



Tribe: Always Stay Curious

Examinations Policy

EXAMINATIONS POLICY

(Reviewed September 2023)

This policy is compatible with all other Ardnashee School and College documents and reflects the values implicit in the School Aims, School Ethos, the Mission Statement and the best of current practice.

This policy is reviewed annually in line with school Policy Review Cycle and amended as considered necessary.

CONSULTATION

The school has consulted with:

- staff
- parents/guardians
- pupils
- 3rd party providers

in the formulation of this plan.

ADOPTION

- The Examinations Officer and SLT reviewed the policy in September 2023.
- The Senior Leadership Team reviewed the policy in 2023
- The Board of Governors formally adopted the policy in 2023

DISSEMINATION

The following channels are used to ensure that this policy is known by the school community:

- Website
- Seesaw
- Departmental Meetings

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The purpose of this exam policy is to ensure:

- the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- 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 senior leadership team and the governors.

1. Exam responsibilities

Head of centre: Principal

- Overall responsibility for the college as an exam centre responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. (Refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*).
- Assume overall responsibility for External assessment

Exams Officer

- To liaise with the Head of Centre, Data and Assessment Co-ordinator and Subject Leaders regarding all aspects of examinations.
- To liaise with all relevant examination boards and disseminate information, guidance materials etc to subject leaders.

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- To provide entry details, both provisional and final to examination boards.
- To provide information to examination boards regarding forecast grades and coursework.
- To receive, check and arrange for the safe storage of all exam papers and stationery.
- To liaise with examination chief invigilator regarding security of examination materials and the conduct of examinations.
- Authorise the opening of exam papers from the exam storeroom to the chief invigilator.
- To ensure that examination details are completed for display in foyer.
- To plan, organise and implement arrangements for the collection and dispatch of all exam papers, coursework etc.
- To provide all pupils taking examinations with appropriate documentation ensuring that they are aware of the regulations and procedures.
- Ensure that satisfactory arrangements for the location and supervision of all examinations, including access arrangements, are in place.
- In consultation with the principal, complete relevant forms where special circumstances or arrangements occur and to respond to appeals if they arise following results.
- To attend school on the day prior to and the day of distribution of results and to download results and distribute them to SLT.
- To liaise regularly with Head of Phase and Curriculum VP with regard to any qualifications that are delivered in conjunction with an external agency.

SENCO

- In consultation with the Examinations Officer to ensure that arrangements are in place to support those pupils who will require special assistance with public examinations.

Subject Leaders

- Ensure accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Ensure accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

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- Ensure entries signed off are accurate.
- Ensure that all candidates are entered for the correct specification and examination paper.
- Ensure that all controlled assessment/coursework/portfolio work is stored in compliance with exam board procedures.
- Inform exams officer of any change to courses or modules before the end of September.
- To provide exams officer with provisional entries before the end of September for the purpose of pre-release material.
- To provide the names of candidates to exam officers required to pay fees for re-sit examinations
- Liaise with subject teachers and inform examination officers of any errors in entry.
 - Advises on appeals and re-marks
 - To provide all coursework material and samples (presented in accordance with exam board procedures) to Examinations Officer by internal deadline prior to dispatch.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- To attend school in order to complete all coursework.
- To understand and abide by the rules and regulations of JCQ.

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the subject leaders and the senior leadership team.

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The statutory tests and qualifications offered are (CCEA) **Entry Level:** English, Maths, PE, LLW, HE, Occupational Studies and Life Skills. And Essential Skills (OCN NI).

In addition, the school's Post 16 pupils have access to a range of courses from other examining bodies.

A number of other qualifications are available to students via the NWRC and other 3rd party providers.

If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams officer must be informed by the Subject Leader prior to exam entries.

Any changes of syllabus of any qualification code delivered with an external agency must be reported to the Exams Officer by the Subject teacher e.g. OS Engineering Services NWRC.

At Key Stage 4 and Post 16

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

It is expected that pupils following the ACHIEVE pathway will complete units at Entry Level. Pupils following the SUCCEED pathway will receive additional support to complete any units they have been entered for. Pupils on the CONQUER pathway will follow a school-based curriculum.

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

External exams are scheduled in March and June.

The exam series used in the centre is decided by subject leaders and the senior leadership team.

3.2 Timetables

The exams officer will distribute the exam timetables for external exams once these are confirmed.

