



Backwell School Examinations Policy 2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	
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1. Introduction

Backwell School is committed to the education of all its students. The examination process enables students to demonstrate their knowledge, and progress to the next stage of their life, be that further education or the workplace. It is the aim of the Exams Office, and all others involved in the processes outlined in this document, to ensure the smooth running of all aspects of examinations. In doing so, we will provide students with an environment in which they will feel confident and secure, enabling them to perform to the best of their ability.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure that the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates.
- To ensure that all exams and assessments are conducted according to JCQ and awarding body regulations, guidance and instructions, thus maintaining the integrity and security of the exam/assessment system at all times.
- To ensure that exam candidates and their parents/carers understand the exams process and what is expected of them.

3. Examination Roles and Responsibilities

Key Roles:

Head of Centre

- Has overall responsibility for the integrity of the exams system with reference to the General Regulations for Approved Centres.
- They must ensure that they are aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ regulations.
- They are accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements in order to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments at all times.

Examinations Officer

- The examinations officer is the person appointed by the head of centre to act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in matters relating to the general administration of awarding body examinations and assessments.

Head of Education Support (SENCo)

- The SENCo is the person appointed by the head of centre to act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in all matters relating to the testing and awarding of access arrangements in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Key Responsibilities:

Head of Centre is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate support is provided to enable compliance with relevant JCQ regulations.
- ensuring a named member of the senior leadership team is allocated to provide support and guidance to the examinations officer (EO).
- ensuring a named member of staff acts as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).
- ensuring the EO and SENCo are able to undertake appropriate training/CPD in order to facilitate the effective delivery of exams and assessments within the centre.
- taking all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during the course of, and after examinations have taken place.
- informing the awarding bodies of any cases of alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, whether involving a candidate or a member of staff.
- ensuring that risks to the exam process are assessed and appropriate risk management processes and a written contingency plan is in place.

Examinations officer is responsible for:

- managing the administration of all external and internal exams in line with the JCQ and awarding body regulations.
- maintaining systems and processes to submit entries to awarding bodies before published deadlines.
- identifying and managing exam timetable clashes in line with the regulations.
- coordinating seating requirements, ensuring that candidates are seated according to JCQ requirements and that all access arrangements (as identified, approved and advised by the Education Support department) are accommodated as appropriate.
- overseeing and supporting departments with the administration of non-examination assessment and coursework. This includes processing any internal appeal requests and ensuring departments are aware of and meet submission deadlines for internally assessed marks as well as ensuring all samples are uploaded or despatched within the required deadlines.
- ensuring processes are in place to handle all examination papers and completed scripts securely and in line with regulations.
- maintaining sufficient suitable invigilators to run exams in accordance with the regulations - recruiting, training and deploying invigilators as required.
- advising on and administering all applications for Special Consideration.
- downloading and disseminating exam results to candidates and key staff and advising on and processing any appeals/review of marking requests.
- collating and issuing certificates to candidates, and maintaining required records of certificates issued or destroyed.

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- deciding on the awarding body and specification.
- ensuring that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes, and any other subject specific instructions.
- supplying the Examinations Officer with details of all exam codes from the specification within required deadlines.
- checking entries once teachers have completed their marksheets, ensuring candidates have been entered accurately and authorise the entry listings to confirm they have completed the relevant checks.

Teachers are responsible for:

- inputting all examination entries via marksheets within the deadlines set by the exams team.
- ensuring that students are entered at the correct tier of entry.
- notifying the SEND team of any access arrangement requirements, and providing the necessary supporting evidence as soon as possible after the start of the course.
- ensuring students have the correct access arrangements for any non-examination assessments.

SEND Team is responsible for:

- identifying and testing of candidates for access arrangements.
- liaising with teaching staff to gather evidence of normal way of working to support an application for access arrangements.
- applying for access arrangements on-line through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and once approved updating SIMS and informing the student and the parent/carer.
- provision of additional support – with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia, hearing and sight impairment, IT equipment – to help candidates achieve their course aims.
- reviewing the use of access arrangements after each exam season (internal or external), and removing arrangements that are no longer required.

