Alde Valley Academy

Aspire and Achieve. Lead with Kindness. Stronger Together.

Exams Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

Alde Valley Academy is committed to ensuring that exams are managed and administered effectively.

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- The planning and management of exams is conducted in the best interest of candidates
- Our system of exams administration is efficient and clear, and staff and pupils understand what is required and expected of them
    - We comply with requirements and guidance set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and awarding bodies

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Everyone

Everyone involved in our exam processes, including staff and pupils, must read, understand and implement this policy. Senior leaders must also read and refer to the JCQ general regulations.

2.2 Head of centre

The head of centre:

- Has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre
- Is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is compliant with the JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
- Must read and refer to the JCQ guidelines
- Is responsible for making sure that all staff comply with the JCQ guidelines
- Is responsible for making sure that all senior leaders and staff involved in exams are familiar with the whole of the JCQ general regulations
- Is responsible for making sure that all staff receive appropriate training, support and time to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments, and that they understand the relevant requirements
- Is responsible for making sure that all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice are reported, in line with the JCQ guidance on malpractice in examinations and assessments
- Ensures that JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security is followed
- Ensures that accurate candidate contact information is obtained and maintained
- Ensures that required information is provided to the National Centre Number Register and updated, as needed
- Ensures appropriate controls are in place that allow accurate data to be submitted to the awarding bodies by the required deadline, e.g. entries and internally-assessed marks
- Ensures that all reasonable steps are taken to respond promptly to requests for information or documentation made by an awarding body or regulatory authority
- Ensures that candidates are entered under names that can be verified against suitable identification such as a birth certificate, driver's licence or passport – and only entered under alternative names in exceptional circumstances
- Ensures that there are appropriate resources in place at the time of exams – such as readers and scribes – to meet candidates' needs
- Ensures that at least 1 member of staff (a senior designated contact) is available to manage emergency results-related requests from awarding bodies during the summer holidays
- Ensures the security of all assessment materials, and that the materials provided are only shared with appropriate staff and candidates
- Reports any potential or actual breach of examination or assessment materials to the awarding body/bodies immediately
- Retains records of all conflicts of interest including details of the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected Our head of centre is Gavin Hetherington.

2.3 Exams officer

The exams officer is responsible for the administration of exams. They:

- Manage the administration of internal and external exams
- Must read and refer to the JCQ guidelines
- Advise the senior leadership team (SLT), subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by awarding bodies
- Oversee the production and distribution of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved, and communicate regularly with staff about imminent deadlines and events. Ensure this calendar is provided to all staff and candidates
- Ensure that candidates and their parents/carers are informed of, and understand, aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them
- Check with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Provide and confirm detailed data on estimated entries
- Maintain systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams
- Receive, check and securely store all exam papers and completed scripts, and make sure that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines
- Download, print (where appropriate) and store electronic assessment materials safely and securely as per the JCQ guidelines
- Administer access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, and make applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ guidance on the special consideration process
- Identify and manage exam timetable clashes
- Account for income and expenditure 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
- Ensure candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks are submitted correctly and on schedule, along with any other material required by the awarding bodies
- Track, dispatch and store returned coursework/controlled assessments
- Arrange for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates, and forward, in consultation with the senior leadership team (SLT), any post-results service requests
- Report all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, in line with the JCQ guidance on suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments
- Advise on appeals and re-marks
    - Be 1 of the key holders to the secure room where question papers and pre-release materials are stored.
        - Our Exams Officer is Jo Chandler.

2.4 Heads of Department

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Advising the exams officer of any changes to syllabus or assessment details for their subjects
- Advising the exams officer of entries for their subjects
- Guidance and pastoral care for candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries
- Accurately completing entry and mark sheets, and adhering to deadlines as set by the exams officer
- Accurately completing coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets

Decisions on post-results procedures

2.5 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Supplying information about entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or the exams officer

2.6 Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Detailing candidates' current difficulties to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in examinations, and summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff
- Identifying and testing candidates' requirements for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, and notifying the exams officer in good time so they can put exam day arrangements in place
- Processing any necessary applications for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, in order to gain approval (if required)
- Working with the exams officer to provide the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments required

by candidates in exam rooms Our SENCO is Claire Wills.

