



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

MOTIVATION COMMITMENT SUCCESS

Examinations and Assessments

Guidance for Students and Parents/Carers

Contents

1	Introduction
2	The Exams Team
3	Exams Entries
4	Exam dates and Timetables
5	Coursework and controlled assessments
6	Exam days
7	Late arrivals
8	Equipment
9	Mobile phones
10	Malpractice
11	Absentees
12	School closure on exam days
13	Behaviour in exams
14	Dress code
15	Access Arrangements
16	Illness on exam days
17	Special consideration
18	Parental help for students
19	Results Days
20	Remarks
21	Copy scripts
22	Certificates

1 Introduction

Public examinations can be a stressful time for students and parents. The rules and regulations are designed to ensure fairness and minimise disturbance. This document is intended to give advice about examination procedures and to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

If you have any other questions please feel free to make enquiries from the exams team. You can contact the exams office by telephone on 01280 846334 or by e-mail to exams@magdalen.northants.sch.uk

On exams days it is best to contact the exams office directly on 01280 846334 rather than the general school number and leave a message, with the nature of your query, since the main priority will be the starting of exam sessions on time.

2 The Exams Team

Exams are managed by the school's Exams and Data Manager (Mrs Ranson) by delegation from the Headteacher, and supported by the assistant Examinations Officer, and on exam days, a team of adult

invigilators who will supervise the conduct of the exams. The examination boards set down strict rules which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the centre is required to follow them precisely. The invigilators are also present to deal with any concerns raised by students during the exam.

3 Examination Entries

It is school policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of exam or assessment. Only by exception, after consultation with parents, and with the written consent of the Headteacher will students not be entered. The school will pay for the initial entry for exams and generally resits will be paid for by the student. Full details appear in the school's exams policy. The school presently makes entries with 4 exam boards – AQA, Pearson Edexcel, OCR and WJEC. Each of these boards has a web site with relevant and useful information.

Students are issued with a 4 figure candidate number which stays with them throughout their time at MCS. Students should remember this number as it needs to be written on all examination and coursework papers. It is shown on a student's individual exam timetable.

Exam entries are made by the faculties and once complete all students receive a statement of entry to check and sign their entries are correct. When the entries have been made they receive a further copy with the dates on in order to plan their revision. It also confirms whether they are in the morning or afternoon but it does not give the seating details. (At this stage exam clashes, i.e. two exams timetabled at the same time, will not have been sorted out so 2 or more exams may appear at the same time – by the time the final timetable is issued the order of exams will have been arranged.) It does mean that by the beginning of March, the students know the dates of their exams and can plan their revision.

4 Exam Dates and timetables

Shortly before the start of the exam season students will be given a timetable which gives details of the exam date, the exact start time, room and seat number for each exam. This should be kept in a safe place and brought into school on exam days so that students know where and when they are taking an exam.

We would also recommend that the details are written into the students' planner so that they still have this information even if they misplace their timetable.

The main period for exams is from the start of May – until the end of June but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier. All candidates will receive a centre produced timetable of all their A level and GCSE written examinations. This will include start times and the location of the examinations. It is helpful if parents make sure a copy of this timetable is available to them at home with their son's/daughter's exams highlighted.

From September/ October the timetable showing the dates of exams is available on the school website under Curriculum – Examination Information - Timetables.

5 Coursework deadlines/controlled assessments

Some subjects have an element of coursework or controlled assessment included in them which has to be completed before the formal exam sessions take place.

The school will set deadlines that ensure the exam board deadlines are met. These are not included on the exam timetables.

6 Exam days

The main location for written papers is the St John's site. Candidates are asked to be outside their exam room **10 minutes** before the start time on their timetable (which is the actual start time of the exam) to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently, and to allow for any unforeseen room changes.

The exam boards set a period within which exams can start. Depending on which exams are running the start times may vary slightly which is why it is important that students keep their timetable safe and refer to it each day. The length of examination papers varies.

GCSE exams generally will be timetabled to ensure students finish within school hours and can use the school buses (but this may not always be possible in which case you will be notified by the Exams Manager). Sixth form students taking more than one module in the afternoon will frequently not finish until after school finishes. Students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting

home. Students will not be allowed out of an exam early to keep the security of the exam paper and to ensure they have the full opportunity to complete the paper to the best of their ability.

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time this is known as a clash. The candidate will have to remain under supervision between the two papers. Generally they will just take one paper after another.

In rare cases it may be necessary for a paper to be done the next day and it is a requirement that the candidate is supervised overnight. This is essential to avoid compromising the security of the examination and needs to be organised in advance.

If an exam is delayed from a morning to an afternoon session the candidate will be supervised over lunchtime. They should bring some revision or reading material and their lunch and a drink, as they will not be allowed to buy food. They will not be able to have access to their mobile phone or any other electronic device whilst they are in isolation. Even attempting to communicate with any other candidate may result in the loss of marks for all those exams for all of the candidates involved.

