will:

- Communicate examination times well in advance to allow transport arrangements to be adjusted
- Work with parents/carers to explore alternative transport solutions
- Support families in making temporary alternative arrangements when necessary
- Consider all possible options to ensure candidates can attend at the scheduled time

Parents/carers should contact the Exams Officer as early as possible if transport arrangements may impact examination attendance

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The centre accepts entries from private candidates.

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

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department/curriculum via pigeon hole.

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

GCSE re-sits/retakes are allowed.

Re-sit decisions will be made by the Exams Officer in consultation with the class teacher.

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 series.

GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the centre.

Fee reimbursements are not sought from candidates:

Re-sit fees are paid by the centre.

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 they provide candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Exams Officer. Please see our Equality Policy for further information.

Access arrangements

The SENCo holds responsibility for several key aspects of access arrangements. This includes the identification and determination of appropriate access arrangements for candidates, while maintaining all

qualifications required by JCQ regulations. For candidates with EHCPs, the SENCo must complete Form 9 to document and substantiate the arrangements needed. They must also ensure all appropriate evidence is properly maintained and readily available for inspection. Additionally, the SENCo is responsible for providing comprehensive training to staff regarding access arrangement regulations and requirements, ensuring all personnel understand and can correctly implement these arrangements.

The Exams Officer manages the practical implementation of access arrangements, including processing online applications through AAO where required and maintaining detailed records of all arrangements. They are responsible for organizing appropriate rooming and invigilation for access arrangement candidates and ensuring arrangements are implemented correctly in all assessments. The Exams Officer must also ensure that subject teachers are fully informed of candidates' approved arrangements.

For candidates with a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), specific documentation requirements must be met. Form 9 must be used to substantiate the EHCP with a picture of need, and Form 8 must not be used. The centre must maintain comprehensive evidence including current EHCP documentation, evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties, documentation demonstrating how the disability or difficulty impacts teaching and learning, and evidence showing the arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working, including its use in internal tests and mock examinations.

The centre maintains detailed records that demonstrate the qualifying need for each arrangement, including additional support, teaching strategies, or behavioural support provided. Teaching staff must confirm that the arrangement is both needed and used consistently.

All applications for access arrangements must be processed and approved before any examination or assessment and submitted by the published JCQ deadline. The Exams officer maintains detailed records of all essential documentation, which must be available for inspection at any time. Implementation requires that arrangements represent the candidate's normal way of working, with staff properly trained in providing approved arrangements and candidates familiar with their use through regular practice.

Where candidates require separate invigilation, the centre must demonstrate substantial need through appropriate evidence. This must reflect the candidate's normal way of working and be supported by professional recommendations. Detailed records justifying such arrangements must be maintained.

Staff training includes regular updates on access arrangement regulations and familiarisation with individual candidates' specific arrangements. The centre maintains comprehensive records of all training provided and reviews procedures annually. The effectiveness of access arrangements is regularly monitored through examination feedback and candidate performance, with arrangements updated as needed to ensure continued compliance with JCQ regulations.

Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Contingency plans are available via briefing meetings and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations. A contingency plan is in place.

Where national examinations are unable to go ahead, Ofqual has published guidance to help improve the resilience of the qualification system, where predicted or estimated grades may be used instead of the final examinations. Teachers responsible for administering mocks must adhere to the section on GCSEs, AS and A Levels which include exams.

The centre must inform the awarding bodies immediately if at risk of closure. A senior designated contact must be available during holiday periods for results-related queries. The contingency plan must detail arrangements for:

- Staff absence at critical points

- Centre unavailability
- IT system failures
- Alternative site arrangements if needed

Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Examinations

The centre has a written emergency evacuation policy for conducting examinations which is subject to inspection by JCQ.

In the event of an emergency evacuation of an exam room: candidates must be told to close their question papers and remain under examination conditions; all materials must remain in the examination room; candidates must be supervised closely while being evacuated to ensure there is no discussion about the examination; the time and duration of the interruption must be recorded; candidates must be allowed the full working time set for the examination. A full report of the incident and action taken must be submitted to the relevant awarding body.

The emergency evacuation procedure is displayed in each examination room within the invigilator folder and staff acting as invigilators are trained in these procedures.

Estimated grades

Subject leaders are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested by the Exams Officer.

In the event that national examinations are unable to go ahead, Ofqual has published guidance to help improve the resilience of the qualification system, where predicted or estimated grades may be used instead of the final examinations. Teachers responsible for administering mocks must adhere to the following section below wherever possible.

GCSEs, AS and A Levels which include exams

For GCSEs, AS and A Levels made up of exams only or made up of exams and non-exam assessment:

- Student evidence from one set of mocks in exam conditions should be sufficient to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as teacher assessed grades (TAGs).
- Schools should plan assessment opportunities in line with their usual assessment approaches – where possible, these should be in the first half of the academic year.
- Students should be assessed under exam-like conditions and, wherever possible, at the same time or using different materials at different times.
- Assessment materials should be as useful as possible for students preparing to take summer exams – similar to full or parts of exam papers.
- Students should be assessed on a wide range of content.
- Total time spent assessing students should not normally exceed the total time students would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment.
- Students must be told before each assessment their performance would be used as part of evidence to determine a teacher assessed grade.
- Reasonable adjustments: the same adjustments made for disabled students taking exams in the summer should be applied, where possible, to assessments.

