

Sharing examination results: Key responsibilities and guidance

Although current attention is understandably focused on the forthcoming examination series, senior leaders with responsibility for examinations and exams managers/officers must also ensure they understand both **external regulations** and the centre's **internal arrangements** for sharing examination results. This includes clarity on:

- when and how candidates may access their examination results
- who is permitted to collect or receive results
- how examination information may be shared with third parties
- the rights of parents, or those with parental responsibility, to access their child's examination information and results

This information should be communicated to students **in good time**, ideally before the examination series begins, reinforced during the exam period, and published on the centre's website so it remains accessible to students and parents up to results day(s) and beyond as a point of reference.

NAEO recommendations for exams managers/officers

The NAEO recommends that exams managers/officers ensure they:

- are fully familiar with JCQ regulations relating to restricted release of results day(s), including the tasks required and the need to maintain key awarding body contact details to resolve results issues
- have clear processes in place to support candidates who wish to access post-results services
- ensure candidates understand results day arrangements, including how provisional statements of results will be distributed and how they can access academic or pastoral support if required
- are prepared to manage candidate requests to authorise a third party (for example, a parent or grandparent) to collect results on their behalf
- liaise with senior leaders and pastoral staff to identify candidates with non-resident parents and confirm how requests for examination information or results will be handled

Regulations on the Release of Results

In preparation for results day(s), exams managers/officers must be fully aware of the regulations governing the sharing of examination results. In particular, they should be familiar with JCQ's [Notice to Centres: Release of Results – June 2026 examinations](#) and must ensure that a candidate's examination information or results are **not shared with any third party until after the candidate has received their results**.

Senior leaders should also be familiar with guidance from the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) on the publication of examination results to third parties, such as the media](#).

Although data protection legislation does not prevent the publication of examination results (for example, in the local press), centres must act fairly and take seriously any concerns raised by candidates or, where applicable, their parents or carers. Centres should also explain clearly how results will be published, for example whether names will be listed alphabetically or results presented in grade order.

While centres do not normally require a candidate's consent to publish examination results, candidates should be informed in advance if publication is planned and how this will take place, recognising that publication may sometimes cause distress or harm.

The NAO therefore recommends that centres obtain candidate approval before publishing results and that they always:

- consider any objection raised by a candidate before deciding to publish; and
- have a clear and justifiable reason if a candidate's objection is rejected.

When can examination results be released to candidates?

JCQ's [Notice to Centres: Release of Results – June 2026 examinations](#) states that results may be released to candidates **from the following times, and no earlier:**

- **08:00 on Thursday 13 August**
GCE AS and A level, FSMQ, Extended Project, Level 3 Applied Qualifications, Level 3 Vocational technical qualifications*
- **08:00 on Thursday 20 August**
GCSE, Entry Level Certificate (ELC), Foundation and Higher Projects, Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational technical qualifications*

* See [Key dates and timetables](#) for the release of results for Cambridge Technicals and the [Pearson website](#) for details of release of results for Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Vocational technical qualifications.

Grade boundaries and results must not be released until after 08:00 on the appropriate date for the publication of results.

Candidates must not receive results by email, post or any other method **before 08:00** on the relevant results day. Any breach of these requirements may be investigated by an awarding body as malpractice.

Collection of results by a nominated representative

Some candidates may be unable to collect results in person due to holidays or other unavoidable circumstances. This can be particularly challenging for centres that issue results only in hard copy.

Candidates may nominate a representative (for example, a parent or grandparent) to collect results on their behalf, provided that:

- the request is made by the candidate in writing or by email
- the nominated individual is clearly identified, and
- the representative presents valid photographic identification when collecting results

Issuing results by email or telephone

In centres where results are not issued electronically, absent candidates may request that results are provided by email or telephone. Such requests should:

- be made in writing or by email
- clearly confirm the correct email address or telephone number, and
- include safeguards, such as a unique password, where necessary. Centres might choose not to issue results by telephone to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or where a candidate may require immediate pastoral support following receipt of their results.

Sharing results with local authorities or the media

Results data must not be shared with any external individuals or organisations until **after candidates have received their results**.

Once candidates have received their results, centres may only release results data, issue press releases or share information more widely **after 09:30** on the relevant publication date.

Requests from parents for examination information or results

Unless a candidate has given explicit permission for an alternative arrangement, results must always be released to the candidate before being shared with any third party.