4. Estimated Grades, entries, entry details, late entries and resits

4.1 Estimated grades

The Subject Leaders will submit estimated grades to the respective exams officer when requested.

4.2 Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the subject leaders.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal, provided it is approved by the school principal and the parent/carer incurs costs. Exams Officer must be immediately informed by school principal.

4.3 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via the examinations officer.

Any changes to tier must be made by the Head of the Department contacting the Examinations Officer with full written details and the change cannot be made any later than 4 weeks before the exam

Late entries are authorised by Vice principal or Principal.

4.4 Resits

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Subject leader must provide reason and supporting evidence for resit entry. All resit fees must be paid for by the candidate. The subject leader must ensure all repeat entries are highlighted as resits to the respective examinations officer.

Resit decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates, subject teachers and subject leaders. (See also section 5: Exam fees)

5. Exam fees

Occupational Studies - initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Entry Level Qualifications - initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Princes Trust - initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Candidates or subject areas 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 deadlines allowed by the awarding bodies.

Resit fees for first and any subsequent resits are paid by the candidates.
(See also section 4.3: Resits)

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result. (See also section 11.2: Enquiries about results [EARs])

Candidates are not reimbursed who have paid for a re-sit or tier change and fail to turn up for the exam.

6. Equal opportunities and diversity special needs, access arrangements and contingency planning

6.1 EO&D

Our Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy describes the way in which Ardnashee School and College will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, as well as any volunteers working in the school.

Ardnashee School and College's Equal Opportunity and Diversity policy can be found in ***Appendix 2***

6.2 Special Needs

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

6.3 Access arrangements

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the Doctor and Educational psychologist/SENCO.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of SENCO, Exams Officer and Subject Leader.

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

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

Support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENCO with the Exams Officer.

6.4 Contingency Planning

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

If the Examinations Officer (Mr. D. Gibson) is absent during any exam session it is the responsibility of the Deputy Examinations Officer (Mrs. Laura Rainey) to carry out all duties related to the delivery of the examination.

In the case of all exams staff being absent, the Vice Principal will carry out all duties related to the delivery of the examination.

For more details see **Appendix 6**

7. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Ardnashee School and College Training is committed to supporting equality of opportunity in education and learning. In addition to Access to Fair Assessment we operate a policy on reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

A reasonable adjustment in the context of assessment is an adjustment that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Special consideration in the context of assessment is where consideration is given to circumstances that occur just prior to or during assessment that place the learner at a disadvantage.

This policy sets out the procedures that staff and learners should follow when implementing reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

7.1 Reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustments are intended to help reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty but must not affect the validity or reliability of the assessment outcomes or give a learner an unfair advantage.

An adjustment may involve

- changing usual assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- providing assistance during assessment
- re-organising the assessment physical environment
- changing or adapting the assessment method
- using assistive technology.

The work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other learners.

Not all adjustments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. The learner may not need, nor be allowed the same adjustment for all assessments.

Examples of reasonable adjustments:

- Allowing extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- Using a different assessment location
- Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, CCTV
- Use of assistive software
- Assessment material in large format or Braille
- Readers/scribes

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- Practical assistants/transcribers/promoters
- Assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- Language-modified assessment material
- British Sign Language (BSL) or Makaton
- Use of ICT/responses using electronic devices

7.2 Applying reasonable adjustment

In the first instance reasonable adjustments must be agreed by the Assessor and Internal Verifier prior to assessment commencing.

Requests for reasonable adjustments will comply with Awarding Organisation terms and conditions and applications for reasonable adjustments made according to the Awarding Organisation's procedures.

A learner does not have to be disabled (as defined by the DDA) to qualify for reasonable adjustment; nor will every learner who is disabled be entitled to reasonable adjustment. Allowing reasonable adjustment is dependent upon how it will facilitate access for the learner. A reasonable adjustment is intended to allow access to assessment but can only be granted where the adjustment does not:

- affect the validity or reliability of the assessment
- give the learner(s) in question an unfair advantage over other learners taking the same or similar assessment
- influence the final outcome of the assessment decision.

All reasonable adjustments will be transparent and unbiased, recorded on relevant documentation and will be kept on record.

7.3 Special consideration

A special consideration is consideration given to a learner who was prepared for and present for assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances that have arisen at or near the time of assessment.

A special consideration cannot give a learner an unfair advantage but can be considered when their performance may be affected by circumstances beyond their control. Examples of circumstances may be:

- recent personal illness
- accident
- bereavement
- serious disturbance during the assessment
- the alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate
- any part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.

