



MARY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Achieve the best for all

Examination Guide for Candidates, Parents and Carers



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All students in Year 9, 10 and 11 sit their external exams in the Sports Hall, or other designated rooms including classrooms. Wherever the venue, public exam rules apply to everybody in the room. These rules are displayed on the inside and outside of the exam venues throughout the whole of the external exam sessions.

GCSE exams take place in November, January, May and June each year.

Exam Timetables

All students taking public examinations will receive a personalised exam timetable.

Exam Clashes (two subjects timetabled for an exam at the same time on the same day) are to be reported to the Exams Officer (in advance, not on the morning of the exam) as soon as possible, so alternative arrangements can be made.

GCSE candidates will receive a personal itemised timetable with name, date of birth and exam candidate number on it. All written exams for which the individual candidate has been entered will be listed on the copy of the individual timetable.

Please check this list very carefully and if there is an error (for example, you are not down for an exam you are expecting to take, you have been entered for an exam you were not expecting to take or the tier is different) please see the Exams Officer immediately.

Your timetable will also tell you what date your exam is and whether it is in the morning or afternoon – it's a suggestion you highlight your exams in two different colours, one colour for the morning exams and one for the afternoon exams so you can see at a glance when you should be in an exam.

Punctuality

Morning exams - Candidates must be in the canteen or the correct venue before **9.00 am** and wait quietly. All morning exams sessions start at **9.00 am**.

Afternoon exams - Candidates must be in the courtyard or outside the correct venue before **1.00 pm** and wait quietly. All afternoon exams start at **1.00 pm**.

It is the responsibility of each candidate to arrive on the correct day at the correct time for the correct examination. It may not always be possible to phone the homes of missing candidates.



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When staff arrive to call candidates into the exam room everybody must be silent. Disobeying this instruction can cause delays and mistakes. Candidates are reminded that disobeying the instructions of invigilators can result in sanctions being applied that could affect your examination result.

Lateness for Exams

Arriving late for an exam is discourteous and causes problems at the start of the exam which is disruptive to the other candidates taking the exam.

Sometimes late arrival may be caused by such unforeseen circumstances as the school bus running late and if this should happen, please telephone the school immediately on 029 20 593465 and leave your name and a message that you may be late for your exam if you are able to do so.

All exam boards can refuse to permit candidates who arrive later than 9.30am or 1.30pm to sit their examinations.

Illness

Anybody who is too ill to attend an exam (both internal and external) must telephone the school as early as possible in the morning and candidates taking external exams must ask for a self certification form or take a doctor's note to the Exams Officer as soon as possible so special consideration can be applied for. This must be provided by the by the 1st July and not after exam results are published.

It is not possible to reschedule GCSE exams during the exam series, but some modules/units may be retaken at a later date.

Exam Equipment and Prohibited Items

Candidates may only take necessary equipment into the exam room – remember to use a transparent pencil case/plastic bag. **Exam Board Regulations state you must write in BLACK INK OR BLACK BIRO.** You must not use correction pens, correction fluid, gel pens, erasable pens or highlighter pens in your answer sheets.

All iPods, MP3/MP4 players, mobile phones and watches must, ideally be left at home, otherwise they must be handed in or left in the candidates' bag before the exam begins – bags must not be brought into the exam room. The school cannot take responsibility for items that go missing.

Anybody taking a mobile phone or any other data storage device or a watch into an exam room is likely to be disqualified if it is not handed in – candidates can be disqualified from future exams if the exam boards think the offence is serious enough.



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The Examination Boards issue the following instructions about the use of calculators:

Calculator cases, instruction leaflets or instructions and formulae printed on the lid or cover must not be brought into the examination room. Calculators having data banks, dictionaries, language translations, ability to retrieve written material (text), QWERTY keyboards, built – in symbolic algebra manipulations, symbolic differentiation or integration, or having a capability of remote communication with other machines are *NOT ALLOWED*.

Their use will be regarded as malpractice.

You may bring a drink – **STILL WATER ONLY** – into the examination venues but it should be in a clear plastic bottle with the label removed, preferably with a sports top so you can't spill water over your examination paper. Students who have a medical need e.g. diabetes and require additional food or drink should talk to the Exams Officer or invigilator before the exam season begin.

Please do not doodle on any paperwork that will be handed in to be sent to the examiner. Examiners can and do disallow defaced papers. Feel free, however, to write on, or use highlighters, on question papers that are not sent to the examiners.

So - to summarise the above points:

- **Please** be on time
- **Please** leave your mobile phone, other data storage devices etc at home
- **Remember** to write in black ink or biro
- **Remember** not to use tippex, corrector pens, gel pens, or highlighter pens on your answer sheet (if you have to answer questions in spaces on the question paper, do not use highlighter pens on the answer part of the paper)
- **Please** bring water with you in a clear bottle preferably with a sports top if you feel you will need a drink during the exam.
- **Remember** an examiner may not mark your paper if you doodle on it.



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During the Exam

You must enter the exam hall in silence and remain that way until you are released at the end of the exam and are away from the exam venue. At the beginning of the exam the Exams Officer or invigilator will read out the starting announcement listing exam rules and regulations. Please listen to them. You will then be asked to check you have the correct paper, if you think you have the wrong one, please notify and invigilator. If you have any other questions or queries – if you need to ask a question, no matter how trivial you may think it is, put up your hand and an invigilator will come and answer it for you. You will be told of any specific instructions for your exam paper and then the exam session will be started. The exact starting and finishing time of your exam will be written on /displayed on the board at the front of the exam venue.

