

Public Examinations

Information for Parents and Pupils
2022/2023

Inspiring Hearts and minds with
Christ at the centre of all we say and
do.

Guidance for Parents & Students on Examinations

Introduction

Public examinations can be a stressful time for pupils and parents and it is important that all those involved are as well informed as possible. Well-informed pupils will realise that the rules and regulations are designed to ensure fairness and minimise disturbance and it is in the interest of all that the exams run smoothly.

The centre will make every effort to ensure that candidates receive the best possible preparation for their examinations, that the administrative arrangements run smoothly, and that the examinations are conducted in a way that will cause as little stress as possible and help pupils to achieve their potential. Mock exams operate with the same standards and rules in order to familiarise pupils with the process.

This booklet is intended to provide information about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and to help guide and support pupils and parents through the examination process.

It also contains the formal notices that are required by regulation to be given to each candidate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs Cadman, the Exams Officer:

Telephone: 01384 889422

Email: tcadman@bmilner.dudley.sch.uk

If you have a query on the day of an exam, please contact the main reception on the number above and leave a message with the receptionist or on the answer machine.

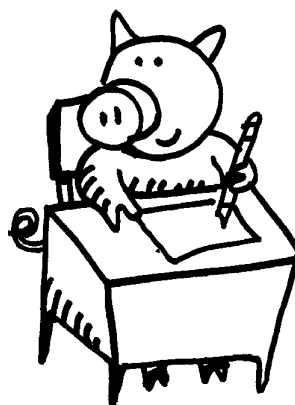


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Important Points to Remember

- Make sure you check your exam entries, name and date of birth very carefully and report any errors to Mrs Cadman straight away.
- Make sure you hand in your controlled assessments on time.
- Make sure you know when your exams are and that you have an accurate, up to date timetable.
- Remember registration or sign in at reception in case of an emergency.
- Arrive at your exams at least 30 minutes before the timetabled start time.
- If you are going to be late, inform the school.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to bring everything they will need in order to complete the examination.
- Do not bring any unauthorized materials into the examination room.
- If you sit an exam when you are ill, or if you are too unwell to sit an exam, make sure that you get a note from your doctor (see p10).
- Pupils not dressed in full school uniform will not be permitted to sit exams.



Who is responsible for the examinations?

The Centre Exams Officer, Mrs Cadman, is responsible for administering all public examination arrangements. Senior Leadership Team will oversee pupils during exams, under direct responsibility from the Head of Centre, the Principal.

There is a team of adult Invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times and who are supervised by the Centre's Exams Officer.

The awarding bodies or examination boards set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the Centre is required to follow them precisely.

Who is entered for public examinations?

It is Centre policy to enter every pupil who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of exam. Only by exception, after consultation with parents, and with the written consent of the Principal, will pupils not be entered.

Can pupils take holidays during term time?

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the exam boards and are subject to change until close to the start of the examinations. The Exams Officer will not give actual dates for exams to parents or pupils in advance. Parents are reminded that they require the Principal's permission to take pupils out of the Centre if they book holidays during term time. Parents do so at their own risk. It is strongly against good practice and Centre policy to take holidays in term time.

What information will pupils receive about their examination entries?

When the entries have been entered on the Centre's management system, pupils will receive a pupil entry summary detailing the subjects and tiers for which they been entered. This should be checked and you are asked to inform the Exams Officer if you believe there are any errors or problems.

This document serves two purposes:

- I. to check that all entries have been made and are correct and that all personal details (name, date of birth) are correct. If any errors are identified, the Exams Officer must be informed immediately.
- II. to inform parents that they undertake to pay the entry fees should their son/daughter fail to take the examination without good reason.

Where will the examinations be held?

The main location for written papers in Summer 2023 is the Sports Hall. Candidates are asked to be there 15 minutes before the advertised start time to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently, and to allow for any unforeseen room changes. Pupils must have attended registration or signed in at Reception in case of emergency. They are then asked to wait at the entrance to the Sports Hall until invited to enter the examination room. Where a candidate sits will be determined by their candidate number. The candidate will sit at the desk bearing a seating slip with their name and candidate number. Desks will be arranged in candidate number order. This arrangement follows the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) rules and the Centre cannot change it. When not in exams, candidates are expected to attend lessons. Once formal teaching has ceased, students will be provided with an allocated study room if they wish to remain on the school site.

How do I know when exams take place?

At the time of printing this document, the government have issued the main period for exams for the 22/23 summer series. For this year exams will be taking place from 15th May to 30th June but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier. All candidates will receive individual timetables which will provide them with the dates and sessions (am or pm) of the papers they are taking. Nearer exam time they will receive a second timetable which will include the exact start times and the location of the examinations. Candidates must make sure that they refer to this final version of the timetable for start times of exams rather than the original version which only shows sessions (for am and pm). It is helpful if parents make sure a copy of this timetable is available to them at home. Practical and Oral examinations will not appear on a candidate's timetable. Subject teachers will inform candidates of the date and time of these exams.