Adult external invigilators will supervise students under the direct management of the Examinations Manager. Once candidates enter the exam room they must remain supervised and follow the invigilators' instructions at all times. The invigilators are experienced in exams procedures and subject to strict regulation, references and DBS clearance.

7 Late Arrivals

If a student is late, depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the candidate to be admitted. However, we are bound by examination board regulations on this matter. Normally candidates with a genuine reason who are brought straight to school may be admitted within the first 60 minutes of the start time, after this time the board will decide whether to accept any paper sat. Candidates who arrive more than 1 hour after the start or after the end of the exam may not be admitted. If they are permitted to take the exam, the examination board is unlikely to mark the script unless we are able to prove that the student was supervised by a responsible adult and had no access to electronic communication or other candidates in this centre or any other examination centre.

8 Equipment

What should be brought-

Candidates should bring writing equipment, coloured pencils, erasers etc. in a transparent plastic bag or pencil case. Non-transparent pencil boxes or cases will not be permitted in the examination room.

Pens should be **black**.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the examination. The centre is under no obligation to provide candidates with any equipment.

What should not be brought-

Some items are strictly banned from exam rooms and should not be brought into the examination room under any circumstances. The exam boards treat mere possession of these items as malpractice. Students are advised to leave these items at home on an exam day as the school cannot be responsible for the security of these while the examination is in progress:-

- Mobile phones, MP3 players, iPods
- Personal iPod and MP3 players
- Smartwatches
- Any other form of electronic storage or retrieval device.
- Notes, papers and text books unless specifically authorised.

9 Mobile phones and other electronic devices

The regulations state that mobile phones are not to be brought into examination rooms under any circumstances. This applies to all public and centre/mock examinations. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present opportunities for malpractice. Any student found to have a phone in the exam room will be reported to the appropriate examination board. Should this happen they are likely to be disqualified from that paper and possibly from the whole examination in that subject.

It is a very serious offence and our advice is that the phone should not be brought to centre. We can take no responsibility for the security of mobile phones brought to centre.

If they are taken into the examination room it is the candidate's responsibility to make sure it is turned off – not just left on silent. If it vibrates, rings, or goes off, the candidate will be reported because of the disturbance to other candidates. Phones left in bags outside rooms should also be turned off as they too can cause a noise/disturbance.

10 Malpractice in an exam

Malpractice is the term that the exam boards use for any irregularity, or breach of the regulations of any form. Examples include:-

- Taking in unauthorised material into the exam room, including phones etc.
- Communicating or trying to communicate with another candidate
- Talking once in the exam room – including before and after the formal exam time
- Failing to follow the invigilator's instructions
- Tapping on the desk or other noise which disturbs other candidates.

The Examinations Manager is required to, and will, report all infringements to the exam board and it will decide on what action to take based on the nature of the infringement. There is a tariff system of actions from which it can decide within limits and some infringements carry automatic loss of marks as a **minimum** penalty.

The exam boards take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that candidates heed the Examination Manager's instructions and any instructions given by an invigilator carefully. This includes before, during and after the exam has finished until they have left the exam room.

11 Absentees from a written exam

The Examinations Manager will try to locate a student who does not turn up in case it is a simple mistake. Because of the need to obtain information quickly, this may mean a parent receives a call from the exams office even though a student has already been reported as absent.

A student who absents themselves from any examination without presenting a doctor's note or a satisfactory reason for a request for special consideration will receive a grade based only on those elements of the examinations which have been marked.

Parents should be aware that the centre may ask parents for payment of the exam fees if a child does not turn up for an examination without a satisfactory reason. It is in all our interests to ensure that the school's budget is not wasted.

12 School closure on exams days

Even if the school is closed to students generally or partially, every effort will be made to open St Johns to ensure external examinations can take place. Students should therefore assume any external examinations are taking place unless there is a note to the contrary on the school web site.

However please note the following:-

- Exams will still take place on the timetabled day and in the timetabled session i.e. am or pm.
- Exam start times may be delayed slightly to ensure staffing arrangements are in accordance with examination regulations – students will be supervised by centre staff if necessary.
- Exams may need to take place in different rooms from those shown on the timetables.
- Students should make every effort to attend unless they consider it unsafe to do so.
- If students are going to arrive late for an exam (defined by the exam regulations as after 10am for a morning exam or 2.30pm for an afternoon exam) they need to make sure they do not have access to any electronic device particularly phone and are supervised by a responsible adult who can confirm that did they not communicate with any other candidate or have access to their phone, internet etc.
- Unless it is the final chance to take that exam it is unlikely we will be able to apply for special consideration if an exam is missed. You will need to take it in the next available session.