IT Department is responsible for:

- provision of technical support and advice to exams team in relation to planning, preparation and delivery of exams.
- ensuring IT staff are available during exam periods and results days to provide technical assistance in the event of IT issues/failure.

Site Team is responsible for:

- supporting the exams team in setting up exam rooms and resources as required.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- completing all training and briefing sessions as required to ensure they are familiar with the latest regulations.
- collection of exam papers and other material from the Examinations Officer before the start of the exam, and ensuring that these are kept secure at all times to protect the integrity of the exams process.
- setting up the exam room prior to the exam, ensuring correct exam papers and materials are ready for each student, and that any access arrangements are in place.
- carrying out invigilation as per the instructions of the Examinations Officer and according to the JCQ regulations.
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their secure return to the exams office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- ensuring they understand the regulations relating to non-examination assessments, in particular with respect to the use of AI, and signing the declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- ensuring they are fully aware of the JCQ regulations for written examinations and ensuring they comply with these regulations in all exams. This information will be communicated via assemblies/exams portal/school website.
- ensuring they are aware of the JCQ regulations relating to the use of social media and exams.
- checking and confirming their exam entries via the exams portal within the deadlines set.
- checking their latest timetable and ensuring they know when their exams are and which exam rooms they are in.

4. Choice of Specification and Awarding Body

- It is at the professional discretion of subject departments to choose which exam board offers the most appropriate specification designed to meet overall curriculum requirements.
- Any changes in specifications must be approved by the Deputy Head for Curriculum and notified to the Examinations Officer by the Head of Department as soon as they are known.
- All examination specifications are available to view online via the awarding body websites.

5. Examination Seasons

GCSE and L1/2 qualifications

- As a general rule GCSE examinations will be available to all candidates for the June series. GCSE resits for English and Maths are available in November for students who have continued their studies at Backwell School.
- Students studying vocational subjects at L1/2 (Cambridge Nationals, BTECs and Entry Level qualifications) may be required to sit exams in the January exam series with resits sometimes available in the June series depending on the course requirements.

GCE and L3 qualifications

- A levels are only available in the June series.
- AS levels in Core Maths, Further Maths, Music and Modern Foreign Languages will also be offered in the June series.
- Students studying vocational subjects at Level 3 may be required to sit exams in either the January and June series, with resits also available in both January and June.

6. Entries

- It is essential that all entries are made accurately and within deadlines posted by exam boards.
- Heads of Department must ensure that all requests for entry information are completed within the internal deadlines set by the exams officer. Heads of Department are responsible for checking their entry codes and student entry listings and notifying any issues to the exams officer. Any fees arising from a failure to do this will be charged to departments.
- Candidates and parents/carers can view their entries via the Exams Assist exam portal. They are responsible for checking their individual entries for completeness and accuracy, and must confirm their entries via the exams portal by the deadline given. They should raise any discrepancies or queries with the exams office and their teachers immediately. Any amendment fees arising as a result of changes being notified after the deadline will be recharged to the parents.
- It is expected that all students attending an exam course will sit exams during or at the end of the course in order to achieve the relevant qualifications. Once entered they may only be withdrawn by written agreement from the Deputy Head for curriculum or the Head of Sixth Form.
- Requests to take examinations in qualifications not offered in the respective curriculum offer will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The final decision rests with the Deputy Head for Curriculum, and a fee may be charged.

7. Exam Fees

- GCSE, GCE and vocational fees will be paid for by the school for students who are sitting these exams as per their curriculum timetable.
- Any amendment fees arising as a result of candidates not confirming their entries within the deadline set must be paid for the student or their parent/carer.
- When a student has been entered for an exam, but fails to attend for any reason, other than certified illness or bereavement, fees must be paid for by student or their parent/carer.
- Fees for any resits or additional subjects will usually have to be paid for by the candidate. The exams office will advise on the specific exam entry fees, which will be set to cover the exam board fee, as well as a charge for invigilation and administration costs.

