Wyedean

School and Sixth Form Centre

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REST BREAK POLICY

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Date of next review: November 2027

A supervised rest break is a centre delegated access arrangements granted by the centre in line with JCQ guidance. The purpose of a supervised rest break is to give the candidate 'time out' from the examination and not to allow for extra thinking time. During the rest break, the candidate may leave the room to use the bathroom or to take a short break, all rest breaks will be fully supervised by an invigilator

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Awarding of supervised rest breaks

A supervised rest break may be awarded to candidates who have a range of difficulties including cognition and learning needs, communication and interaction needs, a medical condition, sensory and physical needs or social, emotional and mental health needs.

The SENCo must only award a supervised rest break to a candidate where:

• they are satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act)
• there is a genuine need for the arrangement
• it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre

The candidate's difficulties must be established within the centre and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities

The role of the SENCO

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to understand the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document and/or the relevant section of the Instructions for conducting examinations publication and make relevant decisions in line with the regulations.

The SENCO must make decisions relating to candidates who require a supervised rest break as they will have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments.

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations, this includes ensuring that the purpose of a supervised rest break is for a break from the examination and not a break used for 'thinking time'

Duration

The duration of the supervised rest break must be determined by the SENCo based on their knowledge of the candidate's needs and the candidate's normal way of working when placed under timed conditions.

The SENCo must also consider the timing of breaks if the candidate has more than one examination during the day.

Where rest breaks have been awarded for any reason other than medical, the duration of a single supervised rest break will be no longer than 10 minutes.

Where rest breaks have been awarded because of a medical condition (eg diabetes) that may require medical intervention, the rest breaks ideally should be no longer than 10 minutes. However, these lengths can be reviewed by the SENCo and exams office staff on the day of exam based on any change in medical need on that day.

No rest break should be longer than 30 minutes, unless medical intervention is required.

A supervised rest break will not be permitted within the first or last 20 minutes of an examination unless on medical grounds.

Frequency

The SENCo will confirm the number of supervised rest breaks permitted for a candidate.

Candidates cannot be given as many supervised rest breaks as they like for as long as they like.

Where rest breaks have been awarded for any reason other than medical, then a maximum of 3 single supervised rest break will be permitted in any exam.

Where rest breaks have been awarded because of a medical condition (eg diabetes) that may require medical intervention, then ideally a maximum of 3 single supervised rest breaks will be permitted. However, the frequency of these breaks can be reviewed by the SENCo and exams office staff on the day of exam based on any change in medical need on that day.

A supervised rest break will not be permitted within the first or last 20 minutes of an examination unless on medical grounds.

The role of the candidate

Although candidates cannot dictate the duration and frequency of their supervised rest break(s), in exceptional circumstances, the SENCo will advise whether the candidate has a difficulty, illness or disability which only the candidate can see emerging during an examination and, therefore, request a supervised rest break when required – within the parameters set above.

The student can indicate to the invigilator if they wish to take their supervised rest break within the exam room or outside the exam room.

The candidate must follow the JCQ regulations on supervised rest breaks understanding that they are for 'time out' from the examination and not to allow for extra thinking time. The student must always remain under invigilator supervision, if they fail to do so, this will be reported to the awarding body as malpractice.

The role of the invigilator

Regardless of the location of the supervised rest break, invigilators must ensure that during the supervised rest break the candidate must not have access to the question paper/answer booklet.

The invigilator must note the start and end time of the supervised rest break and review the overall end time of the exam for the student, ensuring the student is aware of the new end time and that no time has been lost due to the rest break.

Conclusion

The duration and frequency of rest breaks for all students is set out in this document as determined by the SENCo.

The exams staff must be made aware of any decisions that differ to this document to allow for adequate preparation to be undertaken, such as relevant rooming, seating and invigilation arrangements to be put in place and ensuring that sufficient staff are available to facilitate the rest break(s).

A supervised rest break must only be awarded to candidates with a difficulty, illness, impairment or disability as defined by JCQ in its Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document and the Equality Act.