At what times do the exam sessions begin?

The exam boards dictate the permissible start times for exams. Candidates are asked to report no later than 45 minutes before the start time indicated on the final timetable. Morning sessions will normally start at 9.15 and afternoon sessions at 13.30 but timings for some papers may deviate from this pattern and this will be shown on the final timetable. It is the candidates' responsibility to be aware of the start time of each exam. Please ensure your son/daughter checks his/her exam commitments for each day on the previous evening.

The length of examination papers varies. Pupils will not be allowed out of an exam early for any reason. Some pupils may receive an allowance of extra time for the examinations and so their finishing times will be later.

What happens if a pupil has more than one exam at the same time?

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time this is known as a clash. If these are for the same subject, this is intentional on the part of the board and the exams should run one after another. If not, then this should be picked up during the checking process and notified immediately to the exams officer who can grant permission for one of the papers to be taken at a different time on the same day. The candidate will have to remain under supervision between the two papers without communication with any other person. 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 by parents with no access to internet or mobile phones. This is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the examination and needs to be organized well in advance with parent's co-operation.

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. Even attempting to communicate with any other candidate will invariably result in the loss of all those exams for all of the candidates involved.

How are pupils supervised?

Adult external Invigilators will supervise pupils under the direct management of the Centre Exams Officer. 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 checking. They usually work in teams and can contact the Exams Officer by radio/telephone to resolve any issues.

In some sessions, papers will already be on exam desks, these must not be opened until candidates are advised to do so.

What happens if a pupil cannot find his/her place in the exam room?

Occasionally problems arise because a pupil's number card is not where he/she thinks it should be. There are a number of possible reasons for this and the situation has to be investigated. Your son/daughter will be asked to wait at the front for a few moments whilst the Invigilator on duty in checks the entry and sorts the problem out with the Centre Exams Officer. Every effort is made to keep these problems to a minimum and they will not prejudice any pupil's chance of taking an examination for which he/she has been entered.

What happens if a pupil is late?

If parents are aware that their son/daughter has got the timing of the examination wrong and has missed the starting time, they should telephone the Centre immediately and get a message to the Centre Exams Officer. 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 will be granted access to the room to complete the written paper.

Candidates who arrive more than 30 minutes after the official start time or once the exam has finished will still be admitted, but the Awarding Body will need to be informed. They may decide to give a mark of 0 for the paper. This decision is beyond the Centre's control.

What should pupils bring to the examinations?

Candidates should bring writing equipment, coloured pencils, erasers, ruler, calculator etc. in a transparent plastic bag or pencil case. Calculators are allowed in all exams unless stated as a non-calculator exam. Non-transparent pencil boxes or cases will not be permitted in the examination room.

Candidates must write in pen not pencil apart from drawings. Pens must be black.

Some subject papers will require the use of set texts. Candidates will be advised by their subject teachers about this and these will be provided by the school. The use of high lighter pens is permitted on test papers only not in your answers.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the examination.

What should candidates not bring with them?

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 an infringement. These items can be handed to an invigilator before the start of an exam, but the Centre cannot be responsible for their security.

- Mobile phones
- 2022 saw the JCQ banning the wearing wrist watches or having them out on desks. The time will be on display in the examination room and Invigilators are allowed to give a 5-minute warning nearing the end of the examination.
- Any device that can be connected to a mobile internet network e.g. iWatch, Fitbit
- Text books are only allowed in certain exams and provided by Centre. Candidates will be informed by the subject teachers in advance
- Calculator cases should be removed and not brought into the examination

- Candidates should not bring lucky mascots etc. into the examination room
- No food items or chewing gum are allowed
- The use of Tippex or correction pens is not permitted. Candidates should cross through work they do not wish to be marked

May pupils bring a drink?

Candidates may bring a drink with them into the exam room. However no more than 750ml of still water or dilute squash may be brought in a clear bottle with no label (preferably a sport cap bottle). No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed due to the risk of spillage. Drinking too much is not advisable as candidates may not be allowed to use toilet facilities during short exams.

Regulations governing the use of calculators

Some subject papers, especially Mathematics, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. In such cases, candidates must neither have one in their possession nor attempt to use any form of calculator during the exam.

In cases where calculators are permitted, please note that the following facilities are prohibited:

- Data banks
- Dictionaries
- Language translators
- Retrieval of text or formulae
- QWERTY keyboards
- Built-in symbolic algebra manipulations
- Symbolic differentiation or integration
- Capability of remote communication with other machines

The use, or attempted use, of any such calculators will be regarded as malpractice.