2.7 Lead invigilator(s)

The lead invigilator(s) are responsible for:

- Assisting the exams officer to run exams efficiently, according to JCQ regulations
- Collecting exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam
- Collecting all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring they are returned to the exams office

2.8 Candidates

Candidates are responsible for:

- Confirming and signing entries
- Understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations, and signing a declaration that confirms the coursework to be their own
- Ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations

3. Qualifications offered

decides the qualifications we offer.

We offer the following types of qualifications:

- GCSEs
- BTECs
- Cambridge Nationals

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any school year may be found in the curriculum area of our school website: https://www.aldevalley.suffolk.sch.uk/Curriculum-Overview/

If there will be a change to a specification for the next year, the exams office must be informed by December 2025.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the relevant Head of Department and SENCO.

4. Exam series

Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled in the following exam series:

- NGRT (New Group Reading Test) – September 2026 & February 2027
- CAT (Cognitive Ability Test) – September 2026
- Year 11 Mock Exams – November 2026
- Year 11 Mock Exams – March 2027
- Year 10 Mock Exams – June 2027

External exams and assessments are scheduled in the following exam series:

- GCSE Exams – May/June 2027

Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

The Senior Leadership Team decides which exam series are used in the centre.

The centre does not offer assessments on an on-demand basis.

5. Exam timetables

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal and/or external exams on a specified date before each series begins.

6. Entries (including entry details and late entries)

Candidates or parents/carers cannot request subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

We do not accept entries from private candidates.

We do not act as an exams centre for other organisations.

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and middle leader meetings.

Heads of department will provide estimated entry information to the exams officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline require authorisation, in writing, by the Exams Officer.

6.1 Re-sits

Generally re-sits are only offered for non-examined assessments or examinations taken mid-year.

Decisions about re-sits will be made by the Head of Department in consultation with the Exams Officer and SLT.

Re-sits will not be offered to Year 11 students who have taken the examination in the summer series.

7. 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 actions well in advance of each exam series.

Alde Valley Academy, in accordance with the DFE, will not charge for exams or re-sits the pupil has been prepared for at school. However, we reserve the right to charge for the following:

- Exams or re-sits the pupil has not been prepared for at school, even if they are on the list of prescribed public examinations
- Exams not on the set list of prescribed public examinations
- A pupil, if they fail, without good reason, to complete the requirements of a public exam where the school originally paid the entry fee
- Withdrawal from an exam (where charges would be applied by an exam board), if the parent/carer requests withdrawal

8. Equalities

All our staff must make sure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

We will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that we provide to candidates in accordance with the requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies and the JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

9. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

The SENCO will inform subject teachers of any special arrangements that may be needed for candidates with:

- Special educational needs (SEN)
- English as an additional language (EAL)
- A temporary illness or injury

A candidate's access arrangements and reasonable adjustments requirement is determined by the SENCO.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is the responsibility of the SENCO, Head of Department and Teachers.

Submitting completed access arrangement and reasonable adjustment applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the the Exams Officer.

Room arrangements for candidates using access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be organised by the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for candidates using access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements and adjustments regulations, will be organised by the Exams Officer. Where

candidates sit their examinations in a smaller environment away from the main examination room (the suitability of which is to be assessed in conjunction with JCQ access arrangements and adjustments regulations), the JCQ's regulations and guidance must be adhered to.

See chapter 5 of the JCQ access arrangements and adjustments regulations for details on the types of adjustments that may be considered, as well as the procedures involved.