You will know if you are entitled to extra time in exams as this will have been discussed with the Exams Officer or the Additional Learning department well in advance of your exams and will be highlighted on your unique exam identification card.

If you need another answer booklet, drop your pencil case or have a query please put up your hand and an invigilator will come to you. Invigilators cannot help with the content of the question paper and are not allowed to explain any part of the paper to you but can assist in other matters.

If, exceptionally, you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and you will be escorted to the toilet. Candidates are only allowed to use the toilet one at a time and have to be escorted to and from it by an invigilator.

Invigilators are there to oversee the examination and to ensure fair practice. Remember, they are not permitted to help you with your exam so please do not ask them to explain anything on the exam paper to you.

Writing on desks is not allowed as it damages school property. Desks will be checked at the end of every exam and if any additional graffiti is found, the seating plan will be consulted to check who sat at the desk and an invoice may be sent to parents to cover the cost of a new desk.

Talking or turning around could be considered as '**unfair practice**' as defined by the Exam Boards and could result in the **cancellation** of the candidate's examination paper. Bringing into the exam venue any unauthorised materials such as spare paper will also be considered as '**unfair practice**'.

CANDIDATES CAUGHT IN ANY UNFAIR PRACTICE WILL BE REPORTED TO THE EXAM BOARD



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Exam Clashes

When you have two or more exams that are timetabled at the same time on the same date; this is called an 'exam clash'.

If candidates have an exam clash they may need to have a supervised break or supervised lunch when they have two or more exams timetabled at the same time on the same date. Candidates with a clash need to be kept isolated from other students taking these exams so the security of the exams is maintained and information cannot be passed between students on the content of the exam papers. There will be an area for every supervised break or lunch, an invigilator will stay with you but you will be able to:

- Read;
- Revise;
- Talk to other students in the designated room (quietly);
- Eat or drink;
- Move around the supervised area;
- Visit the toilet (supervised).

During a supervised break or lunch, students may not:

- Leave the designated room or area (except to visit the toilet under supervision);
- Use or have in their possession a mobile phone;
- Go to the school canteen (you must bring a packed lunch and drink with you);
- Talk to anybody outside the designated supervision area;
- Talk to any other students, apart from those sharing the supervised break or lunch, on the way to or before they enter their next exam venue.

At the end of the supervised break/lunch you will not line up with the other candidates outside the exam venue as you must not speak with any students before you take your exam, you will be escorted to your exam desk.

GCSE Exam Timing

At our school we start exams at 9.00 am in the morning and 1.00 pm in the afternoon.

Candidates are not permitted to leave the exam venue until their exam has ended.



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Do not make doctor/dentist/hospital appointments etc. before the finishing time of your examination.

Afternoon examinations may finish after the school day ends and buses have gone especially if you are entitled to extra time. If this is the case, it is your responsibility to arrange your own transport home, or catch the homework bus (Monday to Thursday only).

Leaving the Exam Venue

At the end of the exam, once all the papers have been collected the candidates will be dismissed in silence one row at a time – candidates must not talk until they are away from the exam venue. This is especially important if others are still sitting exams. For the Sports Hall this means silence until you are outside the building. Candidates in the Sports Hall will not be dismissed until the area directly outside is clear so please do not wait for your friends there. Silence is required at all times so candidates still taking exams in the hall are not disturbed.

Problems/Queries

If you have problems or queries relating to exams, please see the Exams Officer as soon as possible – do not leave it until the morning of the exam.

Special Consideration for External Examinations

Every year we receive a number of requests for Special Consideration from parents of candidates taking public exams and it might be helpful to clarify the school's position on these requests.

In the case of illness, the school will support requests for sudden and serious conditions that apply on the days of the examinations only and a medical note or self certification form need to be provided.

If a candidate is suffering from such ongoing conditions as **glandular fever etc.** they need to supply a letter from their doctor relating the symptoms to the date of the actual exam or complete a self certification form from the Exams Office. This will be used to request Special Consideration the exam.

If a candidate is affected for more than one day e.g. for exams on Monday 11, Thursday 14 and Friday 15 June in one week, the doctor's note or self certification form, **should be brought to the Exams Office as early as possible in the following week.**

We generally cannot accept 'blanket' doctor's notes for the whole of the exam series. These are notes that do not specify dates and just have comments such as:



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Any medical condition that might flare up can only be considered with a doctor's note or self certification form relating to the specific dates(s). **The school must receive as soon as possible after the date of the exam.** It is strongly recommended that medical advice regarding the control of symptoms for such illnesses is sought well in advance of the examination session.

In the case of sudden or unforeseen family circumstances, such as bereavement during the examination period, special consideration may be applied for, please notify the Exams Office.

Exam Results

Candidates will be told the date and time that they can collect their exam results, this information will also be displayed on the school website and social media.

If you are not able to collect your envelope in person on results day you may authorise, in advance, someone else to collect it for you. This authorisation **must** be in writing on the form provided (even if the person collecting your results is your parent/guardian) so they can collect your results. Your nominated person will also be required to produce identification to show they are who they say they are before results are given.

Without a signed letter from you we are not allowed to release results to any third party (this includes your parents/guardians or relatives)

We cannot give out results of exams over the telephone.

Staff will be available on the day of the results. For GCSE candidates, college staff will also be available (on site) for advice for a limited time during results day if students wish to discuss results with regard to college places.

Examination Certificates

Generally, exam certification will be available for collection near Christmas. You will be notified of dates and times to collect them. Exam results will be kept in school for 3 years after you have taken your exam.

