



# BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Inspiration and Excellence

Headteacher: Dominic Robson BA (Hons), NPQH

Lichfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2NH | 0121 250 5400 | www.bvgs.co.uk

April 2024

Dear Year 11 and Year 13 Parents/Carers,

## **Re: Special consideration in the summer exam series**

As the public examination season approaches, I wanted to make all parents aware of the JCQ guidance regarding the 'special consideration process' and how this is applied at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

### **What is special consideration?**

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade. This is to reflect **temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control AT THE TIME OF THE ASSESSMENT**. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate.

However, it should be noted that **long term conditions or illnesses which affect the candidate are not covered** in the special consideration process, unless medical evidence is produced to show how this condition has flared up at the time of the exams. A permanent disability would result in reasonable adjustments to the way in which the exam is sat, not a post exam mark change.

### **What are the criteria for special consideration?**

JCQ (who oversee all the qualifications we offer at school) have set out clear guidelines as to what circumstances would qualify for special consideration. The full example list is attached to the Appendix 1 in this letter. However, the most commonly cited criteria are temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination, bereavement close to the time of the assessments, or other domestic crisis.

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If your child has a long-term condition or illness which affects their performance over the entire course, then this would normally be dealt with via access arrangements. If you have any questions regarding access arrangements, please contact Mrs Sly at [e.sly@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:e.sly@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk)

### **How should Special Consideration be applied for?**

If you believe, that your child is eligible for Special Consideration at any time during the Examination period, you should complete and submit the attached document entitled “**BVGS Application for Review of Special Consideration for Exams Summer 2024**” to Mrs Helen Pritchard at [h.pritchard@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:h.pritchard@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk) . **This form will be used to determine whether or not an application to the examination boards is appropriate. The deadline for the submission is 5PM on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June.** If you have already submitted information regarding ‘special consideration’, there is no requirement to complete this Form.

### **When will you know if special consideration has been applied?**

Firstly, the School must support an application for special consideration. Exam Boards cannot use grades, which are predicted in their calculations. Submission of an application form will not guarantee a successful application for Special Consideration. The adjustment of marks is at the Examining Board’s discretion and is not the decision of School. Please see Appendix 2, which outlines the JCQ criteria for awarding ‘special consideration’ and the different bands that are applied by the Examination Boards.

The candidate will only know if ‘special consideration’ has been applied on receipt of their results on the published A-Level and GCSE Results Days.

If you have any questions or queries about this process, please do not hesitate to contact me at [d.goodwin@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:d.goodwin@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk)

Yours sincerely



**Mr D Goodwin**  
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## Appendix 1

Candidates will be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but performance in the examination, or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment, is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. These 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 most closely involved will be eligible);
- domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment;
- serious disturbance during an examination;
- accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper or CD, 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 club or country at an international level in chess or football;
- failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.

When candidates have been fully prepared for the specification but the wrong texts have been chosen, special consideration may be given at the discretion of the awarding body.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the correct texts are taught. Where this has not happened, there can be no guarantee that a candidate will receive special consideration. Such instances will be investigated by the awarding body on a case-by-case basis.

Where the wrong texts have been taught, the texts studied must have been examined in the current specification in a previous examination series.

Additionally, JCQ detail a range of criteria for which special consideration would not be applied. For instance,

- Special consideration must be applied for at the time of the assessment.
- long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the assessment (i.e. difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated);
- bereavement occurring 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 in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;

- the consequences of committing a crime, where formally charged or found guilty; (However, a retrospective application for special consideration may be considered where the charge is later dropped or the candidate is found not guilty.)
- the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
- the consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations;
- the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason;
- quality of teaching, staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities;
- misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;
- misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
- making personal arrangements such as a wedding or holiday arrangements which conflict with the examination timetable;
- submitting no coursework or non-examination assessment at all, unless coursework or non-examination assessment is scheduled for a restricted period of time, rather than during the course;
- missing all examinations and internally assessed components/units;
- failure to cover the course because of joining the class part way through;
- a disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) unless the disability or circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the assessment, i.e. difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated;
- failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.

## Appendix 2

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of additional marks to each component affected within a specification. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune. The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the total raw marks available in the component concerned, including coursework/non-examination assessment. The centre must be satisfied that there has been a material detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

The decision made by the awarding body will be based on various factors which may vary from one subject to another. These may include:

- the severity of the circumstances;
- the date of the examination in relation to the circumstances; and
- the nature of the assessment, e.g. whether written papers are affected as opposed to coursework/non-examination assessment, or whether a Practical Test or Speaking Test is involved.
- Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion. For example, because of a recent trauma at the time of the examination and the candidate suffering from a

viral illness. Special consideration should only be applied for the most serious indisposition.

- Candidates or their parents/carers should, in the first instance, discuss the application of special consideration with the school or college concerned.
- Private candidates must liaise with the school or college which made entries on their behalf about an application for special consideration.

The following are examples of circumstances which must apply at the time of the assessment.

**5% This is the maximum allowance and will be reserved for the most exceptional cases, such as:**

- terminal illness of the candidate;
- terminal illness of a parent/carer, brother or sister;
- death of a member of the immediate family within three months of the examination;
- very serious and disruptive crisis/incident at or near the time of the examination.

**4% Very serious problems such as:**

- life-threatening illness of candidate or member of immediate family;
- major surgery at or near the time of the examination;
- severe disease;
- very recent death of member of extended family;
- severe or permanent bodily injury occurring at the time of the examination;
- serious crisis/incident at the time of the examination.

NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the examination(s) taking place.

The centre must be satisfied that there has been a material detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

**3% A more common category (more cases will fall into this category), including:**

- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative;
- recent illness of a more serious nature;
- flare-up of a severe congenital/medical condition or a psychological condition;
- broken limbs;
- organ disease;
- physical assault trauma before an examination;
- recent crisis/incident;
- witnessing a distressing event on the day of the examination involved.

NB 'Recent' is defined as up to four months prior to the examination(s) taking place.

The centre must be satisfied that there has been a material detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

**2% The most common category of allowance (most cases will fall within this category):**

- illness at the time of the examination;
- broken limb on the mend;
- concussion;
- effects of pregnancy (not pregnancy *per se*);

- extreme distress on the day of an examination (not simply exam related stress);
- allowance on the last paper taken in a day when a candidate has been entered for three or more examinations timetabled for the same day and the total duration of those papers is more than 5 hours 30 minutes (GCSE, Level 1 and Level 2 examinations) or more than 6 hours (GCE and Level 3 examinations).
- (Where extra time has been used following formal approval, this should be included in the calculation.)
- (Supervised rest breaks must not be included in the total duration of the papers when applying for special consideration.)

**1% Reserved for more minor problems:**

- on-going noise during an examination;
- illness of another candidate which leads to minor disruption in the examination room;
- stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed;
- hay fever on the day of an examination;
- minor upset arising from administrative problems.

Where the request for special consideration fails to meet the criteria, it will be rejected.