

MAIDSTONE  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL  
FOR GIRLS

GCSE, AS, and A2

Public Examinations

Information for Parents and Students

by Mrs Long  
Examination Manager  
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## Introduction

Public examination can be a stressful time for students and parents and it is important that all those involved are as well informed as possible. Well-informed students 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 examinations run smoothly.

The school will make every effort to ensure that candidates receive the best possible preparation for their examination, 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 students to achieve their best. Mock examinations are run to the same standards and rules in order that students are familiar with the process beforehand.

This booklet is intended to inform about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions to help to guide and support students 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 other questions please feel free to make enquiries from the examinations officer. You can contact Mrs Long by

**telephone on            01622 752103 x 314**

**e-mail to                llong@maidstonegirlsgrammar.kent.sch.uk**

On examinations days it is best to contact the school reception on **01622 752103** and leave a message, with the nature of your query, since the main priority will be the starting of examination sessions on time.

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#### Appendix 1 JCQ Notice to Candidates

## **Who is responsible for the examination?**

The Headteacher is responsible for all public examination arrangements. However, this responsibility is devolved to the schools Examination Officer for the administration and oversight of the examinations.

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

## **Who is entered for public examination?**

It is school policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of examination. Only by exception, after consultation with parents, and with the written consent of the deputy head - curriculum, will students not be entered.

It is the schools responsibility to pay for the first attempt at any taught subject taken at the school. Any subsequent entries, known as re-sits, are the financial responsibility of the candidate.

## **Can students take holidays during exam time?**

Dates for examinations are rigidly fixed by the examination boards and are subject to change until close to the time that students start study leave. No students are permitted to take holidays during any public examination period. If you require more information please contact the schools main office on 01622 752103.

## **Coursework deadlines**

Most subjects have an element of coursework included in them which has to be completed, marked and assessed and the marks and work sent to the boards well before the formal examination sessions take place. The centre sets deadlines that allow time for this process and to meet the board deadlines. These cannot be changed. Students who don't submit coursework on time might not be allocated a mark for this portion and their overall grade will suffer.

## **What arrangements are made for study leave?**

Currently study leave begins for year 11, 12 and 13 students in May on dates notified by the school. After those dates students are only required to be in centre when they actually have examination.

## **What information will students receive about their examination entries?**

When the entries have been entered on the schools computer system, students will receive a student statement of entry detailing the subjects and tiers for which they been entered. This should be checked and you are asked to inform the school if you believe there are any errors or problems.

This document serves two purposes:

To check the entries made are correct

To check the candidates personal details are correct

Timetables will be issued to students in early April or before. A copy of Year 10 & 11 timetables will be sent to parents for information.

## **What are modular examination?**

MGGS pupils in year 10 and 11 are taking modular science. This means taking written examination on sections of the syllabus at intervals throughout the course as well as final examination in the summer of year 11. It is possible to retake modules if advised to do so by your science teacher. Information about re-sitting will be available to you at appropriate times throughout the course. See page 16.

Modular AS/A2 levels involve the written examination on sections of the syllabus being taken at intervals throughout the course rather than all at the end.

Most modular sessions are in January and June according to the Board used.

Students have the opportunity to retake certain units on the advice of their subject teachers but the school only pays the entry fee if the original examination was missed through illness and a medical certificate was produced.

## **What does 'GCE examination' mean?**

Advanced level General Certificate Examinations or A'levels are known as GCE subjects and are now examined in 2 parts and in modules. From September 2008 the

number of modules for each subject, will be reduced from 3 to 2 modules except in some subjects like science that remain with three units for AS and A2. All four/six modules, taken over two years, will then count towards the final 'A2' level grade. Any module at AS can be re-taken, and may be re-entered if the student goes on to full 'A' level certification. Students unhappy with the AS marks awarded can re-sit one or more of the modules in January and apply for certification at that point. Students must be aware that this is an individual decision and should seek advice from their subject teachers and head of sixth form.