Calculators with graphic displays and programmable functions are permitted if information and/or programs stored in the calculator's memory are cleared before the examination. Retrieval of information and/or programs during the examination is an infringement of the regulations.

Candidates are responsible for clearing any information and/or programs before the examination.

What are the regulations regarding mobile phones?

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 and can present opportunities for malpractice. Any pupil found to have a phone in the exam room will be reported to the appropriate examination board. Should this happen candidates are likely to be disqualified from that paper and possibly from the whole examinations in that series.

It is a very serious offence and our advice is that the phones should not be brought to Centre. However, we understand that mobile devices are a way of life for some candidate's, therefore we provide each candidate with a plastic bag with a number on and a corresponding card to collect their phone with after the exam. Phones/headphones should be put into the bag and handed in to the relevant Tutor box, take the card out to be handed in to be able to collect at the end of the examination day at Reception. We can take no responsibility for the security of mobile phones brought to Centre.

What is meant by Malpractice?

Malpractice is the term that the exam boards use for any irregularity, or breach of the regulations. The Exams Officer is required to, and will, report all infringements to the appropriate body and they will decide on the action to take based on the nature of the infringement. There is a tariff system of actions that can be taken 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 Centre Exam Officer's instructions carefully.

What happens if a pupil does not turn up for an examination?

A pupil 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 will seek to recover the exam fees if a child does not turn up for an examination and parents will be asked for a payment of up to £55 per GCSE subject depending on the examining board in the event of non-attendance.

How are exams started?

The Exams Officer or Invigilator will usually announce the exam formally, and candidates will be cautioned that they are subject to the regulations. Any instructions, board notices or changes to papers will be read out and the candidates asked to complete their details on the front of the answer booklet/ papers.

What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

At the back of this booklet is the 'notice to candidates' produced by JCQ, which gives general guidelines for conduct.

The Centre and the examination boards regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should please impress on their 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 Head of Centre and Centre Exams Officer have the power to remove disruptive candidates and can be reported to the examination board.

Candidates are asked to wait quietly outside the exam venue, and to enter and leave in silence. This avoids disturbance to other candidates and helps to maintain a calm atmosphere.

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

What should pupils wear for examinations?

Examinations are a school activity and all pupils must therefore wear full school uniform. We ask for the co-operation of parents in ensuring candidates are correctly dressed. All pupils are aware of the requirements of the school uniform and must ensure they are observed. Pupils not dressed appropriately will not be permitted to sit exams.

No clothing is to be left on the backs of the Candidate's chairs.

Watches must not be taken into the examination room.

Items of jewellery, such as rings or bracelets, should not be worn as they make a noise on the desk and would be deemed a disruption to other candidates.

Emergency Evacuations/Lockdown Procedure

The school has a very well-rehearsed evacuation and lockdown procedure. In the event of an emergency evacuation, students will be directed to leave the building by the Invigilator. Students should remain silent throughout and stand in their Examination line keeping a 1 m distance from each other where possible. Once the all clear has been given, students will be directed back to the examination room in an orderly way.

If the lockdown alarm is activated, students should hide under their desks and not come out until instructed to by a member of the leadership team.

What do I do if my son/daughter is unwell at the time of one of the examinations?

Even if you would not normally visit your doctor's surgery for minor illnesses, it is important that you do so at examination time. Your doctor will advise as to whether your son/daughter is fit to sit the examination. If the candidate is unwell but able to take the examination, your doctor should provide a letter providing details of the illness which may be sent to the examination board to request special consideration on the grounds of illness. If the candidate is too unwell to take the examination, the board may, after examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is essential that you see your doctor on the day of the examination at the very latest. Retrospective information is not accepted by the examination boards and any doctors' letters must be forwarded to the exams officer without delay.

Please telephone the Centre if your son/daughter will not be attending an examination or if he/she will be present but is unwell.

What do pupils do if they finish early?

Pupils should use all of the available time on their exams and spend any time at the end checking their answers. In any event they are not permitted to leave before the duration of the exam. They must sit quietly at their desk so as not to disturb other candidates.

What do I need to do if a pupil has problems that may affect his/her examination performance?

Some candidates are eligible for extra time or special examination arrangements. These are identified by the Centre and appropriate applications made (sometimes supported by a Special educational report). The SENDCO is empowered to grant extra time, provide a prompter or make other arrangements, but only if they are given the correct evidence. The SENDCO will give the Examinations Officer information to decide upon arrangements for providing special assistance where appropriate and inform the candidates of any special rooming arrangements. All applications for Access Arrangements are made to the Examination Boards via the SENDCO. Applications will be rejected if what is being requested is not the candidate's normal way of working. Any illness, or family circumstances, which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be communicated as soon as possible to the Centre Exams Officer so that an application for special consideration can be made. Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and that feedback is not provided.

