

PIERVIEW ACADEMY

EXAMS AND APPEALS POLICY

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1. Introduction

Pierview Academy believes that all students should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve a range of accreditations and awards. The purpose of this exams policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- To ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.
- To ensure that Pierview Academy meets statutory guidance in conducting examinations and assessments.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the exam processes to read, understand, and implement this policy. The examination policy will be reviewed annually by the Exams Officer and Headteacher.

2. Legislation, Regulatory Framework & Access Arrangements

Equality Act 2010 & Disability Compliance

This document serves as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide accessibility policy/plan, detailing how the centre recognizes its duties towards disabled candidates under the Equality Act 2010. The school makes a commitment to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments, and make reasonable adjustments to the services provided.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is considered cumulatively in terms of identifying impairments, assessing substantial long-term adverse effects, and judging the impact on daily activities. The school uses these descriptions alongside Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to identify persistent and significant difficulties in reading, understanding, or physical execution.

Access Arrangements

- **Identification:** Candidate access arrangement requirements are determined by the SENCo and Headteacher in conjunction with subject leaders.
- **Evidence & Submission:** The SENCo and Headteacher are responsible for gathering proper evidence of need and standard ways of working. The Exams Officer and Headteacher submit completed applications via *JCQ Access Arrangements Online (AAO)* or the NCFE Portal where applicable.
- **Implementation:** The Exams Officer coordinates rooming. Invigilation and candidate support (readers, scribes, practical assistants) are checked by the Headteacher and arranged by Curriculum/Subject Leads.

Regulatory Framework & Linked Policies

Where references are made to regulatory guidelines, further details can be found via JCQ, Ofqual, and NCFE. In particular, this policy complies with:

- JCQ *General Regulations for Approved Centres* (2026–2027)
- JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* (ICE) (2026–2027)
- JCQ *Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties* (2026–2027)
- JCQ *Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures*
- JCQ *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting Assessment Integrity*
- NCFE *Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments & Contingency Policies*
- Ofqual & GOV.UK Joint Contingency Planning Guidance
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018

Linked Internal Policies:

- Cyber Security Policy (Exams)
- Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Special Consideration Policy
- Assessment & Marking Policies
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown & Evacuation Policy

3. Qualifications Offered & Exam Entries

Qualifications Offered

- Qualifications offered at Pierview Academy are determined by the curriculum framework and subject leaders in consultation with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and ratified by the Headteacher.
- Qualification levels range from Unit Awards through to Functional Skills, Entry Level, and GCSE/IGCSEs.
- Subject Leads are responsible for informing the Exams Officer of any changes to specification specifications.
- **Private Candidates:** Pierview Academy does not accept entries from private candidates or act as an exam centre for organizations outside ALP Schools.

Entries, Entry Details, and Fees

- Entry deadlines are circulated via email, briefings, and the school drive.

- Late entries or entry amendments require written authorization from the Exams Officer.
- **Fees:** Entry fees, including allowed resits, are fully covered by the school. Fee reimbursements are not sought from families due to the SEN needs and daily challenges our learners face.

4. Storage of Materials, ICT Systems & Cyber Security

Physical Storage

- All examination papers, confidential materials, and internal assessments are stored in a secure, climate-controlled exam room and safe strictly complying with JCQ and NCFE security requirements.
- Key control for the secure room and safe is restricted strictly to authorized key holders.

ICT Systems & Cyber Security Protocol

- **Digital Systems:** Electronic candidate records and exam files are held on secure, access-controlled drives.
- **Downloaded Materials:** Electronic papers downloaded on the day of an assessment must be held on a secure drive and deleted immediately post-exam, or stored in the exam safe if printed.
- **Access Security:** In compliance with JCQ guidance, all staff accessing awarding body portals (JCQ and NCFE Portal) must use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) and unique individual log-in credentials.
- **Cyber Incidents:** In the event of a system failure, network outage, or cyber incident, staff will follow the *Cyber Security Policy*, maintain printed backup registers, and contact awarding bodies immediately if entry or assessment deadlines are compromised.