9.1 Use of word processors

We may allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate as part of access arrangements or as a reasonable adjustment where appropriate, including:

- When it is their normal way of working, i.e. where the curriculum is delivered electronically and word processors are provided to all candidates
- If they need support with handwriting

If they have a:

- Physical disability
- Learning difficulty that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- Medical condition
- Sensory impairment
- Difficulty with planning and organisation when writing by hand

The SENCO will use their judgement, in collaboration with relevant members of staff where necessary, to make decisions about when a word processor is appropriate outside the specific examples listed above.

We will make sure that:

- The proposed arrangement will not disadvantage or advantage a candidate
- The use of a word processor will not compromise the assessment objectives or the integrity of the assessment and will be used under secure conditions. Where these objectives would be compromised, then a word processor will not be granted for use by a candidate We will also make sure that the word processor:
- Has the spelling and grammar check and predictive text software disabled
- Does not have internet connectivity during the exam
- Has been cleared of any previously stored data, along with any portable storage medium used (and where any authorised memory stick is provided to or used by the candidate, the memory stick will be cleared of any previously stored data)
- Does not allow access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited), spreadsheets or emails
- Does not have graphic packages or computed-aided design software, unless permission is given

Does not have computer reading (text to speech) software, unless the candidate has permission

- Does not have speech recognition technology, unless the candidate has permission

The word processor will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

All equipment will be checked to make sure it's in working order and sufficiently charged for the duration of the examination.

Candidates provided with the use of a word processor will be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where we accommodate a candidate in another room, a separate invigilator will be present.

Candidates will be:

- Reminded to make sure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer, or to handwrite their details on the printed documents where this

feature is not available (where the candidate needs to handwrite their details, they will be supervised to make sure that that is solely what they're doing and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way)

- Reminded to save their work at regular intervals, unless 'autosave' has been set up on the device to make sure that the candidate's work is not lost because of a technical issue
- Advised to use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing Each

page of the typed script will be numbered.

The word processor will be connected to a printer so that the script can be printed off, and this will be done once the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work is their own and then the script will be attached to any answer booklet that contains some of the answers. We may also be required by the awarding body to include a word processor cover sheet with the candidate's typed script.

We may retain electronic copies of a word-processed script and this may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost and it is demonstrated that the file has been kept securely.

10. Contingency planning and resilience

Contingency planning for exam administration is the responsibility of the Exams Officer. They are responsible for:

- Being familiar with the regulators' guidance on ensuring resilience in the qualification system
- Making sure that we have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to exams
- Ensuring that we have an up-to-date, written examination contingency plan that covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration, in accordance with JCQ guidelines

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the contingency plans, which are available via email and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Exams to put in place a process for gathering evidence of candidate performance in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual.

11. Estimated grades

Subject Teachers and Heads of Department are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams officer when requested.

12. Managing invigilators

External staff will be used to invigilate examinations. The head of centre, a senior member of centre staff, such as an assistant headteacher, or the exams officer will ensure that (where possible) a teacher, teaching assistant, tutor or senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, or a learning support assistant who has supported 1 or more candidates, is not an invigilator during the examination. If you will use external staff to invigilate exams, include:

These invigilators will be used for internal exams (wherever possible) and external exams].

All schools continue with:

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and any new invigilators and/or those facilitating an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment for a candidate under examination conditions will receive thorough training on JCQ guidelines.

If invigilators require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, the Headteacher assumes responsibility for obtaining these.

DBS fees are paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Headteacher in accordance with the Kingfisher Schools Trust.

Invigilators will be timetabled, trained and briefed by the Exams Officer.

13. Malpractice

The centre will take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice before, during and after assessment has taken place. The head of centre, in consultation with the Exams Officer and Assistant Headteacher responsible for exams, is responsible for ensuring that suspected malpractice is thoroughly investigated. Malpractice does not necessarily involve an intention to cheat or gain an unfair advantage. Examples of malpractice include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorised use of a mobile phone or internet-enabled device in examinations
- Copying or allowing work to be copied
- Posting work on social media prior to an exam
- Collusion or working collaboratively

Candidates are briefed in assemblies and before every examination about malpractice and the consequences.