How can a parent 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. Consequently, it should be unnecessary for any pupil 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 pupil if such help is requested, but often all that is needed is a quiet place to work and lots of encouragement. Pupils should get plenty of sleep and have opportunities to relax. A good breakfast on the morning of exams will also help with concentration.

What happens about the return of Centre books and equipment at the end of the examination period?

Pupils will have been informed by their subject teachers about the arrangements for return of books etc. Please ensure that all textbooks and equipment are returned promptly.

When and how are the results distributed?

GCE A Level results will be distributed on Thursday 17th August 2023. GCSE results will be distributed on Thursday 24th August 2022. Results will be available for collection from 8.30am until 2.00pm. Pupils wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results must send a signed letter of authorisation to the Exams Officer prior to results day and one with the collector. The designated collector must bring 2 forms of ID (one a photo ID). Results will not be given over the telephone under any circumstances.

What can I do if results are substantially different from what is anticipated?

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 RoR (Review of result), which can be costly. 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 available from the Centre Exams Officer and the process should commence as soon as possible after consultation with the relevant curriculum leader. The final date for submission to the board is usually around four weeks after the results are first issued.

If the results have serious implications for the pupil's future plans then advice should be sought from the Careers Officer Mrs Wilkins or Head of Year available on the results day.

How do I obtain copies of marked examination scripts?

It is possible to access marked scripts. You will be required to speak to the Centre Exams Officer, there maybe a small fee for each subject paper or electronic copies have been introduced in 2022 were free. You should be aware that copies of marked scripts must be ordered within two school weeks of the issue of results. You will also need a copy of the mark scheme. All requests must be made by the candidate.

When do pupils receive certificates?

The examining boards issue certificates quite some time after the examinations have taken place. Pupils are required to collect in person, we do not post certificates as they are legal documents, loss and replacement are a costly exercise. A friend or family member may collect them but only if they have a letter of request signed by the candidate and some ID. Certificates which have not been collected within one year are returned to the examination boards. They can be replaced as a consequence of a direct application to the exam board by the candidate, and will require proof of identity (such as an original birth certificate) and will incur a substantial fee. If they are lost a certified Centre results certificate can be issued as proof of qualification.

Internally Marked Coursework Appeals Procedure

Appeals may be made to the school regarding the procedures used in internal assessment.

A student or parent wishing to appeal should contact the Examinations officer as soon as possible to discuss the appeal. The Exams officer will advise them of the most appropriate grounds for appeal and a written appeal should be submitted. This must be received by the school within 5 school days of the exam, the assessment exercise or the disputed mark being notified to the student.

On receipt of a written appeal, the appeals procedure will operate as set out below:

If the appeal is against the procedures used:

- An enquiry into the internal assessment will be conducted by the Head of Department.
- This enquiry will consider whether the procedures used in the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body.
- The appellant will be informed in writing within 5 working days of the outcome of the appeal.
- The written report will include details of any relevant communication with the awarding body and of any steps taken to further protect the interests of the candidates.

If the appeal is against the marking or if a candidate appealing against Procedure feels that he/she does not agree with the report:

- The unit or coursework will be re-marked by the Internal Verifier or Head of Department as appropriate who will write a report on the review.
- This will be available to the candidate within 5 working days of the second step being initiated.

If the candidate feels that their grounds for appeal have still not been addressed:

- They may appeal in the final instance to the Principal.
- The Principal will request a report from the original marker.
- On the basis of the two markers' reports and the report from the Examinations officer, the Principal will either uphold the original mark or ask for a third member of staff to perform a re-mark.

The outcome of this review will be final, regardless of whether the marks awarded are above or below the original mark and the appellant will be informed in writing.

**Reviews of marking - centre assessed marks
(GCSE controlled assessments & non-examination assessments)**

Bishop Milner Catholic College is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Bishop Milner Catholic College is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

1. BMCC will ensure that candidates are informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
2. BMCC will inform candidates that they may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.
3. BMCC will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
4. BMCC will provide candidates with sufficient time in order to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision.
5. Requests for reviews of marking must be made in writing.
6. BMCC will allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline.
7. BMCC will ensure that the review of marking is carried out by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.
8. BMCC will instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
9. The candidate will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.
10. The outcome of the review of the centre's marking will be made known to the Head of Centre and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the review of the Centre's marking bring any irregularity in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed immediately.

After Candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of Bishop Milner Catholic College and is not covered by this procedure.