Ardnashee School and College Training will submit a written Special Consideration request to the Awarding

Organisation. All applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis and thus separate applications must be made for each learner.

Learners may apply for special consideration during or after an assessment but may not apply for special consideration in the case of a permanent disability or learning difficulty. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Requests for special consideration will comply with Awarding Organisation terms and conditions and applications for special consideration made according to the Awarding Organisation's procedures.

8. Coursework and appeals against internal assessments

8.1 Internal assessment replaces the largely discontinued term coursework

It is the duty of Subject Leaders to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for despatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer will assist by keeping a record of each despatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Exams Officer by Subject Leaders.

Appeals against internal assessments must be made by the 15/04 of each academic year.

8.2 Appeals

The process for managing appeals is detailed in ***Appendix 1***

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

9.1 Results

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

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days, either in person at the centre or by post to their home address if it has not been collected within 14 days of issue.

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

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

For non-EDI subjects the exams Officer passes the examination certification information to the Office staff to input this information into the PI data. This should be completed in late/ June early July.

9.2 Enquiry about Results (EARs)

Fees must be paid in advance by candidates.

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

Enquiry about Results (EAR) may be requested by candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. The candidates consent is required before any EAR is requested. An EAR may incur a cost for the student. If the grade increases, then fees are reimbursed.

Script Requests (ATS) may be requested provided the candidates consent has been obtained. A script request may incur a cost for the student or subject area.

EAR and ATS requests – NOTE results can stay the same, be increased or **be decreased.**

10. Conflict of Interest

The JCQ regulations for examination and assessment conduct have been revised for the academic year 2015-16.

Ardnashee School and College agrees to:

'inform the awarding bodies of any members of centre staff who are either sitting examinations and assessments or teaching and preparing members of their family for examinations and assessments. Awarding bodies should also be informed where children of exams office staff are being entered for examinations and assessments'

Ardnashee School and College will inform examining bodies if any member of our staff is either sitting examinations or preparing members of their family to sit examinations or assessment. This will be done by emailing the Centre and Examiner Support Team or forwarding a conflict of interest form (will be available on the CCEA and OCN NI website) if available.

JCQ Instructions for conducting controlled assessments 2015-2016 (5.3 – Page 18)

Where a teacher teaches his/her own child, 'the centre must declare the conflict of interest and submit the marked work for moderation, whether or not it is part of the moderation sample.'

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11. Certificates

Certificates can be collected or posted to candidate's address. If the certificate is collected, then candidate or third party must sign to verify same.

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have been authorised to do so, or permitted by the Senior Leadership Team.

Certificates are not withheld from candidates who owe fees.

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The centre retains certificates for one year.

A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

Appendix 1

Appeals Policy

Introduction

This policy addresses the situation where students may wish to appeal against a grade he/she has received for a qualification.

Access

Students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it. All tutors are made aware of these policies and how to access them in order that students can be supported.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be amended in response to feedback from students, staff, parents/carers and external organisations.

Policy Statement

All students at Ardnashee School and College have the right to make an appeal about any of the marks received for the qualifications they are undertaking.

If any student wishes to appeal a decision, they should follow the following procedure.

1. If possible, speak to the member of staff responsible for teaching the qualification in the first instance about the reason they wish to appeal.
2. The member of staff has a responsibility to explain to the candidate why he/she received the grade/mark.
3. If the student or parent/carer is not satisfied with the explanation, the piece of work will be re-marked by another member of staff also involved with that qualification.
4. The student and parent/carer will be informed of the outcome of the re-marking by letter.
5. If the student wants to continue the appeal, he/she needs to contact the exams officer, who will provide the student and parent/carer with information about the appeals procedure for the relevant awarding body and explain what is involved. School will assist with the completion of any forms and will correspond with the awarding body on behalf of the student.
6. Please note: a student must have the support of the centre to be able to appeal against a result.

Appendix 2

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Please note: This policy reflects the duty of all educational organisations to have updated and published their Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, which adheres to the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

This policy describes the way in which Ardnashee school and College will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, as well as any volunteers working in the school.

Access

Employees, learners and volunteers are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Policy Statement

Ardnashee School and College will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against learners, staff, volunteers or anyone involved in external agencies the organisation may be working with on the grounds of:

- sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

In addition, there will be no discrimination against:

- pregnant females or new mothers
- staff, learners or volunteers undergoing gender re-assignment
- learners due to the behaviour of their parents and/or siblings

When recruiting staff, health related questions will not be asked until after a job offer is made, and then, only if it is necessary for the role.

