

Private Candidate Policy 2026-2027

Horizons Alternative Provisions Academy

Note: This policy is written to align with current UK legislation and JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) requirements for private candidates, and to reflect best practice for alternative provision secondary academies. School leaders must personalise sections marked with key questions. School Policy Tracker (<https://schoolpolicytracker.co.uk>) provides a cost efficient, efficient way to manage your complete policy review schedule which means you'll never have an out-of-date policy again.

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Purpose

This policy sets out how Horizons Alternative Provisions Academy will manage, support and administer examinations taken by private candidates (learners who are not registered on the school's roll for the relevant qualifications). It aims to ensure compliance with JCQ regulations, awarding body requirements and UK law, while protecting fairness, security and welfare of all learners.

Scope

This policy covers:



- All private candidates wishing to sit external qualifications (GCSEs, A-Levels, vocational qualifications, functional skills, etc.) at or through Horizons Alternative Provisions Academy.
- Staff involved in exam administration, safeguarding, SEND provision and assessment.
- Parents/carers, referring agencies and placement partners.
- External awarding bodies and JCQ/other regulators.

Definitions

- Private candidate: A learner not enrolled on the school's roll for the relevant qualification who wishes to enter an examination under the school's centre number or to use the school as an examination venue.
- Centre: Horizons Alternative Provisions Academy with its allocated JCQ centre number.
- Candidate: Any individual entered for an examination or assessment (includes private and internal candidates).
- NEA: Non-Exam Assessment (coursework, controlled assessment).

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy takes account of:

- The General Conditions of Recognition (Ofqual) and relevant awarding body regulations.
 - JCQ publications including:
 - Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE)
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA)
 - Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures
 - Post Results Services
 - Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Safeguarding guidance from the Department for Education
 - DfE statutory guidance on exams and assessment
- School leaders must also check any updated JCQ guidance each exam series.

Principles

- Fairness: Private candidates will be treated fairly and in line with awarding body and JCQ rules.
- Safeguarding: The welfare and safety of all candidates is paramount.
- Confidentiality: Candidate data and assessment materials will be handled securely.
- Transparency: Fees, processes and responsibilities will be made clear in advance.

- Reasonable adjustments: Candidates with SEND will be supported in line with AA guidance.
- No compromise to internal candidates: School commitments to enrolled students must not be undermined by accommodating private candidates.

Roles and responsibilities

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Headteacher / Principal

- Approve the school's acceptance of private candidates.
- Ensure adequate resources, staffing and facilities are available.
- Ensure policy compliance with JCQ, awarding bodies and safeguarding duties.
- Consider and approve exceptions where needed.

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Examinations Officer (EO) / Exams Lead

- Main point of contact for private candidates and referring bodies.
- Manage requests, entries, registrations and venue allocations.
- Ensure JCQ and awarding body procedures are followed.
- Maintain secure storage of exam materials and records.
- Liaise with SENDCo for access arrangements.
- Administer fees, invoicing and refunds.
- Keep auditable records of communications and decisions.

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SENDCo / SEN Team

- Assess and coordinate access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for private candidates.
- Gather evidence to support applications to awarding bodies.
- Ensure equality and safeguarding considerations are met.

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Safeguarding Lead / DSL

- Ensure safeguarding checks are conducted for private candidates where applicable.
- Confirm that appropriate arrangements are in place if the candidate is under 18 or is a vulnerable adult.

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Invigilators and Examination Staff

- Follow ICE and centre procedures and signage.
- Complete attendance registers, incident logs, and other documentation.
- Ensure security of exam materials during sessions.

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Private Candidate (and Parent/Carer or Representative)

- Provide accurate personal details and required documentation.
- Comply with exam rules and centre instructions.
- Pay fees and adhere to deadlines.

- Provide evidence for access arrangements where relevant.

Eligibility and application procedures

- General eligibility

- Private candidates may be accepted at the discretion of the Headteacher, subject to availability and compliance requirements.
- Preference may be given to candidates with a clear educational rationale (e.g., previous enrolment, placement with the academy, urgent re-sit needs).
- The centre will not agree to act as a conduit for systematic outsourcing of assessments in a way that compromises centre responsibilities.