5. Non-Examined Assessments (NEA) & AI Integrity

- Curriculum and Subject Leaders must ensure candidate assessment evidence is produced, authenticated, and moderated according to awarding body specifications (JCQ and NCFE).
- **AI Misuse:** Unacknowledged use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for non-examined assessments, coursework, or portfolios constitutes malpractice.

- Candidates must sign authentication declarations confirming the work is entirely their own. Staff must verify authenticity prior to signing submission declarations.

6. Exam Days, On-Screen Testing & Invigilation

General Invigilation & Setup

- **Invigilators:** External staff are not used. Internal staff are recruited, timetabled, and trained annually on JCQ ICE and NCFE regulations by the Exams Officer and SMT.
- **Room Setup:** Allocated exam rooms are set up by Curriculum/Subject Leads at least 2 weeks in advance under instruction from the Exams Officer.
- **Starting Exams:** The Exams Officer (or an SMT deputy) starts and finishes all exam sessions in strict compliance with awarding body guidelines.

NCFE Functional Skills Specific Operational Protocols

- **Scheduling & Bookings:** Functional Skills external assessments are booked on-demand via the NCFE Portal by the Exams Officer, adhering to published lead times (e.g., 5 working days for paper papers, or on-demand for online assessments).
- **Invigilation Ratios:** Assessments require a minimum ratio of **1 invigilator to 20 candidates** for paper-based assessments and **1 invigilator to 10 candidates** for online assessments.
- **Subject Teacher Rule:** NCFE strictly prohibits subject specialist teachers from acting as sole invigilators for their own Functional Skills candidates.
- **Onscreen Test Contingency (NCFE Online / Test Player):** Hardware and connectivity are prepared prior to testing. Log-in credentials are downloaded on the day and destroyed post-assessment. In the event of a system crash or internet disconnection during an NCFE online exam, invigilators must record the disruption time. The Exams Officer will liaise directly with NCFE Technical Support before restarting or re-issuing candidate keys.
- **Resit Guidelines:** Candidates attempting NCFE Functional Skills resits must undergo targeted remediation before being re-booked, adhering to NCFE's recommended waiting period (14 days) between test attempts.

Candidate Conduct

- Unauthorized items (including mobile phones, smartwatches, and electronic devices) are strictly prohibited in the exam room.

- Candidates leaving the exam room temporarily must be accompanied by an authorized staff member at all times.

7. Special Consideration & Post-Results Services

Special Consideration

- If a candidate is disadvantaged, ill, or experiences trauma during or immediately prior to an exam, the Exams Officer must be notified.
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- Supporting evidence must be provided within 24 hours. The Exams Officer/Headteacher will submit a Special Consideration application to the relevant awarding body (JCQ or NCFE) within published deadlines.
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Results, EARs, and Access to Scripts

- **Distribution:** Results slips are prepared and distributed by SMT and the Exams Officer.
- **Enquiries About Results (EARs):** Requests for re-marks or clerical checks require written candidate consent. EAR fees supported by the academy are funded by the centre.
- **Access to Scripts (ATS):** Staff or candidates may request returned scripts within 30 days of results release. Candidate consent is required if scripts are used for teaching purposes.

Certificates

- Certificates are stored securely, issued in person (signed for), or sent via tracked delivery as a last resort. Scanned copies are retained on file for 5 years post-departure before secure destruction.

APPENDIX A: Exam Contingency Plans

Contingency planning for exam administration is managed by the Exams Officer and Curriculum Leads in line with Ofqual, JCQ, NCFE, and government guidance.

Disruption of Teaching Time

If the academy is closed for an extended period, alternative online learning and remote provision will be implemented. Advice will be sought from awarding bodies regarding extension of deadlines or Special Consideration.