Appendix 3

Fair Assessment Policy

Statement of Assessment

- We aim to provide a variety of qualifications which provide all students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route.
- Our Assessment Policy is based on the concepts of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency and openness.
- We will endeavour to ensure that the assessment processes are implemented in a way which is fair and non-discriminatory.

Access

Students are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it. It can be obtained from the Examinations Officer.

All tutors are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy.

This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from students, tutors and external organisations.

What students can expect from us

- We aim to ensure that all assessment of work is carried out fairly and in keeping with the awarding body's requirements.
- All portfolio-based work will be assessed fairly against the qualification standards and teachers involved will be fully trained.
- Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to awarding body instructions.
- Externally marked tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the awarding body.

Students can also expect:

- To be fully inducted onto a new course and given information that can be shared with parents and carers.

Appendix 4

Internal Moderation Policy

Internal moderation is a key process carried out by centres, throughout the delivery of a Qualification, to ensure that assessment methods are consistent across all Tutors/Assessors and that outcomes are fair to all learners.

Evidence of a robust internal moderation system will be required at external moderation and for audit purposes; therefore, there must be reliable and auditable record-keeping systems in place.

It is the responsibility of all staff to participate in the moderation process by keeping the necessary records, attending relevant meetings and submitting marked candidate work as requested.

All assessment evidence that has been internally moderated must be kept on site until after the external moderation. The work remains the property of the candidate and can be returned to the candidate according to the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

Internal Moderation Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- internal moderation practices are valid and reliable, cover all tutors/assessors and meet the requirements of the awarding organisation
- the internal moderation procedures are fair and open
- accurate and detailed records are kept of internal moderation decisions

The centre will:

- ensure that all assessment activities are valid, appropriate and fit for purpose
- apply a strategy that will provide a representative sample across all tutor/assessors
- create a plan of internal moderation in relation to all assessment activities
- define, maintain and support effective internal moderation roles, including the provision of training where required
- provide standardised documentation to support internal moderation activity and record-keeping
- ensure that feedback and outcomes of internal and external moderation support future development of good practice
- carry out an annual evaluation and review of internal moderation policy and procedures

Internal Verification

In order to implement a robust internal verification standardisation, this centre implements the following processes and procedures.

Programme Manager/ Quality Nominee – S. Crossan

- English Lead – Mrs Kennedy
- Maths: Lead– Mr Gibson
- PE: Lead – Mr Colhoun
- LLW: Lead – Mrs Kennedy
- HE: Lead - Mr Gibson
- Occ Studies Lead – Mr Deery
- Life Skills Lead - Mrs. Gibson

Step 1 - All assessors are fully briefed on assessment procedures and specifications

Step 2 - All assessors are made aware of the internal verification process and the

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documentation that is used.

Step 3- All assignments briefs are internally verified before distribution to students

Step 4- All assessors are aware of the annual verification schedule

Step 5- Feedback sheets are completed by the internal verifier and support is provided if clarification is required

Step 6- All assignments are securely in each department

Appendix 5

Malpractice Policy

Staff Malpractice Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out to define the procedures to be followed in the event of any dispute or allegation regarding staff malpractice in the assessment of internally marked qualifications and also regarding examinations invigilated by staff at the school and marked externally.

Examples of Malpractice

Attempted or actual malpractice activity will not be tolerated. The following are examples of malpractice by staff with regards to portfolio-based qualifications. This list is not exhaustive:

- Tampering with candidates work prior to external moderation/verification
- Assisting candidates with the production of work outside of the awarding body guidance
- Fabricating assessment and/or internal verification records or authentication statements

The following are examples of malpractice by staff with regard to examinations

- Assisting candidates with exam questions outside of the awarding body guidance
- Allowing candidates to talk, use a mobile phone or go to the toilet unsupervised
- Tampering with scripts prior to external marking taking place.

Staff Malpractice Procedure

Investigations into allegations will be coordinated by the exams officer who will ensure the initial investigation is carried out within ten working days. The person responsible for coordinating the investigation will depend on the qualification being investigated. The investigation will involve establishing the full facts and circumstances of any alleged malpractice. It should not be assumed that because an allegation has been made, it is true. Where appropriate, the staff

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member concerned and any potential witnesses will be interviewed and their version of events recorded on paper.

