

First Language Examinations Policy

Date of policy review:	August 2026
Date for Review:	September 2027
Lead for Review:	Deputy Head Academic

Purpose

As an international school, we recognise the linguistic diversity of our student body and the academic value of maintaining and certifying proficiency in a student's first language. This policy outlines the conditions under which students may enter for GCSE or A Level examinations in their first language.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled in either the A Level programme.
- Parents/guardians of students requesting entry for a first language A Level.

Core Principles

First Language GCSE

- A first language GCSE will normally be taken as an additional GCSE subject.

First Language A Level as a Fourth Subject

- A first language A Level will normally be taken as a fourth A Level subject.
- The only exception to this requirement is where a confirmed post-university offer clearly states that entry requirements can be met without the first language A Level.
- Such exceptions must be reviewed and approved by the Deputy Head Academic and/or Director for Higher Education.

Examination Centre and Approval

Where possible, examinations may be taken within the school as part of our examination centre. Entry is subject to approval by the Exams Officer, who will:

- Confirm feasibility of hosting the qualification.
- Review resource requirements (e.g., speaking/oral examiner, specialist invigilator, technology, rooming).
- Ensure compliance with awarding body regulations.

If required resources cannot reasonably be provided, other arrangements may need to be made externally. All entries and administration will comply with current JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and the General Regulations for Approved Centres.

The School reserves the right to decline entry where the qualification is not currently approved within the centre's JCQ registration or where resourcing would place disproportionate operational burden on the examination cycle.

Private Tuition Requirement

Students must arrange private tuition for their first language GCSE or A Level. The school does not provide in-house teaching for these qualifications unless otherwise formally agreed. The School does not quality-assure or supervise external tutors. Parents retain full safeguarding responsibility for any off-site tuition arrangements. Onsite and online tuition will follow our tuition policy and will be monitored in accordance with this.

Parents must confirm:

- The identity and qualifications of the tutor.
- The structure and frequency of lessons.
- That the content aligns with the relevant examination board specification.

All tuition arrangements must follow the school's standard Private Tuition Procedure and be formally declared to the school.

Recommended Timing of Examinations

Students are strongly encouraged to sit the final GCSE or A Level examination in the final year of their programme. For A Levels specifically, completing the qualification in Year 13 strengthens university applications, demonstrates sustained academic commitment and provides a confirmed grade (rather than a predicted grade) for competitive university entry, particularly for top-tier institutions. Earlier entry may be considered only in exceptional cases and must be approved by senior academic leadership.

Request and Approval Process

Requests to enter for a first language GCSE or A Level will typically arise through direct communication (in person or via email) between the student and/or parents and one of the following:

- Deputy Head Academic
- Headteacher
- Director for Higher Education

Following initial discussion:

1. A formal written request must be submitted by parents.
2. Written parental permission is required.
3. Parents must confirm that they:
 - Take full responsibility for the student's academic preparation.
 - Accept full responsibility for examination outcomes.
 - Understand that the school does not guarantee results.

Final approval is subject to agreement from:

- Senior Leadership

Financial Arrangements

Once approval is granted:

- The Finance Team will raise an invoice to parents.
- The invoice will include:
 - Administration costs
 - Examination entrance fees
 - Invigilation and staffing costs
 - Costs related to oral components (where applicable)
 - Any additional resources required

All costs will be agreed in advance via communication between the Exams Officer and parents. Entry will not be confirmed until payment has been received in accordance with school financial procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Student

- Maintain consistent attendance at private tuition.
- Follow examination board specifications.
- Meet internal deadlines set by the Exams Office.

Parents

- Provide written consent.
- Organise and fund private tuition.
- Accept full responsibility for student preparation and outcomes.
- Settle all invoices by the required deadlines.

Exams Officer

- Approve feasibility of examination entry.
- Ensure compliance with awarding body regulations.
- Coordinate logistics and resource allocation.

Senior Leadership

- Review and approve requests.
- Ensure alignment with academic and university guidance.

Finance Team

- Issue invoice.
- Confirm payment prior to entry submission.

Related Policies

- Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Reporting
- Academic Honesty
- Exams
- Online Safety

First Language Examination – Parental Consent Form

Student Name:

Level: GCSE / A Level (please indicate which applies)

First Language Subject:

Examination Board (if known):

1. Request for Entry

I/We formally request that our child be entered for the above First Language GCSE / A Level qualification under the School's First Language Examinations Policy.

2. Academic Preparation

I/We confirm that:

- ☐ Private tuition has been arranged for this qualification.
- ☐ Tuition aligns with the relevant examination board specification.
- ☐ Tuition arrangements have been declared in accordance with the School's Private Tuition Procedure.
- ☐ I/We accept full responsibility for the student's academic preparation.

Name of Tutor (if confirmed):

Frequency of Tuition:

3. Examination Entry and Outcomes

I/We understand and agree that:

- ☐ The First Language A Level is normally taken as a fourth subject unless formally agreed otherwise.
- ☐ The School provides examination centre access subject to approval by Senior Leadership and the Exams Officer.
- ☐ The School does not guarantee examination outcomes.
- ☐ I/We accept full responsibility for examination results and any impact on university applications.

4. Financial Responsibility

I/We agree to:

- ☐ Pay all costs associated with this examination entry, including administration fees, examination entry fees, invigilation costs, oral examination costs (if applicable), and any additional agreed expenses.
- ☐ Settle invoices issued by the Finance Team by the stated deadline.
- ☐ I/We understand that examination entry will not be confirmed until payment is received.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Signature:

Date:



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