- Special consideration: if a student's performance was affected by an event such as illness or family bereavement, the teacher should mark the assessment as normal but record the issues so they can be taken into account later.
- Teachers should mark in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance but be aware that the grade boundaries from Autumn 2020, 2021 and Summer 2022 reflect the grading arrangements in place during the pandemic, which were more lenient.
- Students should not resit assessments for the purpose of evidence collection.
- Teachers may tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed.
- Student work must be retained by the centre – digitally or physically.
- Students may be given a copy or the original of their work.
- Students should be supported to complete their non-exam assessment (NEA) wherever possible.

Managing invigilators

External staff will not be used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for external exams.

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

Documentation showing what training was provided to invigilators and staff who support access arrangements must be kept and made available for inspection. These records must be retained until either the deadline for reviews of marking has passed, or if there are any appeals, malpractice cases, or results inquiries until these have been fully resolved - whichever comes later.

As a special school, our staff work closely with pupils and know them well. However, we must maintain formal examination procedures in line with JCQ requirements. The following procedure outlines our approach to verifying candidate identity during examinations, balancing our school environment with examination security requirements.

Candidate Identity Verification Procedure

1. Standard Verification:

- Class teachers and invigilators have regular contact with students and can verify their identity through familiarity
- Daily register and attendance records confirm regular student presence
- Seating plans will be provided to invigilators

2. Identity Verification Process: a) Before the examination:

- Class teacher confirms candidate identity upon entering exam room
- Invigilator cross-references with seating plan and attendance register

b) In case of any uncertainty:

- Contact Exams Officer immediately
- Head of Year or senior staff member to verify identity
- Document any identity verification issues

3. For any occasional external/transferred candidates:

- Must provide photo ID (passport/driving license)
- ID to be checked by Exams Officer
- Copy of ID retained with examination records

Malpractice

The Head of Centre in consultation with the Exams Officer is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice, including the inappropriate use of AI. The centre's malpractice policy must detail how students are instructed on appropriate AI use, acknowledgment requirements, and consequences of misuse. Staff must be trained to identify potential AI misuse in assessment work. Any suspected malpractice must be reported immediately to the awarding body. Please see our Malpractice Policy for further information.

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.

The Exams Officer will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be 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 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 Department 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.

Candidates

The Exams Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series.

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

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject.

This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities, including; smart glasses or any other smart device, for example, an Apple watch, Airpods, earphones/earbuds. Any bottles of water must have the packaging removed and in a see-through bottle. Pencil cases, watches and any personal items (such as bags) will need to be left outside the exam room or kept with the invigilator. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Exams Officer.

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

The Exams Officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day who will submit the form VLA report using the centre Admin Portal which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies secure extranet sites.

Private candidates

The centre accepts private candidates subject to:

- Verification of identity using appropriate photographic ID
- Completion of all required documentation
- Payment of applicable fees before the entry deadline
- Submission of any access arrangement applications and evidence by published deadlines
- Agreement to follow all centre and JCQ regulations
- Attendance at all required assessments and examinations

The Exams Officer maintains detailed records of all private candidate arrangements. Examinations will only be offered if the school has any pupils sitting those examinations for the academic year requested.

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 5 days of the exam.

The Exams Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the exam.

Internal assessment

It is the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer 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 subject leaders. 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.

Results

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days,

- in person at the centre
- by email or post to their home address.

The results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document.

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 Exams Officer.

Enquiries About Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark 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 Exams Officer

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.

Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 5 days of the receipt of results.

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

Re-marks cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost will be paid by the centre.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the centre
- by post to their home address

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.

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

Cyber Security

The JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security should be referred to and followed at all times. This document can be found on the JCQ website or through this link: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Guidance-for-centres-on-cyber-security_23_FINAL.pdf

All examination materials must be accessed and handled within the secure storage Exam room at the centre. Files containing examination materials must not be accessed or printed at alternative locations without prior permission from the awarding body. All staff accessing secure assessment materials via awarding bodies' online systems must:

- Use devices that comply with multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements
- Never share MFA devices between staff members
- Only access materials from within the centre's secure environment
- Ensure all downloaded files are deleted immediately after printing
- Report any potential breaches of security immediately to the Head of Centre
- Follow the JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security (available at www.jcq.org.uk)

The centre must maintain robust and reliable access to internet connectivity to ensure secure data can be accessed only by authorised personnel. All electronic examination materials must be stored securely when not in use, with appropriate backup systems in place.

Staff must be trained in cyber security awareness, particularly regarding phishing attempts and password security.

Staff accessing awarding body systems must:

- Use multi-factor authentication (MFA)
 - Only access materials within the centre's secure environment
 - Have regular cyber security training
 - Report any potential breaches immediately to the head of centre
- Centres must ensure off-site backup of candidates' work and maintain protection against IT system corruption and cyber-attacks

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Word Processor Policy
- Internal Appeals Procedure
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Non-examination Assessment Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

All related policies are available from the Exams Officer and should be updated annually. Where some policies are centrally written by the MAT (Southend SEN Trust), a cover note can be written with recommended updates and amendments suggested for when this is formally reviewed.

Head of Centre: D. Woodman

Exams Officer: E. Kirk

Date: 28.04.22

Revisions: 06.12.24