



THE COOPERS' COMPANY AND COBORN SCHOOL

Love as Brethren

Headteacher: Ms Sue Hay, BA(Hons), PGDip, NPQH

St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 3HS

| Tel: 01708 250500 | Email: info@cooperscoborn.org.uk | Website: www.cooperscoborn.org.uk |

May 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Re: Special consideration

Sometimes, when children take their GCSE or A-level examinations, it is necessary to submit a special consideration application on their behalf. Schools do this when there is an event, such as illness or bereavement that is likely to affect the student's performance on that examination. If special consideration is granted, exam boards will consider the effect of the event on the student's performance when awarding a final grade.

We are writing to you today to explain this process and to give you the opportunity to make special consideration application/s.

Mitigating circumstances / special consideration

Special consideration recognises students that may have been affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional and physical, which may have influenced their performance in their assessments. Students will be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but the performance in the examination, is materially affected by adverse circumstances.

Examples of special circumstances include:-

- Temporary illness or accident / injury at the time of the assessment;
- Bereavement at the time of the assessment (where whole groups are affected, normally only those closely involved will be eligible);
- Domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment;
- Accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper, failure of practical equipment, failure of materials to arrive on time;
- Participation in sporting events, training camps or other events at an international level at the time of the assessment, e.g. representing their country at an international level in chess or football.

This information is in reference to the JCQ's [A guide to special consideration process](#) and further examples of what is and what is not considered as special consideration can be found within this document.

Given the above, we have therefore put in place a formal process which requires the completion of a form ([click here](#)). In addition to completing the form, to ensure we are compiling with exam boards' protocol, we will require to see sight of and retain evidence (as this may be called upon by an exam board) to support any application. With this in mind, please ensure that any supporting documentation is with the school's exams office as soon as possible but no later than two working days following submission of the google form. Please note that, even if the school is already aware of any mitigating circumstances, this form must still be completed.

Key information from JCQ about special consideration:

- Special consideration is an adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment.



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- It can only be applied where the candidate's performance has been adversely affected i.e., has prevented them from demonstrating their normal level of attainment.
- Only minor adjustments can be made, as to make larger adjustments would jeopardise the standard of the qualification. The maximum adjustment is 5%, which is reserved for most exceptional cases.
- The mark awarded might not reflect the candidate's true ability if attainment has been considerably affected over a long period of time. Where long-term circumstances have prevented the candidate from reaching the competence standards, it may not be possible to make an adjustment.

Examples of circumstances not eligible for special consideration are as follows:-

- Long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves at the time of the assessment;
- Bereavement more than six months before the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment or there are on-going implications such as an inquest or court case;
- Domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays (including school/exchange visits and field trips) at the time of the assessment;
- Minor disturbance during the examination caused by another student, such as bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
- The consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
- The consequences of disobeying the school's internal regulations;
- Misreading the instructions on the paper and answering the wrong questions;
- Missing all examinations;
- A disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) unless illness affects the student at the time of the examination or where the disability exacerbates what would otherwise be a minor issue – (difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated).

Special consideration would not generally apply for non-examined assessment as this is ongoing over an extended period of time.

How is special consideration applied and what allowance can be made

Special consideration is given by applying an allowance of additional marks to the individual examination affected. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune.

The range of allowance given is 1-5%. The maximum allowance that can be given is 5% and this is reserved for the most exceptional and serious cases such as terminal illness of the candidate/parent/carer, death of a member of the immediate family within two months of the examination. The most common category of allowance is 1% / 2% for illness at the time of the assessment, broken limb, concussion, extreme distress (not exam related).

Furthermore, a missing mark can be estimated when a candidate is absent (for an acceptable reason) from a unit or a component in either a modular or linear specification. An example of how this would work can be found at the following link: [click here](#).



1536



1701

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Please note that exam boards only advise that special consideration has been awarded on the results information not what percentage they have been awarded. If absent from a timetabled component for acceptable reasons, the minimum requirements for enhanced grading (estimating a missing mark) is that 25% of the total assessment must have been completed.

Candidates will only be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but performance in the exam is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

In the event of student being absent on the day of an examination, we will require the student to complete the [self-certification form](#) which will assist us when submitting an application to the exam board. We have to highlight that should a candidate be found to be falsifying absence this will constitute malpractice.

Covid-19

To help ensure that exams and other formal assessments can go ahead and are fair, Ofqual and exam boards have set timetabled exams for summer 2022 to ensure that there is at least a 10-day gap between the exams in the same subject to reduce the risk of students missing all exams in a subject.

Key extracts from the [UKHSA guidance](#) as of 1st April 2022 – People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including Covid-19 state:-

For children and young people 18 and under:

- “Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.”
- “Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.”
- “If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can.”
- “Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.”

In the unfortunate event a student is absent as a consequence of Covid-19, we will require parents/ carers/ guardians and students to complete the self-certification form (as detailed above). This process is outlined in the school's [supplementary guidance on the special consideration process](#). This will enable us to submit a special consideration application to the exam board under the category of illness at the time of the exam. As the exams are likely to go ahead, we cannot use historic or mock data to support any application.



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If you have any further questions regarding this process, please feel free to contact a member of the exams team, head of year and / or head of key stage. In the meantime, we would like to take this opportunity in wishing each and every student the best of luck in their forthcoming examinations.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. M. Duncan
Assistant Headteacher

Mrs. A. Titley
Examinations and Data Manager