Site Unavailability & Alternative Venues

If the main site is unavailable, Pierview Academy's primary contingency exam space is **ALP Parkview Academy** or **ALP Sittingbourne**.

- Awarding bodies will be formally notified via the JCQ Alternative Site form (or NCFE equivalent) for approval prior to running exams.
- Examination materials will be transported by two members of staff, including at least one Senior Leader.

APPENDIX B: Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher (Head of Centre):** Holds overall structural and legal responsibility for the centre, reporting malpractice, and managing audits.
- **Exams Officer:** Coordinates all administrative operations, submissions, timetable planning, script dispatches, secure storage, and invigilator briefing for JCQ and NCFE qualifications.
- **SENCo:** Leads access arrangement testing, collates normal-way-of-working evidence, and coordinates reader/scribe provision.
- **Curriculum & Subject Leads:** Manage subject entries, internal moderation, NEA/coursework authenticity, and initial room setup.
- **Invigilators / Support Staff:** Maintain strict exam conditions, enforce JCQ and NCFE invigilation ratios, prevent malpractice, and enforce emergency evacuation procedures.

APPENDIX C: Internal Appeals Procedure

1. Appeal Against Internal Assessment Procedures

Candidates or parents wishing to appeal against the procedures used in internal assessment must write to the Exams Officer at least 10 days prior to the start of the written exam series. An enquiry panel comprising the Exams Officer, an SMT member, and an independent Subject Lead will review the case and provide a written response prior to results day.

2. Appeals Against Non-Support for EARs

If the school chooses not to support an Enquiry About Results (EAR), the candidate may appeal in writing to the Exams Officer at least 5 working days prior to the awarding body deadline. The panel will review the appeal and communicate the final decision within 24 hours.

APPENDIX D & F: Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown Procedures

In the event of a fire alarm or emergency evacuation during an exam:

1. Candidates must be instructed to **stop writing, close answer booklets, and leave papers on desks.**
2. Candidates must **evacuate in complete silence** without collecting personal belongings.
3. The invigilator collects the attendance register and supervises candidates closely to ensure no discussion occurs.
4. Candidates assemble at the designated Fire Evacuation Point separate from the main school body.
5. Note the exact start time, duration, and end time of the interruption. Upon return, candidates are granted the full remaining working time set for the exam.
6. A full incident report is submitted to the Exams Officer and the relevant awarding body (JCQ or NCFE).

APPENDIX E: Processing Examination Papers & Transport

Receipt and Opening

- Deliveries are signed for, logged in the receipt book, and taken immediately to secure storage by authorized key holders.
- Immediately before opening paper packets, **two authorized staff members** must verify the date, time, subject, unit, and tier of entry, completing the "Second Pair of Eyes" log.

Dispatch & Transport Logistics

- Completed scripts are packaged securely in the exam room prior to transfer.
- Primary script dispatch is conducted via scheduled **Parcelforce Yellow Label** collections.
- If a collection is missed, scripts remain locked in the exam safe overnight. In urgent contingency cases, authorized SMT members will drop packages directly at a designated Express Post Office or Parcelforce depot, obtaining stamped proof of posting.

APPENDIX G: Malpractice Protocol

- Malpractice includes intentional cheating, breach of regulations, misuse of AI, carelessness, or failure to enforce exam security.
- The Headteacher must report all alleged or actual incidents of candidate or staff malpractice immediately to the relevant awarding body (JCQ or NCFE) using official reporting forms.
- Investigations will be conducted independently of the affected department.

APPENDIX I: Conflict of Interest & Staff Protocols

- **Declaration:** At the start of each academic year, the Exams Officer collects conflict of interest declarations from all staff regarding any relatives or close friends taking qualifications at the centre.
- **Confidentiality:** Staff privy to confidential exam content must maintain absolute neutrality. They are strictly prohibited from setting revision materials matching live papers, adjusting teaching to fit known live questions, or making predictions based on confidential knowledge.