All Year 12 AS levels will not be finalised until the end of year 13. This means an overall grade for an AS level at the end of year 12 will not appear on the statement of results.

### **Where will the examination be held?**

The main locations for written papers are the main hall, the small hall and the gym, other specialist rooms may be used as well. Candidates must be there 10 minutes before the advertised start time to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently, and to allow for any unforeseen room changes. They must wait quietly outside the room until invited to enter. Where a candidate sits will be determined by their candidate number, which appears on all statements of entry. The candidate will sit at the desk bearing a card with their name and candidate number. This arrangement follows examination board rules and the centre cannot change it.

### **How do I know when the date examinations take place?**

External Public exams take place throughout the academic year.

The main period for examinations is from the start of May until the end of June/early July but some oral examination and practical examination will take place earlier usually in April. All candidates will receive individual entry statements and timetable from the examination boards, which will give them the dates and sessions (a.m. or p.m.) of the papers they are taking. It is helpful if parents display the individuals timetable at home and if its transcribed onto another calender or diary checked carefully with the original. Often problems of missed examinations happen because dates and times become confused.

## **At what times do the examination sessions begin?**

The examination boards dictate the permissible start times for examinations. Candidates are asked to report no later than 8.50am for morning examination and 1.20pm for afternoon examination. The length of examination papers varies and they will frequently not finish until after school. Students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home. Students will not be allowed out of an examination early for any reason.

Some students may also receive an allowance of extra time for the examination and so their finishing times will be even later. Timings for some papers may deviate from this pattern and the candidates will be made aware of this. It is the candidates' responsibility to be aware of the start time of each examination. Please ensure your son/daughter checks his/her examination commitments for each day on the previous evening.

## **What happens if a student has more than one examination at the same time?**

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more examinations at the same time, and the examinations are of different subjects, this is known as a clash. If these are for the same subject this is intentional on the part of the board and the examinations are meant to run one after another. If not, then this should be picked up during the checking process and notified immediately to the examinations 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. 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 integrity of the examination and needs to be organised well in advance.

If an examination 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. Even

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

### **What should students bring to the examination?**

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. All candidates should have their name clearly marked on their calculators, as these have to be collected in for some mathematics papers, which are non-calculator.

Pens should be **black** only. Some modular papers require the use of a **HB Pencil**. Some subject papers will require the use of dictionaries or set texts, and candidates will be advised by their subject teachers about this.

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 examination rooms and should not be brought into the examination room under any circumstances. The examination boards treat mere possession of these items as an infringement.

Mobile phones

Personal MP3/MP4/CD/tape/minidisk players.

The use of tippex, highlighters or correction pens is not permitted. Candidates should cross through neatly work they do not wish to be marked.

Notes, papers and text books etc. are only allowed in certain examinations and candidates will be informed by the subject teachers in advance.

Candidates should not bring lucky mascots etc. into the examination room

No food items or chewing gum are allowed

## **May students bring a drink?**

Candidates may bring a drink with them into the examination room. However no more than 750ml of still water may be brought, and must be in a clear bottle with the label removed. No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed due to the risk of spillage. Drinking too much may cause an issue since candidates may not be allowed to use toilet facilities during short examinations due to issues of supervision.

## **Regulations governing the use of calculators**

Some subject papers, especially Maths, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. Candidates must not have on them or attempt to use any form of calculator for these. Also calculators with any of 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 calculators 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 program 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 examination. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present

opportunities for malpractice. Any student found to have a phone in the examination 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 school and if they are they are left in a secure locker. We can take no responsibility for the security of mobile phones brought to school.

### **How are examinations started?**

The examinations officer will usually announce the examination formally, and candidates cautioned that they are subject to the regulations. Any instructions or board notices, changes to papers etc will be read out and the candidates asked to complete their details on the answer papers. Before the examination is started the candidates will be asked if they have any questions and that is the opportunity for any candidates who are unsure of anything to ask. Invigilators cannot answer or comment on any question specific query from candidates.

