

April 2018

Dear Head teacher,

Let's have a successful exam series

As we move closer to the 2018 exams, I wanted to share with you some feedback from previous exam years to help make sure this summer series is a success for you, your colleagues and your students.

Most exams go to plan, and most schools will have an event-free exam series. We want this to be the case for you this summer. But sometimes things go wrong, which cause avoidable distress and lead to penalties for students and even teachers. I'd like to draw a few of these to your attention:

MOBILE PHONES

- It is clearly important that candidates do not have access to mobile phones during exams, and we are grateful to centres for implementing the rules on this. We have seen an increase in the number of students being issued with a penalty for breaching the rules, albeit that they might not have intended to use their phone during the exam. We have asked students why this is happening and some have told us they are unwilling to hand in their phones in case they are lost or damaged. We are encouraging centres to reflect on how they can best assure their students their phones will be safe and that students understand the risk of being found with a phone during an exam.

EXAM PACKAGE SECURITY

- Each year some mistakes are made when storing or opening exam packages. This can cause disruption. May I remind you that packages from exam boards must be stored securely and at least two members of staff must be present to check the right packages are opened before papers are handed to students. Please make sure your exams officer is able to comply with these requirements from the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ).

SUPERVISION

- You might have a small number of students who have a timetable clash. We have seen cases where students have not been properly supervised on these occasions or during a fire alarm or other incident, creating opportunities for exam security to be breached. If your team is managing timetable clashes this summer, please do make sure they understand and follow [the necessary JCQ protocols](#).

As you know, Exams Officers play an essential role in the lead up to and during the exam series. We encourage you to make sure your Exams Officer is well known and well supported, as he/she is the best person to answer questions about exams protocols. You might like to use [this poster in your staff communal areas](#) to help promote your Exams Officer to your colleagues.

Another vital way that schools contribute to the success of qualifications is by supporting colleagues who act as markers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, and your relevant colleagues, for this valuable contribution.

Thank you for all you and your staff will do over the coming months and we wish you an incident-free exams series. I plan to be in touch again soon with information on any patterns we are seeing in this year's exam entries and how we are working with exam boards to ensure all students are treated fairly.

If you haven't already, do consider signing up to [receive our email newsletter, Exam matters](#), for news on exams and further resources we are creating for schools.

Yours sincerely,



Sally Collier
Chief Regulator