



St Thomas More High School

God's Servant First

Examinations Handbook

Information for Candidates

2021/22

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Prayers to St Joseph Cupertino for Success in Exams

O Great St. Joseph of Cupertino who while on earth did obtain from God the grace to be asked at your examination only the questions you knew, obtain for me a like favour in the examinations for which I am now preparing. In return I promise to make you known and cause you to be invoked.

Through Christ our Lord.

St. Joseph of Cupertino, Pray for us.

Amen

JCQ – Who are they? What do they do?

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) are the ruling body over the main school qualifications taken within the UK. Here, at St Thomas More High School, we use AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC to deliver our courses and subsequent examinations. JCQ rules and regulations ensure that all examinations and courses are delivered in a fair manner allowing candidates to perform to their maximum potential.

For further information – www.jcq.org.uk

JCQ Documentation

JCQ provide the following information for candidates:

1. Controlled assessments
2. Coursework
3. Non Examinable Assessments
4. Onscreen tests
5. Privacy notice
6. Social media
7. Written examinations

You should take the time to read these documents carefully and discuss them with your parents / carers. They give you the rules and regulations you must follow during all examinations as well as controlled assessments and coursework. Failure to follow any of the instructions given in these documents could lead to an investigation of malpractice and a subsequent report to examination boards. Outcomes of such an investigation include but may not be limited to:

- Written warning
- Loss of marks
- Loss of whole GCSE grades

Do not put yourself at suspicion of malpractice. This is the only time throughout life you will be guilty until proven innocent. If you are ever unsure, ask your subject teacher or any other member of staff.

If you have any further questions after reading this handbook contact Mrs Norton,
Examinations Officer.

Before the Exam

1. You will receive a statement of entry indicating what you will be entered for and the level of entry is applicable. This should be carefully checked alongside your personal details (eg date of birth, correct spelling of name) as this information will be printed on your certificate and it may be difficult to change once certificates have been issued. This will need to be returned to the exams office before you are issued your individual timetable – details of this will follow later in the year.
2. A copy of the whole school exam timetable will be published. This will be put up in your form room and be available on the VLE and the school website.
3. You will receive an individual candidate timetable. This will include your exam dates, start times as well as rooms and seat numbers. You should check this carefully and keep it safe. If you lose your individual candidate timetable you should see Mrs Norton who will issue you with a replacement.
4. During the summer examinations, the timings of the school day may change. If this affects you, you will be given the specific arrangements nearer the time.

PUBLIC EXAM START TIMES:

Morning: Ready to enter the exam room by 8:45am

Exam start at 9:00am

Afternoon: Ready to enter the exam room by 1:15pm

Exam start at 1:30pm

Other exams, for example BTEC, may start at times different to those above. Be prepared and ensure you arrive 15 minutes before the start time – you will always be given plenty of warning in these cases.

5. You may have timetable clashes, where two of your examinations start at the same time. In these circumstances you will either have to sit papers back-to-back or have one of your exams moved to a different session. The specific arrangements for either scenario will be given to you nearer the time.

During the Exam Season

1. Candidates will need to be ready to enter their examination at least 15 minutes before the start time. During the summer exam season GCSE students will be called in from the playground (or sports hall in wet weather) and A-Level students from the Sixth Form Study Area. For mocks and other exams this may vary – details will be given nearer the time.
2. Seating plans will be available on the day outside the exam rooms. GCSE students will find theirs on the wall opposite the PE corridor, and A-Level students will find theirs on the Sixth Form noticeboard in the study area. You should check this daily as it may vary from your individual timetable due to unforeseen circumstances.
3. Full uniform should be worn by all candidates. Should you not be wearing the expected attire, it may delay the start of your examination.
4. Make sure you have more than one working pen as well as all the necessary equipment (pens, pencils, rulers, calculators etc). Only specialist scientific / geographical items will be loaned out – your subject teacher will let you know if you are affected in the run up to the exam. Equipment should be carried in a see-through pencil case, container or plastic wallet; **not** in a standard pencil case.
 - a. You will not be able to borrow from friends
 - b. You must write in **black** ink
 - c. HB pencil should be used for drawings / diagrams
 - d. Calculator lids/cases must be removed and stored under your chair for the duration of the exam
 - e. Any memory function on the calculator must be cleared prior to each exam
5. No food is allowed in the examination room.
6. Bottled water is allowed in the exam, but it must be in a clear plastic bottle with the label removed.
7. If you are unwell and cannot attend the exam, you must inform the school as early as possible **01702 344933**. You must speak to the Exams Officer; it is not acceptable to leave a message in this instance. Do **not** call the absence line.

Conduct During the Exams

The school has a responsibility to provide fair and proper working conditions for all candidates. The main points can be found in the JCQ Documentation at the front of this handbook. Additional signage detailing a 'Warning to Candidates' will be displayed outside each examination room.