8. Resits – internal candidates

- GCSE
 - Maths and English – where a candidate has not achieved a grade 4, resits for students attending Backwell sixth form will be funded by the school, and candidates will usually be entered for the next available opportunity.
 - All other cases – resits will not usually be supported. Candidates may be permitted to resit in exceptional circumstances (eg significant disadvantage at time of first attempt, or where a higher grade is required for future plans), but only if this has been discussed and agreed with the Head of Sixth Form/Deputy Head. In all cases exam fees will be the responsibility of the student who will be required to pay before entries are confirmed with the exam boards.
- Vocational courses
 - Where the specification allows, candidates may resit individual units with a view to improving their final grade. Resits will be advised by the subject teacher after discussion with the student. The school will meet the cost of one resit per unit, where the subject teacher agrees it will be beneficial.

9. Private Candidates

- Backwell School will only accept ex-Backwell School students as private candidates, and only for those specifications which are already offered by the school. For L2 qualifications external entries will only be made for English and Maths GCSE. For L3 qualifications, external candidates will only be accepted in the year following their final year at Backwell School.
- The decision to accept private candidates may be reviewed and withdrawn at any time, although existing entries would usually be honoured.
- Private candidates will need to complete the appropriate documentation and provide payment by the dates specified. Entries will not be made without upfront payment of fees.
- Private candidates will be required to pay an administration fee of £30, in addition to the exam board fee and a charge for invigilation costs.
- For A-level language exams, a further fee will be charged to cover the cost of the speaking examiner who will need to prepare for and deliver the speaking component.
- NEA components:
 - Backwell School will not mark or submit coursework on behalf of private candidates.
 - For resits, coursework from your earlier attempt will be carried forward to this attempt.
 - Should you need to complete a new piece of coursework, you will need to make appropriate arrangements to complete this with a distance learning centre, and notify us of the details. We could then act as a host centre for your written exams. Backwell School are unable to advise on suitable centres.

10. Access Arrangements

- Access arrangements are intended to allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.
- Access arrangements will only be awarded where appropriate and in accordance with the JCQ publication "Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments".
- All access arrangements are awarded by the SENCo, who has responsibility for arranging the necessary testing and gathering supporting evidence as required by JCQ.
- Exam access arrangements should reflect the candidate's normal way of working and would ordinarily be put in place at the start of the exam course.
- The SEND team are responsible for recording all access arrangements and making applications as required via the JCQ on-line portal. They will retain all records and supporting evidence on file and make this available as required for JCQ inspection purposes.
- Once approved, parent/carers will be informed in writing of the award, and all access arrangements will be recorded in the student record so that all teaching staff are aware of the provision.
- The exams team will work closely with the SEND team to ensure that any access arrangements are properly applied in accordance with the regulations during all exams, both internal and external.

11. Timetables, Seating and Clashes

- The exams team is responsible for arranging seating for all exams, and this will be carried out in accordance with the regulations set out in the JCQ document "Instructions for Conducting Examinations".
- The main venue for exams is the old Sports Hall, although it is occasionally necessary to use other classrooms.
- In certain circumstances, a candidate with an established difficulty may be eligible to take exams under separate invigilation or in a smaller room. Any such arrangement will only be put in place where it has been approved by the Inclusion Panel and agreed in consultation with the exams officer, SENCo and Deputy Head for Curriculum. It will only be put in place where:
 1. the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
 2. is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Individual timetables will be produced by the exams office and made available to students and parents/carer via the exams portal. The timetable will show dates, start times, duration, location and seat number. Start times must be strictly adhered to.
- It is the responsibility of all candidates to arrive at the correct exam venue no less than fifteen minutes before the advertised start time.
- Occasionally students will have a clash where 2 exams are scheduled to take place at the same time. The exams team will resolve these clashes in line with the JCQ regulations and notify the candidate of the arrangements to be put in place. In most cases clashes can be resolved by moving one of the exams to an earlier or later session on the same day, with the candidate remaining under centre supervision between the exams.
- In rare and exceptional cases, it may be necessary to move an exam to the next day and put overnight supervision arrangements in place. This is subject to strict regulations and if applicable, arrangements will be made in discussion with the candidate, their parent/carer and the school. All such arrangements must be authorised by the Head of Centre.