- Application process (step-by-step)

- Step 1: Initial enquiry — Private candidate or referring body contacts the EO with intended qualification, exam series and subject(s).
- Step 2: Invoice – Candidates are sent an initial invoice that outlines the fees. If accepted, candidates are invited to fill in the information on the form and return it to the EO. They are also required to send a copy of photographic ID for identity checks. See Appendix A and B
- Step 3: Eligibility check and decision — EO consults Headteacher and SENDCo; decision communicated in writing within an agreed timeframe (10 working days).
- Step 4: Entry confirmation and fees — If accepted, candidate signs centre agreement form and pays required fees/deposits by specified deadline.
- Step 5: Registration and exam entry — EO completes awarding body registrations and provides timetable/venue confirmation.

Entry, exam registration and administration

Registration and entry protocols

- The EO will register private candidates in line with awarding body deadlines.
- Late entries may be accepted only where permitted and with payment of any late fees; acceptance is at the centre's discretion.
- Candidate names must match official ID as required by the awarding body.

Examination venue and supervision

- Private candidates will sit exams in the same venue as enrolled students, unless a separate room is agreed in advance.
- Invigilation staffing levels must meet awarding body requirements and ensure equality of treatment and security.

- Seating plans, attendance registers, and exam room checks must be completed.

Identification and verification

- On exam day, the candidate must present acceptable original photo ID (Passport, Drivers licence) as specified by JCQ/awarding body instructions.
- The EO will verify identity and keep a record of checks.

Timetables and communication

- Candidates receive the exam timetable, arrival instructions and candidate information booklet well before exams.
- Candidates must provide emergency contact details.

Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

Access arrangements

- Private candidates with SEND can apply for access arrangements; applications must be supported by appropriate evidence (e.g., educational psychologist report, specialist assessor report, historical evidence).
- The SENDCo will assess needs, determine eligibility and submit applications to awarding bodies where necessary.
- The centre will ensure that the same standards of evidence and historic need are applied as for internal candidates.

Reasonable adjustments

- The centre will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and JCQ guidance.
- Where adjustments require specialist equipment or staffing (e.g., readers, scribes), candidates or referring bodies may be asked to contribute to costs or provide personnel.

Special consideration

- If a candidate is affected by circumstances close to the exam, the EO will consider applying for special consideration per awarding body rules and with required evidence.

Fees, charges and refunds

Fee schedule

- The Centre will charge fees on an individual basis. These will be communicated to the candidate before they are registered.



- Fees reflect actual costs and awarding body charges plus an administration fee where appropriate.

Payment terms

- Candidates must pay invoices by the stated deadlines before entries are submitted.
- Non-payment may result in cancelled entries.

Refunds and cancellations

- Refund rules for withdrawals before entry deadlines, and for cancellations after deadlines (which may still incur awarding body charges), must be published.
- Exceptional refunds may be considered by the Headteacher in circumstances such as verified illness or centre error.

Coursework, NEA and authentication

NEA submission and supervision

- Private candidates are normally expected to submit NEA directly to awarding bodies or through approved centres; where the centre agrees to accept NEA, the same supervision and authentication procedures as for internal candidates will apply.
- The EO and subject staff must ensure that work is authenticated and stored securely.

Authenticity and tutoring

- The centre will not take responsibility for any external tuition unless explicitly agreed in writing; any private tuition must be clearly documented and not conflict with awarding body rules on assistance.
- Tutors or parents assisting candidates must not engage in activities that compromise authenticity.

Exam conduct, malpractice and appeals

Exam day conduct

- Private candidates must follow JCQ ICE regulations; breaches may lead to penalties or disqualification.
- The EO will brief candidates on acceptable behaviour, permitted materials and mobile phone policies.

Malpractice

- Suspected malpractice by a private candidate will be investigated in accordance with JCQ and awarding body procedures.
- Where malpractice is found, the centre will submit required documentation and cooperate with awarding bodies. Disciplinary action may include barring from future sittings at the centre.