Requests from parents or those with parental responsibility can be complex, particularly when made by a non-resident parent. Any such request received by an exams manager/officer should be referred to the centre's Data Protection Officer (DPO), senior leadership team or head of centre. They are responsible for deciding what information to share and when, in accordance with data protection legislation and any relevant personal or legal considerations.

Non-resident parents

The Department for Education (DfE) uses the terms *resident* and *non-resident* parent to distinguish between parents who do, and do not, live with a child.

A parent is defined as a person who has care of a child or young person, either full-time or part-time, regardless of their biological or legal relationship. Senior leaders must understand what examinations-related information may be shared with a non-resident parent.

Non-resident parents retain parental rights and responsibilities and have the right to participate in decisions about their child's education. Unless restricted by a court order, centres must treat all parents with parental responsibility equally. This includes providing access to information such as examination results.

Student rights and parental responsibility

The ability of young people to understand and exercise their rights develops as they mature. As a general guide:

- the ICO refers to children aged **12 or over**;
- the DfE refers to children **from the age of 13**, in line with GDPR principles.

Although GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not specify an age at which a child gains full control over access to examination results, centres should consider each case individually, taking account of whether the child understands the implications of their request.

A child's competence is assessed depending upon the level of understanding of the child, but it does indicate an approach that will be reasonable in many cases.

Even where a child does not wish to share results with their parents, parents with parental responsibility remain entitled to request access to their child's educational record until the child reaches the age of 18, subject to limited statutory exceptions.

DfE guidance confirms that requests from both resident and non-resident parents with parental responsibility must be met.

GCSE results form part of the pupil's educational record and are therefore disclosable to a parent who requests access to or copies of their child's educational record. The pupil's consent is not required. However, if a school considers that sharing this information could result in serious physical or mental harm to the pupil or another individual, it may decide not to release the results to the parent. In such a situation, the school and the affected parent may wish to seek independent legal advice.

Informing non-resident parents

[DfE guidance](#) states that:

- where a school does not know the whereabouts of a non-resident parent, the resident parent should be reminded of the other parent's entitlement to be involved in the child's education
- if a non-resident parent later makes direct contact, information should be provided once parental status is reasonably verified

- consent from the resident parent or legal documentation is not required before sharing statutory information

The DfE gives an example of a non-resident parent, with limited contact with their child, asking the school how their child performed in their exams. Even if both the child and the resident parent object and ask the school not to share this information, the school must still release it. Refusing to do so on the grounds that the child is old enough to control access would breach education law, as the non-resident parent is legally entitled to this information.

Conclusion

Exams managers/officers and senior leaders must be fully aware of the regulations governing the sharing of examination results. Centres must follow JCQ guidance carefully and ensure candidates understand how and when results will be issued, together with the support available to them.

Potential issues should be addressed before results day, including arrangements for absent candidates and managing requests from non-resident parents. In complex cases, senior leaders must take the lead, drawing on guidance from the DfE and ICO. Failure to identify such issues in advance may make them more difficult to resolve at the point results are issued.

The NAEO recommends the following five steps which exams managers/officers should take prior to the start of an exam series/results day(s) to pre-empt any issues:

- Meet with your line manager to confirm understanding of the centre policy regarding the sharing of examination results – and that this is in line with regulations. This policy should clearly outline how and when examination results will be shared with those with parental responsibility, including non-resident parents, and with third parties. (An example: Where access to, or a copy of, a candidate's examination results is requested by a non-resident parent, these will be shared within X working days of receiving the request and after confirmation that results have been issued to the candidate, etc.)
- Confirm there is a process in place that ensures all relevant members of staff are clear on the guidance regarding the sharing of examination results information with those with parental responsibility (resident and non-resident parents, etc.) and other third parties
- Ensure that an appropriate member of staff (for example, head of year/head of sixth form, etc.) has informed candidates and parents/carers of the centre policy regarding the sharing of examination results ahead of the examination series/results day(s)
- In situations where there is a non-resident parent, confirm that contact has been made with all candidates and resident parents and that they are aware of the centre policy
- Communicate the centre policy via the centre's website/newsletter/parents' evenings, etc. to candidates and parents/carers

Footnote

For more information please visit the [ICO](#) and [DfE](#) websites.



(1) Source: [Guidance - Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#). Updated 24 August 2023. This guidance applies to maintained schools – including sixth form and nursery year groups; maintained nursery schools; academies and free schools – including sixth form and nursery year groups.