



Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College

May God's love be our guide 

Examinations Policy

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College appreciates the value of examinations for the following reasons:

- They provide an opportunity for recognising and confirming students' achievement.
- They inform departments and individual teachers on student performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing comparison against recognised targets.
- They allow individual students to identify strengths and future targets.
- They provide information for parents on the performance of their child.
- Internal examinations provide practice for public examinations. These are referred to as Pre Public Examinations (PPEs) and Centre Assessments (CAGs).
- Assessments encourage the following qualities in students: the development of retention and learning skills; the organisation of time and syllabus content for revision; the selection and application of knowledge, skills and techniques in unfamiliar contexts; the delivery of concise, relevant answers under the twin pressures of time and the awareness that much may be at stake.
- External examinations make possible entry into further education and certain types of employment.

Procedures and Rationale

Internal examinations

- They are planned and organised by the Examinations Officer and the Deputy Head responsible for Examinations.
- All students undertake 'Pre Public Examinations (PPE's) or Centre Assessments (as appropriate) in preparation for public examinations.
- Revision skills and examination preparation form part of the weekly Tutorial Programme and are also covered by individual subject departments.
- Absentees are normally encouraged to take internal examinations on their return to Main School if time and circumstances permit. For reasons of fairness, they are not normally

permitted to do so before the actual examination date. These are usually done in after school activities to minimise loss of learning time from lessons.

External examinations

- All external examinations are organised by the school's Examinations Officer.
- Subject departments may choose their Awarding Body and syllabus in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher responsible for the curriculum.
- KS4 students are entered primarily for GCSE qualifications. Additionally, students may also be entered for BTEC (Level 2 Tech Awards), and OCR Cambridge Nationals. Certain students, depending on their learning needs and abilities, may be entered for Entry Level Qualifications in English, Maths and/or Science (in discussion with Heads of Department, SENCo and the Deputy Headteacher).
- KS5 Students are normally entered for three A-level and/or BTEC subjects and/or Level 3 Certificate in Criminology/Cambridge Technical in Sport upon enrolment into Year 12. Students are also given the option of sitting an AQA Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics and applying for entry to complete a Level 3 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Students are entered for examinations during the relevant exam series over the course of their studies.
- Special consideration is sought for students who have been disadvantaged by health problems or traumatic events such as death or serious illness in the family.
- For students with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, appropriate Access Arrangement applications are made by the College's qualified assessor in consultation with the SENCo, Pastoral Support and Deputy Headteacher. The assessor's qualifications are checked by the SENCo and a copy of the qualification certificate is kept by the Examinations Officer.
- Reasonable Adjustments are considered for students who are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 who would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled
- Examination rooms are selected to provide a quiet atmosphere, adequate space and good working conditions.
- Full details of the arrangements for the conduct of public examinations are given to supervising staff.

Monitoring and Review

- Procedures for the conduct of examinations are reviewed annually after examinations have taken place. This may lead to revisions to procedures, for example a change to designated examination rooms.
- Value added measures are applied through systems such as FFT Aspire. The results of students from certain target groups such as students with special educational needs, ethnic minorities or for whom English is an additional language are scrutinised. Any underperformance identified would lead to particularly close monitoring of students with similar backgrounds.

Examination Arrangements

- JCQ regulations are strictly adhered to.
- A launch assembly with students to explain JCQ regulations is held every year by the Deputy Headteacher. This information is also shared with parents.
- Invigilators are recruited and trained as per the JCQ General Regulations.

Behaviour

- JCQ Information for Candidates documents and awarding body privacy notices are distributed to all students prior to examinations taking place.
- Students are made aware of the content of the JCQ Unauthorised items and Warning to Candidates posters.
- Prior to examinations taking place, students are briefed to reinforce what they must and must not do when sitting written examinations.
- Students are under formal examination conditions from the moment they enter the room in which they will be taking their examination until the point at which they are permitted to leave.
- Where a student is being disruptive, the invigilator will warn them that they may be removed from the examination room. The student will also be warned that the awarding body will be informed and may decide to penalise them, which could include disqualification.
- The head of centre, or authorised members of staff, have the authority to remove a student from the examination room if the student is disrupting others by remaining in the room.

Form Tutors

- Inform students about date, venue and length of examinations as early as possible. Students are issued with draft copies of exam timetables once examination entries have been completed (usually in Spring) for them to check over and for any issues or errors to be discussed.