The member of staff will be:

- informed in writing of the allegation made against them
- informed what evidence there is to support the allegation
- informed of the possible consequences, should malpractice be proven
- given the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations
- given the opportunity to submit a written statement
- given the opportunity to seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if required)
- informed of the applicable appeals procedure, should a decision be made against them
- informed of the possibility that information relating to a serious case of malpractice will be shared with the relevant awarding body and may be shared with other awarding bodies, the regulators Ofqual, the police and/or professional bodies including the GTCNI

If work is submitted for moderation/verification or for marking which is not the candidate's own work, the awarding body may not be able to give that candidate a result.

Staff Malpractice Sanctions

Where a member of staff is found guilty of malpractice, Ardnashee School and College may impose the following sanctions:

- 1) **Written warning:** Issue the member of staff with a written warning stating that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied
- 2) **Training:** Require the member of staff, as a condition of future involvement in both internal and external assessments to undertake specific training or mentoring, within a particular period of time, including a review process at the end of the training
- 3) **Special conditions:** Impose special conditions on the future involvement in assessments by the member of staff
- 4) **Suspension:** Bar the member of staff in all involvement in the administration of assessments for a set period of time
- 5) **Dismissal:** Should the degree of malpractice be deemed gross professional misconduct, the member of staff could face dismissal from his/her post

Appeals

The member of staff may appeal against sanctions imposed on them. Appeals will be conducted in line with the organisations Appeals Policy.

Appendix 6

Examination Contingency Plan

Contents

Purpose of the plan

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice
6. Failure of IT systems
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Purpose of the plan

Pupils at Ardnashee School and College School do not currently sit any written exams. This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Ardnashee School and College School if exams are sat in the future. There are also important points which need to be considered around the submission of ELQ coursework.

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which provides guidance in the publication what schools, colleges, and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.

This plan also confirms Ardnashee School and College School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2019-2020) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan, which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absences.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered.
- Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines, sufficient invigilators not recruited.

Entries

- Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff.
- Candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment, awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred.

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Pre-Exams

- Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams.
- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- Exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
- Internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

Exam Time

- Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies

Results and Post-Results

- Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Mr Gibson is also registered as an Exams Officer to allow him to access all the relevant information, therefore should there be any extended absence there will be someone to complete the relevant tasks at the different stages of the examination process. This will be enhanced by good planning and entries and preparations made early.

SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- Candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- Centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-Exams

- Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- Centre-delegated arrangements not put in place

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- Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- Staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam Time

- Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms
- Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
- In the event that the SENCo has an extended absence, the relevant planning and arrangements will be prepared by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Other teachers in the team will be able to advise on entries needed. This may be the subject leader or other subject specialists.

Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam
- Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

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Extra invigilators can be called on the day of an exam to provide emergency cover.

Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Sufficient and early planning for use of rooms; lessons may be moved in order to accommodate rooms that are suitable for exams. Both the central hall and PE hall can be used if necessary.

Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- System failure at final entry deadline
- System failure during exams preparation
- System failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Cannot log onto the network: initial diagnosis by IT Technician and IT Manager to determine the scope and scale of the problem. If not an internal problem then a call will be made to external server support by the IT Manager. Exam board will be notified.

Sims will not load: initial diagnosis by IT Manager to discover the scope and scale of the problem. Internal issues will be resolved immediately, if not an internal issue then call will be made to SIMS support.

Internet connection has broken: Call the Internet Service Provider to report the issue. We have no influence on this type of problems and generally this should not impact the candidates from completing an exam unless ICT. In which case the issue will be reported to the exam board.

Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

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Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Please see separate document

Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Early preparation for exam series, to ensure that teaching and learning prepares candidates for the exams. Extra classes may be set-up to allow for missed work to be completed. SLT to research the use of another centre. Candidates who are unable to attend for an extended period, will be identified with the exam boards and special consideration requests made.

The exams officer will inform SLT of key dates for external assessments and any information given to exam boards in relation to these dates. If any dates are changed for any reason then the exam board and JCQ must be informed.

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The Exams Officer will liaise with HOC in order for arrangements to be decided. The exams officer will contact the relevant exam boards and complete any necessary documentation such as special consideration.

Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Initial risk assessment of school site, if emergency is localised within the school then another area of the school might be used. Otherwise HOC will decide on alternative arrangements.

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Security of exams papers and other JCQ regulations would have to be considered. Exams officers will contact the exam boards with arrangements or to seek further advice.

Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Exams officers to monitor and check receipt of exam papers, in advance of exam dates, if papers have not been received at least one week prior to the exam date, they will make HOC aware and contact the exam board.

Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Exams Officers to contact Parcel Force and report delay, ensure papers are held in a secure location until collected. If a delay occurs over a weekend or over half-term it will be ensured that the papers are held securely. Access to area will be by key holders only – Exams Officer and HOC.

Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

HOC to be made aware of incident and parents and exam boards will be notified.

Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

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In the event that there has been an IT failure or another incident resulting in distribution problems, advice will be obtained by the exam boards. Information will be shared with relevant parties.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans...

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.

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6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

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[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted, sections 1 and 2
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>]

JCQ

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

Further information may be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iv]
 General regulations for approved centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>
 Guidance on alternative site arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>
 Guidance on transferred candidate arrangements <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries>
 Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations> A guide to the special consideration process

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<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-yearssettings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weatherconditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

Statutory guidance on school closures <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Northern Ireland Exceptional closure days <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days> Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>

Appendix 5

Guidance

GUIDELINES FOR SUBJECT TEACHERS

1. Subject Teachers must complete an **examination survey/ audit** for each exam class (September) and ensure that the exam entry details are correct (e.g. exam entry code, cash-in code if required, class code, date of entry – March series & Summer series) Teachers must ensure that they follow the Terminal Rule laid out by the exam board for their subject area. This can be found in their subject specification..
2. Teachers are given a *Unit Tracker* spreadsheet to check, sign and date in advance of each examination series based on the information they have included in their September
3. All communications regarding examination entries and access arrangements should be given to the examinations officer. The withdrawal from any subject is solely the decision of the Principal, in conjunction with the subject teacher, the pupil and the parent/parents of the pupil. Any parental requests for withdrawal from any subject must be in writing to the Principal.
4. Teachers entering candidates for examinations other than the boards listed below, will be responsible for their own entries.

CCEA

OCN NI

5. **The school will pay for 1 entry per module for each.** Resits must be paid for by pupils. Pupils will be informed via assemblies, emails and class teachers of the dates and costs of when resits must be paid for. Teachers of these pupils taking resits must encourage pupils to hand in resit fees to the office and a receipt must be issued. If the resit fee has not been paid by 15th June a resit bill will be issued to the parent/ guardian. * In the case of extreme hardship, the Vice Principal/Principal will decide if the school should pay for the resit.
6. All subject teachers must inform Examinations Officer (Darren Gibson) and Office Staff (Denise) of Pupils requiring resits throughout the year.

GUIDELINES FOR EXAMINATION OFFICER

The examinations officer will collect information from all subject teachers in relation to exam entries by 30th September each year. *(please note these may be subject to change)*

EXAM SERIES	DEADLINE DATE FOR ENTRIES	RELEASE DATE FOR RESULTS
CCEA March(including entry level)	January	June
CCEA Summer:	February	August
OCN NI	February	August

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:

- Any pupil completing ELQ **Occupational Studies** must be registered by 31st January.
 - Any pupils who are doing **Entry Level** (CCEA) for any subject area must enter pupils by 31st January.
1. The examinations officer will ensure that all entries, based on the data provided, will be entered on time for each examinations series to avoid late entry fees.

2. The examination officer will follow JCQ Guidelines (see Joint Council Qualifications website) when applying for special consideration for any pupil who requires it.
3. The SENCO will inform the examinations officer of any examination concessions which pupils are entitled to.
4. The examinations officer will ensure that correct procedures are followed in relation to invigilating exams with the Chief Invigilator and all the assistant invigilators.
5. The examinations officer will download the results via EDI for each exam series and will forward a copy of this information to the Principal. On the morning of the official results, the examinations officer will give the relevant subject teachers a copy of the results which are distributed to the pupils at an agreed time.
6. The examinations officer will ensure that all relevant notices about exams will be placed both inside and outside the exam room following JCQ guidelines.
7. If the Chief invigilator discovers any evidence of malpractice during an exam, the Chief Invigilator will inform the Examinations officer who will complete a JCQ form in relation to malpractice and inform the child's parents. If the Examination Officer is absent the Chief Invigilator will inform the VP or a member of the SLT who will contact the child's home about the incident. The Examination's Officer /VP will also inform the HOD of the relevant subject area.

Any further questions surrounding External Examinations should be directed to the Principal,
Vice Principal or Exams Officer.

D. Gibson – *January 2023*