12. Candidate Briefings and Behaviour Expectations

- Candidates need to be aware of the exam board regulations and the school's rules and expectations for conduct during exams.
- This information will be provided to all students via:
 - Exam assemblies, which are the responsibility of the Deputy Head for Curriculum and Head of 6th Form in consultation with the Examinations Officer.
 - Examination Key Information Booklet, which is available to all students and their parent/carers via the exam portal and the [Exam Arrangements](#) page of the school website.
 - The [Exam Arrangements](#) page of the school website also has a wide variety of other exams information, including information about access arrangements, key dates, links to JCQ publications and relevant school policies.

13. Malpractice

- All instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice will be reported to the relevant awarding body in line with JCQ regulations and the school's "Malpractice Policy".
- The awarding body will decide, on the basis of the report, whether there is evidence of malpractice, and will determine the sanction to be applied.
- Candidates may receive a warning, loss of marks for that paper, disqualification from the qualification or a whole exam series depending on the nature of the malpractice. Full details of the indicative sanctions are set out in the JCQ document "Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures".

14. Invigilation

- All rooms will have a lead invigilator (allocated by the exams team). The lead invigilator will have overall responsibility for that exam room and will manage any other invigilators supporting in that room.
- Invigilators will give their full attention to invigilating the exam at all times and are not permitted to complete any other non-exam related tasks during the exam.
- The lead invigilator will start and finish exams, and will use Exams Assist to record attendance, access arrangements usage, toilet breaks and any other incidents that need to be recorded during the exam.
- The lead invigilator will notify the exams officer of any incidents that require immediate assistance, such as:
 - Candidate absence
 - Noise/disturbances
 - Candidate illness
 - Suspected or actual malpractice
- The lead invigilator will use their mobile phone during exams for accessing Exams Assist and contacting the exams team if necessary. They should keep their phone on silent, and it should not be used for any non-exam related purposes, in line with JCQ regulations.

15. Attendance / Absence / Late Arrival

- Candidates are expected to attend all examinations as detailed on the timetable.
- Candidates should arrive at their exam venue (as specified on their individual timetable) no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the exam. The only exception to this is for candidates in Y11 who are expected to attend any exam briefings that have been scheduled immediately prior to the start of their exams.
- If a candidate is ill or running late for an exam, they must notify the exam team by phoning reception or emailing exams@backwellschool.net as soon as possible.
- The identity of all candidates will be verified at the start of each examination by the invigilators by reference to the seating plan / attendance registers.
- Any candidates who have been identified as absent will be notified to the exams officer immediately.
- Where no reason for absence has been given, the exams office will try to contact home to understand the reason for absence or provide any practical assistance (where possible and if necessary) to ensure the candidate attends the exam.
- If a candidate arrives late, the centre will make provision for them to sit the exam and ensure they are given the full time allowance if possible.
- If a candidate arrives very late, the centre will still make provision for them to sit the exam and ensure they are given the full time allowance if possible. However, the candidate will be informed that the awarding body must be advised, and their script may not be accepted for marking.
- When a student has been entered for an exam, but fails to attend for any reason, other than certified illness or bereavement, fees must be paid for by student or their parent/carer.

