



Ysgol Uwchradd Yr Eglwys Newydd


Whitchurch High School

Exams – Anxiety Policy June 2024

Responsible staff member: Lauren Sharpe
Approved by Governing Body: 17.6.24

EXAM ANXIETY POLICY

Reviewed by: Lauren Sharpe (Review annually)

Signed by: 
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(Headteacher)

Date:17.6.24.....

Rationale

This policy details the actions taken to ensure inclusion for all pupils who suffer from exam anxiety, and the steps that school can reasonably take as a regulated examination venue to support students. Whitchurch High School's default position for all students is that students who have exam anxiety are able to sit their examinations with the main cohort of pupils unless there are specific Access Arrangements specifying that separate accommodation is necessary, that reflects **'their normal way of working'**, as instructed by JCQ regulations, and supported by professional medical letter/evidence. Normal way of working refers to, for example, if a student's anxiety precludes them from being taught in a mainstream classroom, a separate or smaller venue would be their normal way of working. JCQ guidance specifies that medical evidence cannot be supplied by a child's General Practitioner and must come from a diagnostic specialist. Consideration would also be given to any student who is awaiting treatment or diagnosis under a specialist team, but which has been delayed prior to the start of external examinations.

The care, support and guidance structures that operate within school as part of everyday practice should be utilised fully to support students to be able to access all aspects of their education, including accessing large examination venues. This policy will only be applied in exceptional circumstances where there is no other reasonable alternative available to students and where all stages of the policy have been applied.

Procedures

Stage 1:

- a) Students who have self-identified an issue with exam anxiety are brought to the attention of the Progress Leaders, Progress Assistants and Exams Officer via Wellbeing Tutors, subject leaders or parents. Panic attacks on the day of exams would also begin this process for future examinations.
- b) Progress staff and subject staff will support students identified as anxious at key points in the run up to exams with the aim to enable them to complete the examination with the main cohort.
- c) Progress Leaders or Heads of Faculty will also refer student to Exams Officer to arrange meeting prior to an exam series to ensure the pupil is aware of what main exam venues look like, how the seating is arranged, what arrangements for entry will be on the day and other familiarisation strategies.
- d) In some cases, the Exam Officer may need to assign a specific seat within the main exam rooms, in consultation with the student, to determine where the student feel most comfortable (i.e., front/back/wall).

Stage 2

- a) In the most extreme cases, the school may need to room students in a venue away from the main exam venues; however, this can be actioned **only** if there is a recommendation from an outside agency/professional (not a GP), whose function is to support the mental health of the pupil, such as CAMHS. This would be treated like an Access Arrangement for ALN pupils and must reflect ***'their normal way of working'*** as instructed by JCQ regulations.
- b) If a student who has not gone through Stage One, has a panic attack on the day of the examination, the school's exams and Progress Teams will work to assist the pupil in completing the exam, but this may not always be in a separate venue, due to staffing and space pressure.

These procedures will be reviewed yearly, as required.