It is important to be aware of the following:

1. Candidates must not have any unauthorised material on their person. Bags, coats, blazers, revision notes etc should be stored in your locker or where possible left at home.
2. **Mobile phones are not allowed in the exam room under any circumstances even if they are switched off.** We recommend that you leave them at home on exam days. If you do have to bring your mobile you must leave it in your locker.

Remember – Possession of any unauthorised material is considered malpractice and can result in disqualification from exams and subsequent loss of qualifications

3. Talking is not allowed in the examination room. This includes before, during and after the exam takes place.
4. The invigilation team are there to support you. If you need anything, raise your hand to attract their attention.
5. Candidates must listen carefully to instructions and notices given out by any invigilators – there may be amendments to the exam paper that you need to know about.
6. Digital and analogue watches are permitted in the exam room, but must be placed on the yellow square on your desk. You will not be allowed to touch your watch for the duration of your exam. Do not set a countdown timer on your watch; the alarm will cause disruption to the exam room.
7. You will be given time to write your name and candidate number on your paper. You must write your full legal name including all middle names. If you cannot remember your candidate number please ask an invigilator.

8. You must remain seated for the whole duration of the exam until you are dismissed by a member of the exam team.
9. Candidates will not be allowed toilet breaks during the exam unless it is an emergency. Should you need to use the toilet, time will not be added on to the end of your exam to accommodate this. The only exception is those who have a medical pass.
10. Should you start to feel unwell during the exam you must inform an invigilator as soon as possible so the appropriate action can be taken. If you have a medical condition which may require equipment (eg diabetes or asthma) you must bring this into the exam room, declare it to an invigilator and then may place it under your chair.
11. If the fire alarm sounds during an examination you must follow the instructions of the invigilator. **Please do not panic.** You will need to remain in silence throughout an emergency – failure to do so may be considered malpractice. If it is necessary to leave the exam room you will be asked to do so in the order you are sitting. You must leave everything in the exam room. When you return to your desk, do not start writing until the invigilator tells you to. You will be allowed the full remaining time you are entitled to for that paper. A report will be sent to the awarding body detailing the incident. This process will apply to any emergency situation.
12. At the end of the exam candidates must remain seated until all work has been collected. You must hand everything in. If you have used more than one answer booklet, check your name and candidate number is on each one and ask for a tag to fasten them in the correct order.
13. On leaving the examination room be aware there may be other candidates still working within the room. You should leave the exam room and surrounding area quickly and quietly to minimise disruption.

Exam Top Tips

1. **Timing** – Make sure you know how much time you have for each exam. Knowing how to split your time between each question will help you answer all the questions.
2. **Read everything** – It is worth having a quick read of the paper from start to finish. Without even realising you will be thinking about the answers to the later questions.
3. **Plan your answers** – This can be anything from highlighting key words to doing a small rough plan. Examiners say that time given to planning is important, especially in essay questions, for achieving the higher marks.
4. **Show your working** – In any exam with an equation, such as maths or physics, you should show your working as you may receive marks for your method even if the answer is incorrect.
5. **Clock watch** – Make sure you keep an eye on the time as you are going through the exam paper; you don't want to run out of time at the end!
6. **Handwriting** – as you are frantically writing away your handwriting may become a little less neat than normal. It is important to remember if the examiner can't read it, they can't mark it! Double check your spelling as you may be awarded marks for accuracy here. And remember to use black pen only.
7. **Be prepared** – Have you got the correct equipment? Do you know which room and seat you should be in? Do you know the date and start time of each exam? Having the solutions to these questions can help reduce stress on exam days.
8. **Keep calm** – Easier said than done, but take a few second to stop and breathe. Remember you have two years' worth of knowledge to show off to the examiner.
9. **Move on** – after each exam it is a case of onwards and upwards. There is nothing more you can do about it once you leave the exam room. The best thing to do is go home, relax, and start revising for the next one.

Results Days

A-Level Results Day: TBC

GCSE Results Day: TBC

Results will be available for collection on the days listed above. You will be given more details of the day nearer the time.

Exam results are yours and yours alone. They will only be given to the student whose name is on the envelope. We cannot hand your results to anyone else on the day without prior permission from you.

If you wish for any other person (including family) to collect your results on your behalf, you must give a letter to the exams office by the last day of term. The person collecting your results must bring a form of photo ID with them. An example of the letter can be found below:

Dear Mrs Norton

I give my permission for my father John Smith to collect my GCSE results on my behalf. I have spoken to him and he understands he must bring photo ID with him on the day.

Kind regards

Fred Smith

If no one is available to collect your results on the day, you may request they be posted to your home address. You will need to provide a ready stamped envelope with your home address by the last day of term.

No results can be given out by e-mail or telephone under any circumstances.

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

To inspire,

To learn,

To achieve,

To keep our Catholic ethos at the centre of

our lives,

To fulfil our educational potential,

Welcoming all and reaching out to the wider

world,

To be truly God's servant first.