Appeals and complaints

- Private candidates have the right to post-results services. The EO will outline the process, costs and timescales.
- Formal complaints about the centre's handling of private candidates must be made via the school's complaints procedure.

Results, certificates and post-results services

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Results collection and release

- Results will be released in line with awarding body timetables; candidates must provide preferred method for receipt (in person with ID, post to secure address).
- The centre will not be responsible for loss of certificates if dispatched to an insecure address provided by the candidate.

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Certificates

- Awarding bodies issue certificates to centres, which will be held securely.
- The centre will provide certificates to private candidates on verification of identity or as instructed in writing; a small administration charge may be applied for reissue requests where allowed.

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Post-results services

- Candidates wishing the centre to request reviews of marking or access copies must submit written consent and payment; the centre will advise on likelihood and costs.
- The centre will follow awarding body procedures and timescales for appeals and inform candidates of outcomes.

Record keeping and data protection

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Records retained

- The centre will keep:
 - Application forms and ID verification
 - Entry and registration records
 - Attendance registers, seating plans, incident logs

- Access arrangement evidence
- NEA authentication forms
- Communications and fee invoices/receipts
- Results and post-results requests
- Retention periods will comply with awarding body guidance and data protection legislation.

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Data protection

- The centre will process personal data lawfully and securely per UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Candidates will be informed how their data is used and where it is shared (e.g., awarding bodies, JCQ).
- Confidential exam materials will be stored in secure, access-controlled locations.

Communication with stakeholders

Information provided to candidates and parents

- The centre will publish a private candidate information pack that explains:
 - How to apply
 - Fees and payment process
 - ID requirements
 - Timetables and venue rules
 - Access arrangements procedures
 - Policies on malpractice, appeals and complaints

Liaison with referring bodies and employers

- The EO will set out expectations for partner agencies (e.g., referring local authorities, alternative provision brokers) in writing, including fee liabilities, safeguarding responsibilities and candidate support.

Training for staff

- The centre will provide training for staff involved with private candidates on JCQ procedures, safeguarding and access arrangements.

Implementation, monitoring and review

Implementation

- This policy is effective from the date approved by the Headteacher and will be disseminated to staff, candidates and stakeholders.
- The EO will produce an annual private candidate operational plan before each exam series.

- Monitoring

- The Headteacher and EO will monitor compliance through:
 - Random audits of exam records and attendance registers
 - Review of fee and entry processes
 - Feedback from candidates and stakeholders

- Review

- The policy will be reviewed at least annually or when JCQ/awarding body regulations change, or sooner if a significant incident occurs.
- The review will ensure alignment with OFSTED requirements, particularly the OFSTED inspection framework areas relevant to exam administration (Curriculum and Teaching, Inclusion, Leadership and Governance, and Safeguarding).

Related procedures and documents

- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)
- JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA)
- JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures
- Awarding body-specific instructions
- School safeguarding policy
- Data protection and privacy notices
- School complaints procedure
- Fees schedule and candidate agreement form
- Private Candidate application form and checklist

Approval and review

- Approved by: SLT
- Date of approval: 12/10/2026
- Next review date: 12/10/2027

Horizons Alternative Provision Academy

2027 Examination Entry Fees and Rationale

standard charges for GCSE and Functional Skills examination entries

Purpose. To set a transparent 2027 fee schedule for external/private candidate entries at Horizons, combining the awarding organisation entry fee with a £200 per-subject administration charge.

Rationale

Cost recovery and sustainability

The subject-specific administration fees is intended to contribute to the centre costs that sit beyond the awarding organisation entry charge, including candidate onboarding and verification, entries and amendments, timetable administration, examination-room planning, invigilation coordination, secure handling of papers and materials, access-arrangement administration where applicable, attendance management, results processing and post-results administration.

Transparent pricing

Separating the awarding organisation fee from the Horizons administration fee makes the charging structure easy for commissioners, families and candidates to understand. The proposed total is the sum of the stated board fee plus the applicable administration fee for each subject.

Late-entry charge

A £120 per-subject late fee recognises the additional administrative pressure and reduced lead time associated with entries received after the standard deadline. It also encourages timely submission of candidate information and supports additional checking, amendment and processing work.