16. Exam Days

- Uniform
 - It is expected that students below the Sixth Form will wear normal school uniform including black shoes. No other clothing will be permitted in the exam rooms.
 - Sixth Form students are expected to dress in an appropriate manner.
 - Coats/hats/scarves and gloves are not permitted in the exam room.
- Exam equipment
 - It is the student's responsibility to bring all the necessary equipment they will need for the exam and nothing more.
 - All equipment must be held in a transparent plastic pencil case.
 - When permitted, calculators may be used but must be of a type that is approved by the JCQ for exam use. Lids/cases must be removed and are not allowed in the exam room.
 - The exams team have limited stocks of spare equipment available for students should their own equipment break during the exam.
- Unauthorised items
 - Candidates must not bring any unauthorised items into an exam. This includes, but is not limited to items such as mobile phones, smart devices, watches of any kind, notes, etc.
 - Candidate personal belongings that are not allowed in the exam room must be left in the areas designated by the school (exam lockers/cloakrooms etc to be advised). The centre will not accept liability for any items left in bags, so candidates are advised not to bring expensive electronic items into school.
 - Candidates are not permitted to bring their own tissues into exams. Tissues will be available in all exam rooms if required.

- Food and drinks
 - Food is not permitted in exam room unless needed for medical reasons, and prior permission has been given by the Examinations Officer/SENCo.
 - Candidates may bring a transparent water bottle (which must have no writing/markings or label on it) into the exam. They are only permitted to bring water into the exam – no other drinks will be allowed.
- Behaviour
 - Candidates must follow the invigilators' instructions at all times when in the exam room.
 - Candidates must be in silence as soon as they enter the exam room and must not attempt to communicate in any way with other students. This includes both verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - Candidates must not disrupt or disturb other candidates during the examination.
 - Where a candidate is deliberately disrupting others they may be removed from the examination and will be reported to the awarding body for malpractice.
- Leaving the exam room
 - Candidates are only allowed to leave an exam room during the exam for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by a member of the exam team at all times.
 - Toilet breaks are not permitted in the first or last half hour of an exam (unless there is a medical need), and should only be taken if absolutely necessary. The time taken for a toilet break is not added to the exam time. Students are encouraged to use the toilet facilities prior to entering the exam room.
 - All toilet breaks will be logged by invigilators, and this information may be requested by the awarding bodies if there is any allegation of malpractice.
 - It is school policy that candidates must remain in the exam room for the full exam time. Candidates must remain silent in the exam room until dismissed by the invigilator.
 - In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be given permission to leave an exam room early. Permission can only be given by the Deputy Head for Curriculum and the candidate may only leave when they have been dismissed by the lead invigilator.
- Illness or other disadvantage
 - Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the Examinations Officer to that effect. Special consideration may be available (see section 17).

17. Special Consideration

- All requests for special consideration must be made in writing by the candidate by completing a Self-Certification Form, available from the exams office.
- All requests must be authorised by the Deputy Head (GCSE) or Head of Sixth Form (GCE), and candidates are required to obtain this authorisation in person from the relevant member of staff. Whilst supporting documentation is not essential, it should be provided wherever possible, and your claim may not be accepted without it.
- The exams office will advise what falls within the special consideration framework, ensuring that students/parents are informed that the awarding of extra marks via special consideration is extremely limited and should not be considered as a passport to higher grades.
- The exams office will complete all online submissions (or required paperwork) and submit this to appropriate board(s) within the time frame published for each exam season.

18. Results

- The exams team is responsible for downloading results from the exam boards on restricted release days.
- The exams team will ensure that the results are kept secure and only shared with the Head of Centre and other members of the SLT as required and as permitted by the regulations.
- Candidates are encouraged to come into school on results days to collect their paper statements of results, which are issued to students by exams office staff.
- Members of SLT and other teaching staff will be available on results days to celebrate the students' successes and support students where necessary.
- Results are also made available to all students electronically via the exams portal.
- Results will only be released to the candidate themselves, unless they have given their permission in writing for another person to collect them on their behalf. The authorised person will be required to show identification.
- The data manager exports results into SISRA to allow for department reviews, target setting etc.
- Statements for the press are prepared by the Head of Centre based on statistics provided by the data manager.