- Each student will be issued with a final version of his or her timetable nearer to the exams season. Exam timetables can be viewed by students and parents/carers on the Bromcom Student Portal and My Child At School apps.
- Form tutors also re-iterate JCQ regulations and expectations for conduct in examinations.

Starting Examinations

- Students are instructed not to take their non-essential belongings into the examination room. These include bags, blazers, coats and any materials prohibited from being taken into the room (including mobile phones)
- Students are registered as they enter the exam room by a member of the Senior Leadership team. The student names are checked against the seating plan which is produced with the most accurate data taken from Bromcom to ensure the students are present for the correct exam. This also ensures the identity of all candidates is confirmed in line with JCQ regulations.
- Examinations are started by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Absentees are identified.
- The exam begins with a prayer.
- **NOTE:** Private candidates are required to provide photographic identification, even if they are a candidate who was previously on roll at the College.
- Students who arrive late may still be allowed to sit the exam at the discretion of the exam personnel. If a student knows they are going to be late they should telephone the college to notify staff. Persistently late students risk not being allowed to enter the examination room.
- Students who arrive very late (an hour after the published start time) will not be allowed to sit the exam unless due to exceptional circumstances. This decision will be made jointly with the Head of Centre, Exams Officer and leading Invigilator(s).
- Students who know they will be absent from an examination should telephone the college to notify staff of the absence prior to the start time of the examination. If the absence is due to illness, injury or other unavoidable issue then Special Consideration may be applied for if JCQ criteria are met.
- Students who are absent from an examination and fail to notify the college prior to the start time of the examination or are absent for an unacceptable reason risk forfeiting the entire qualification. This decision would be made by awarding bodies and not by the college.
- In the event that a student fails to attend an examination without notifying the college prior to the published start time, and without a valid, acceptable reason, a refund for the fee of the examination will be sought from the candidate or their parents/carers.

During Examinations

- Invigilators enforce procedures outlined in JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

- Invigilators are to remain vigilant throughout the examination. Any suspected incidents of malpractice should be reported to the Examinations Officer.
- Unless absolutely necessary, no student should leave the examination room during the examination (particularly within the first hour), but invigilating staff should use their discretion. Students who have a toilet pass for medical reasons will be allowed to visit the toilet, however this should not be within the first hour of the examination.
- If it is deemed by the invigilating staff that a student must temporarily leave the examination room, they must be escorted and fully supervised by an appropriate adult whilst not affecting the correct ratio of invigilators to students in the examination room.
- Students who finish and leave early, leave unaccompanied or without permission will not be allowed back in.

Finishing examinations

- Students who are entitled to extra time may opt not to take advantage of it. In this instance, they must sign a waiver form to declare their intentions. If students do opt to take their extra time, they must take it all so as not to disturb other students by leaving early.
- Students are usually dismissed from the examination room(s) by the invigilators. Whole-cohort exams may be dismissed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to aid in maintaining a calm environment.
- Exam scripts are collected by invigilators, are checked against the register(s) and prepared for dispatch in sealed sacks provided by the exam boards.
- Scripts are dispatched by Parcelforce the same day in the first instance. Alternatively, they are dispatched the next working day. Scripts are stored in the Exams Office secure storage until Parcelforce are on site to collect them.

College Policy on external candidates and private entries:

- The College offers private resit entries in GCSE Mathematics and English Language in the November examination series. These are made only for candidates who were entered in the summer series prior to that November's series.
- Private entries are limited to current or former students of the College. Capacity issues mean we are unable to offer private entries to external candidates who have not been educated at the College.
- The College may offer private entries in applicable A-level subjects to former Sixth Form students, providing they meet the cost(s) of entry in full. This is at the discretion of the Examinations Officer and is dependent on adequate accommodation being available. Priority must be given to students on roll at the College.
- We do not offer private entries in any subject that we do not offer as part of our curriculum.

Certificates

- Once all certificates are published by awarding bodies and delivered to the school, an awards evening will be organised for students to attend and to collect their certificates.
- Students who do not attend the awards evening can collect their certificates from the school reception between 8am and 4pm during term time.
 - Students must give their signature upon collection of their certificates
 - A nominated person, such as a family member, can collect certificates on the student's behalf but must produce signed written permission from the student.
 - **Certificates will not be issued to third parties without signed written permission from the student.**
- Unclaimed certificates will be held by school for a period of four years after the date of issue, after which time they will be destroyed by a secure method.