Consistency and planning

The administration fee is set at £200 for all subjects. This supports transparent quoting while allowing the underlying awarding organisation fee to remain visible and to be updated if the board changes its charge.

Fee application and conditions

- Fees above are proposed for standard on-time entries for the 2027 examination series. Entries submitted after the Horizons standard-entry deadline incur an additional £120 per subject.
- The awarding organisation entry fees used in this document are the figures supplied for this proposal: AQA English Language £52.85, AQA English Literature £52.85, and Pearson Edexcel GCSE Mathematics £55.00. Administration fees are £200.
- The Horizons administration fee is charged per subject: £200 for AQA GCSE English Language, £200 for AQA GCSE English Literature and £200 for Pearson Edexcel GCSE Mathematics.
- The Horizons late-entry charge is £120 per subject. Any further very-late/high-late awarding organisation charges, amendment, transfer, access-arrangement, specialist invigilation, separate-room, practical/NEA, courier or post-results costs are not included and should be charged separately where applicable.
- All entries remain subject to awarding organisation rules, entry deadlines, candidate eligibility and the Academy being able to make the required examination arrangements.
- Fees will be reviewed annually, and sooner if an awarding organisation changes its published charge.

2027 GCSE fee schedule

Subject	Exam board	Board fee	Admin fee	Standard total	Late fee	Late total
GCSE English Language Foundation	AQA	£52.85	£200.00	£252.85	£120.00	£372.85
GCSE English Literature Foundation	AQA	£52.85	£200.00	£252.85	£120.00	£372.85
GCSE Mathematics Foundation	Pearson Edexcel	£55.00	£200.00	£255.00	£120.00	£375.00



2027 Functional Skills fee schedule



Subject	Exam board	Board fee	Admin fee	Standard total	Late fee	Late total
Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 Maths	Pearson	£24.60	£100	£124.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 English	Pearson	£24.60	£150	£174.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 3 Maths	Pearson	£24.60	£100	£124.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 3 English	Pearson	£24.60	£150	£174.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 3 English	Pearson	£24.60	£100	£124.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 2 Maths	Pearson	£24.60	£150	£174.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 2 English	Pearson	£24.60	£100	£124.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 1 Maths	Pearson	£24.60	£150	£174.60	£120.00	£372.85
Functional Skills Entry Level 1 English	Pearson	£24.60	£100	£124.60	£120.00	£372.85

Approved by:	Role:	Date:
C Willmott	Executive Head	07/10/2026

Appendix B

PRIVATE CANDIDATE: PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Further to your enquiry regarding entering and accommodating your examination(s), places offered to private candidates are limited and subject to conditions (which include that not all awarding body specifications are available to private candidates and those with internally assessed components may have restrictions). A preliminary entry does not guarantee you will be entered by this centre.

You should fully complete all sections of the preliminary entry form and relevant sections of the additional information form. The confirmation statement must be signed and dated. Your request will not be processed until all required information and supporting documentation is provided.

The deadline for returning completed forms is [21/10/2026].

If the centre is able to enter/accommodate you, you will receive a provisional entry confirmation and an invoice for examination entry fee(s) and/including the centre's administration fee(s) as detailed below.

Your final exam information will not be confirmed to you until the invoice has been paid.

In case of query, please contact Elodie Fuller on 01189 937 6847 or e.fuller@maidenerleghtrust.org

Private Candidate Examination Fees 2026/27 Effective from 1 September 2026

Qualification	Entry fee per subject	Admin fee per subject	Total Fee	
GCSE English Language Foundation	£52.85	£200	£252.85	
GCSE English Literature Foundation	£52.85	£200	£252.85	
GCSE Mathematics Foundation	£55.00	£200	£255.00	