19. Post Results Services - Access to Scripts and Enquiries About Results

- Candidates will be made aware of the availability of post results services, the fees charged and the deadlines for applications in advance of results days. The information will be made available on the exam portal, included in school bulletins and included on [Exam Arrangements](#) page of the school website.
- Post results services may be requested by the candidate following the release of results. All requests require the written consent of the candidate.
- Post results services requested by candidates must be paid for by the candidate and the appropriate forms must be completed before the request will be processed.
- If a candidate requests a review of marking, they will be made aware that this may result in their marks being lowered, confirmed or raised. Once completed the review cannot be cancelled.
- Should a candidate wish the school to appeal a review of marking decision, they must follow the process set out in the School's Appeals Policy and make sure they comply with the strict deadlines for requesting an appeal.
- The school has the discretion to pay for post results services in certain circumstances. This must be authorised by the Deputy Head for Curriculum to ensure a fair and consistent approach for all students.
- Departments may request access to scripts for teaching and learning purposes. Candidate consent must be obtained before scripts can be requested. It is the teacher's responsibility to obtain candidate consent for this, and consent may only be given once the candidate has received their results.
- The awarding bodies will only accept applications for post results services from exams officers. Direct communication from students or parents is not allowed.
- The processing of enquiries about results and access to scripts requests must be carried out as soon as possible after the issue of results and within the deadlines published by the Awarding Bodies. No late applications will be accepted.

20. Certificates

- Certificates are provided to centres by awarding bodies after results have been confirmed.
- Certificate distribution will be arranged to take place after the deadline for issue of certificates by awarding bodies, and parents will be notified of the arrangements put in place.
- GCSE certificates will be issued during tutor time for students who have continued into sixth form.
- Year 11 leavers will have the following options:
 - they can collect their certificates from the exams office in person during a specified time period;
 - they can arrange for their certificates to be collected on their behalf by providing the exams team with written or email permission/authorisation – the authorised person must provide ID evidence on collection of certificates; or
 - they can ask for them to be posted. Postage will be by a tracked service and will incur a fee. The school will not assume any liability for certificates that are lost in the post, and candidates will need to seek replacement certificates from the exam boards at their own expense should this happen.
- Y13 leavers will be invited to attend a certificate presentation evening held in school. If they are unable to attend the presentation evening, they will have the following options:
 - they can collect their certificates from the exams office in person on a specified collection day;
 - they can arrange for their certificates to be collected on their behalf by providing the exams team with written or email permission/authorisation – the authorised person must provide ID evidence on collection of certificates; or
 - they can ask for them to be posted. Postage will be by a tracked service and will incur a fee. The school will not assume any liability for certificates that are lost in the post, and candidates will need to seek replacement certificates from the exam boards at their own expense should this happen.
- Certificates for students who take exams in Y12, or Y10 and below, will be retained securely in the exams office until the candidate has completed Y11 or Y13. They will then be distributed with the rest of the candidate's certificates. This minimises the risk of individual certificates being misplaced by the candidate. However, should a candidate require their certificate before this for whatever reason, they will be able to obtain it from the exams office.
- The school makes every effort to ensure that all certificates are correctly issued by the exam board, but it is ultimately the candidate's responsibility to check that they are correct. Candidates will be asked to sign when they receive their certificates to confirm that they have received them and checked them for accuracy and completeness.
- Unclaimed certificates are required to be kept in secure storage for a minimum of one year from the date of issue. After 5 years any uncollected certificates will be securely disposed of by Backwell School and a record of the destroyed certificates will be kept.
- The school is unable to obtain copies of certificates where they have been lost or destroyed. Candidates will have to follow exam board procedures for requesting replacement documents and should be aware that such replacements are expensive and may take 6 weeks or more to be produced.