In the event that the school is unable to open for exams at all, we will take advice from the relevant examinations board and post that advice on the school web site.

13 Standards of behaviour in examinations

All candidates are given a copy of a 'notice to candidates' produced by the examining boards by display on the school web site. This gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed.

The centre and the examination boards regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should please impress on your son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an examination, as any activities that may disturb or upset other candidates will not be tolerated. The Examinations Manager has the responsibility to remove disruptive candidates.

Candidates should enter and leave exam rooms in silence as there may be exams in other rooms still continuing.

Candidates who try to communicate with other candidates inside the room, or who create a disturbance in the examination room will be asked to leave, and the circumstances will be reported to the examination board. This may result in the candidate not receiving a grade for the whole of that examination.

14 Dress code for exams

Examinations are a centre activity and normal rules should be followed. Hoodies and scarves are not permitted in exams, unless for reasons of your religious beliefs.

15 Access Arrangements

This will apply to students who have been advised by the Learning support department that they have been granted extra time or the use of a reader and/or scribe or a WP. These arrangements will be given to the student at the time of the exam

16 Illness on the day of the exam

If a student is ill on the day of an exam and parents have decided the student cannot sit the exam, the parent should ring the Exams office as soon as possible. We will need a doctor's certificate or note or other evidence of a satisfactory medical reason to enable the school to apply to the examination board asking for special consideration on the grounds of illness. If the candidate is unable through illness to sit a paper the board **may**, after examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade.

Please also telephone the centre if your son/daughter he/she will be present but is unwell or affected by some other circumstance. It is often helpful for the invigilator to be aware that a candidate is not feeling well. If their performance is impaired we can notify the exam board who may make an adjustment.

Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small (up to 5% in very extreme circumstances) and that no feedback is ever provided.

17 Special consideration

Any illness, or family circumstances, which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be notified as soon as possible to the Examinations Manager so that an application for special consideration can be made to the boards.

18 How can parents best help their son/daughter during the examination period?

Examinations are inevitably a stressful time for some candidates and support from both centre and parents can be helpful.

The centre will provide advice about revision programmes and examination techniques, and if this is followed it should not be necessary for any student to work abnormally long hours during the revision period. It is probably helpful to discuss with your son/daughter how he/she intends to organise revision and to talk through any anxieties about particular techniques or subject matter. Testing knowledge of factual material can benefit the student if such help is requested, but often all that is needed is a quiet place to work and lots of encouragement. Students should get plenty of sleep and some opportunities for relaxation.

19 Results

A level GCE and GCSE results arrive in school on separate dates which will be notified to students and appear on the schools web site. Arrangements for collection of results will also be posted there.

Students wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results **must** send a signed letter of authorisation with the person collecting who must also have identification with them. This applies even if the person collecting is a parent. Results will not be given over the telephone under any circumstances.

GCE and GCSE candidates not intending to collect in person but wishing their results to be posted, should leave a stamped addressed envelope (also bearing their candidate number), with the Examinations Manager or at the centre reception before the end of term – no post for school is delivered during the summer holidays until September.

Result slips not collected or posted on results day will be retained in centre for collection at the start of term, again with the necessary authority.

20 Remarks

It must be remembered that examinations can only measure performance on the day, and that candidates can do better or worse than anticipated for a variety of reasons. It is advisable to obtain a copy of the script and mark scheme before proceeding to an EAR (enquiry about result) as that is very expensive.

If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the centre can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate board.

Details of the procedures and the fees involved are posted around the room where results are collected and are available from the exam office. The process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the Leader of Learning or head of department concerned – especially if a university or college place is dependent on the result as urgent requests have to be made within a week.

The final date for submission to the board is 20th September for summer exams.

21 Copies of marked examination scripts

It is currently possible to have access to marked scripts for most AS/A2 units and some GCSE. You will need to complete an ESR1 form from the centre and pay a fee for each subject/paper. You should be aware that copies of marked scripts prior to an enquiry on results must be ordered within one week of the issue of results.

22 Certificates

The examining boards issue certificates well after the examinations have taken place. The centre distributes the ones issued for the main summer's exams at or after the centre's presentation evening – if held. In addition we distribute certificates to students still in school and have collection details which appear on the school web site and are notified by text/email to students.

Students are required to collect in person, as these are valuable documents and we need a record of collection. A friend or family member may collect them but only bearing a letter of request signed by the candidate and some form of ID.

Certificates uncollected after 1 year can be destroyed by the school. At present this is not the policy of the school. However if they have been destroyed according to exam board regulations or have been lost by the candidate, they can only be replaced by direct application to the boards by the candidate, and will require proof of identity such as an original birth certificate and a fee per certificate. The exam boards do not issue another certificate, only a letter certifying results.