Points to note

- You are responsible for ensuring the centre receives all your preliminary information by the deadline above
- If the centre agrees to make your exam entry (or entries) you **must** refer to the relevant awarding body privacy notice to understand your personal data will be transferred to the awarding body and how they use it, for example: [AQA](#) and [Pearson](#)
- Should your exam entry (or entries) and use of the centre's exam accommodation incur additional or other fees, including extra invigilation costs, these will be charged at a later date once the examination timetable is finalised. Additional or other fees must be paid by when, etc.
- The centre reserves the right to withdraw your entry (or entries) if any amount remains outstanding
- The centre cannot accept responsibility for any amendment fees that become due if you fail to give sufficient notice to make any necessary changes to your entry (or entries) information
- Should you decide to withdraw your entry (or entries) you will [insert as relevant to your centre, as example: only be entitled to any refund amount that is issued by the awarding body concerned. Refunds will only be made by awarding bodies for a limited time after the entry deadline has passed and this varies dependent on the awarding body]

PRIVATE CANDIDATE: PRELIMINARY ENTRY FORM

Please complete the white boxes below in BLOCK CAPITALS

Section 1 PERSONAL DETAILS			
Surname		Forename	Middle or other name(s)
Title	Gender	Date of birth	Email address
Address (including postcode)		Contact telephone number(s)	Enter any previous known exam numbers
			UCI:
			ULN:
Section 2 EXAMINATION DETAILS			
Qualification type e.g. GCSE		Awarding body	Exam series (month & year)
Specification (Subject) title		Specification (Entry) code (include option code if applicable)	Unit entry code(s) (if applicable for a unitised specification)
Section 3 IDENTIFICATION: Your identity must be checked by the centre through a verification process which involves photo-ID			
(As example for verification purposes, please provide) Driving Licence Number OR Passport Number		A copy of photo driving licence OR copy of photo page of passport must be attached ¹	
Section 4 ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS/REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS			
Do you have any difficulties when working under timed/controlled conditions?			YES / NO Circle your response
Do you have any potential access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) requirements?			YES / NO Circle your response
If you answer YES above, please provide further detail here:			
Detail here does not guarantee approval of any access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s). The centre will contact you as soon practically possible to discuss your needs and evidence requirements further.			



Confirmation statement

By signing here, I am confirming I understand all information and points to note on all pages of this document:

.....

Date of signature:

FOR EXAMS OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date forms received	
Copy photo-ID provided?	YES / NO
AA/RA follow up required?	YES / NO

PRIVATE CANDIDATE: **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FORM**

Section 5 NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT	
Does the qualification include any non-examination assessment (NEA)? NEA can include coursework, controlled assessment or an endorsement	YES / NO Circle your response
If you answer YES above, have you previously taken the qualification? If YES, please add when (month & year)	YES / NO
If you have previously taken the qualification, dependent on this being permitted by the awarding body's specification, do you wish to carry forward (re-use) your previous NEA mark?	YES / NO
Responses here do not guarantee acceptance of entry. The centre will refer to the relevant specification and/or subject-specific guidance in the first instance to confirm if this is available to a private candidate. As relevant or applicable, further communication on this will follow in due course if the centre is required to/able to arrange for supervision, authentication and marking as required.	

Section 6 ADDITIONAL PRELIMINARY ENTRY INFORMATION Only complete for any additional entry requested
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¹ If the centre agrees to enter/accommodate you, the original of this photo-ID must be brought to each exam/assessment

Qualification type e.g. GCSE	Awarding body	Exam series (month & year)
Specification (Subject) title	Specification (Entry) code (include option code if applicable)	Unit entry code(s) (if applicable for a unitised specification)
Does the qualification include any non-examination assessment (NEA)?		YES / NO
If you answer YES above, have you previously taken the qualification? If YES, please add when (month & year)		YES / NO
If you have previously taken the qualification, dependent on this being permitted by the awarding body's specification, do you wish to carry forward (re-use) your previous NEA mark?		YES / NO

Qualification type e.g. GCSE	Awarding body	Exam series (month & year)
Specification (Subject) title	Specification (Entry) code (include option code if applicable)	Unit entry code(s) (if applicable for a unitised specification)
Does the qualification include any non-examination assessment (NEA)?		YES / NO
If you answer YES above, have you previously taken the qualification? If YES, please add when (month & year)		YES / NO
If you have previously taken the qualification, dependent on this being permitted by the awarding body's specification, do you wish to carry forward (re-use) your previous NEA mark?		YES / NO