14. Exam days

The exams officer will:

- Book all exam rooms (after liaising with other relevant users)
- Make question papers, exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator(s)

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements 14 days in advance.

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

Subject staff may not be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff will only be present in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to the relevant Head of Department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

After an exam, the exams officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed exam scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with the School Support Team.

The procedure for emergency evacuation of exam rooms will be outlined in our exam contingency policy, which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

In the event of an emergency, a full report of the incident will be produced and kept on file – and any breach of question paper security or malpractice will be reported to the awarding body immediately.

15. Candidates

The exams officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates may be given by the Assistant Headteacher responsible for exams.

Our published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and we accept 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, and/or the specification for that subject.

This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic devices with text or digital facilities.

Any precluded items must not be taken into the exam room.

Disruptive candidates will be dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team.

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.

15.1 Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible for making arrangements for clash candidates, including:

- Supervising escorts
- Identifying a secure venue
- Arranging overnight stays where necessary

16. Special consideration

If a candidate is unable to attend an exam because of illness, bereavement or other trauma, or if a candidate becomes ill or otherwise disadvantaged during an exam, they are responsible for alerting the invigilators and/or Exams Officer to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 3 days of the exam.

The exams officer will, where appropriate, make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 7 days of the exam.

17. Non-examination assessments

Teaching staff who deliver non-examination assessments for GCEs and GCSEs will follow the correct specifications and the specification and instructions provided by the awarding body, and/or JCQ instructions for conducting non-examination assessments, if appropriate. Teaching staff will also check that the tasks and approach being taken are appropriate and in line with ethical standards and the centre's safeguarding responsibilities.

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all non-examination 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 internally assessed work will be provided to the exams office by subject teachers. The Exams Officer will inform staff of the deadline date for appeals against internal assessments.

Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with our internal appeals procedure document.

17.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Alde Valley Academy recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Pupils **may not** use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Pupils **may** use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed

Where a pupil uses an AI tool, they should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated response(s). Pupils must submit this along with the work to be assessed.

Staff should:

- Be aware that AI tools are still being developed and tested
- Use AI tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate or biased content
- Make pupils aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments Staff **must not:**
- Use AI as the sole means of marking candidates' work

See our Homework Policy for more information on how pupils can and cannot use AI for their assignments.

For more information on AI misuse, see guidance from JCQ on AI use in assessments. Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.

18. Results and certificates

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days. These will be distributed from the school canteen from 9am - 11am on the national GCSE results day (usually a Thursday in late August).

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 Senior Leadership Team.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

Dates of results days each year will be publicised for all candidates through the school website and letters home.

18.1 Enquiries about results (EARs)

Enquiries about results (EARs) may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results.

Any request for a re-mark or clerical check must only be submitted with the written consent of the candidate. A request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of a group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the school (if requested by the school) or the candidate (if requested by the candidate).

All decisions about whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Heads of Department.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and we will respond by following the process in our internal appeals procedure document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer, following the JCQ guidance.

18.2 Access to scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 20 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.

Applications for EARs cannot be submitted once an original script has been returned.

The Exams Officer is responsible for processing requests for ATS.

The cost of ATS will be paid by the centre (if requested by the centre) or the candidate (if requested by the candidate).

18.3 Certificates

Candidates will be notified by school about how to collect their examination certificates from the school office.

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 indications with them that confirms who they are.

The centre retains certificates for 2 years.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organization except in certain specific circumstances (such as a change of gender or identity).

19. Monitoring and review

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed and updated **annually**, and whenever there is a relevant change to:

- The exams system
- JCQ guidance
- Our curriculum offer

20. Links with other policies

This policy links with our:

- Exam contingency plan
- Whistle-blowing policy
- Conflict of interest's policy
- Complaints policy
- Data protection policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Appeals policy
- Management of non-examination assessments policy