### **How are students supervised?**

Adult external invigilators will supervise students under the line management of the examinations officer. Once candidates enter the examination room they must remain supervised and follow the invigilators instructions at all times. The invigilators are experienced in examinations procedures and subject to strict regulation, references and police checks. They usually work in teams and can contact the examinations officer by phone to resolve any issues.

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

### **What happens if a student 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 school

immediately and get a message to the examinations officer. Candidates that arrive late will always be admitted to sit the examination providing they are fit to do so. However, we are bound by examination board regulations on this matter. Candidates should be aware that the examination board may refuse to mark the papers of candidates who are very late to examinations and provide no good reason for the delayed start.

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

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 takes the paper, your doctor should give you a letter, which the centre can forward 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 the examination of the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is unlikely that an AS grade will be awarded if a unit is missed as the candidate will be expected to re-take it in January. It is essential that you see your doctor on the day of the examination or previously. Retrospective information is not accepted by the examination boards and any doctors' letters must be forwarded to the examinations officer **without delay**.

Please note that special consideration cannot be applied to conditions a candidate deals with on a regular basis. Eg. Hayfever. Only if a candidate is obviously suffering during an examination will such ailments be taken into consideration. Disruption to revision is not normally taken into account. If you are unsure please see your doctor who will advise further.

Please telephone the school if your son/daughter will **not** be attending an examination or if he/she will be present but is unwell. It is often helpful for the invigilator to be aware that a candidate is not feeling well.

## **What is meant by Malpractice?**

Malpractice is the term that the examination boards use for any irregularity, or breach of the regulations of any form. The examination officer is required to, and will, report all infringements to the appropriate body and they will decide on what action to take based on the nature of the infringement. There is a tariff system of actions from which they can decide within limits and some infringements carry automatic loss of marks as a **minimum** penalty. The examination boards take the integrity of examinations very seriously and it is important that candidates heed the examination officers instructions carefully.

## **What happens if a student does not turn up for an examination?**

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 examination which have been marked.

Parents should be aware that the centre will seek to recover the examination fees if a child does not turn up for an examination and parents be asked for a payment of between £29.50 per GCSE subject and £21.00 AS/A2 unit, depending on the examination board in the event of non-attendance. It is in all our interests to ensure that the centre's examination budget is not wasted. (prices will vary depending on board and qualification)

## **What standards of behaviour are expected during examination?**

All candidates are given a copy of a 'notice to candidates' produced by the examination bodies, which gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed. The wording of this is included at the back of this booklet.

The school 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.

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 examination board. This may result in the candidate not receiving a grade for the whole of that examination or qualification.

The Headteacher and examination officer have the power to remove disruptive candidates.

Candidates must wait quietly outside the examination venue, and to enter and leave in silence. This avoids disturbance to other candidates and does help to maintain a calm atmosphere for those students who are nervous about their examinations.

### **What should students wear for examination?**

Examinations are a school activity and students below the sixth form must wear normal uniform. We ask for the co-operation of parents in ensuring candidates are correctly dressed as we wish to avoid causing stress to candidates in the examination room by pointing out when they are not in correct uniform. All students know the uniform rules and it is their responsibility to ensure they observe them. Sixth form students are requested to wear suitably modest clothing and will not be admitted to the examination room should their attire appear unsuitable.

Jackets, jumpers or other clothing are not allowed over the backs of the chairs.

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, likewise keys around necks.

### **What do Students do who finish early?**

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

## **Students with additional educational needs (AEN)**

Some candidates are eligible for extra time or special examination arrangements. These are normally identified by the school and appropriate applications made supported by an educational psychologist's report, to the examination boards. Parents will be contacted by the schools AEN manager prior to examinations to explain the arrangements that have been agreed by the examination boards. The examination officer will make arrangements for providing any other special assistance and inform the candidates of any special rooming arrangements. Any illness, or family circumstances, which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the examinations, should be notified as soon as possible to the examinations officer so that an application for special consideration can be made to the boards. Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and that no feedback is ever provided.

## **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 school and parents can be helpful. The school 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.

## **What happens about the return of centre books and equipment at the end of the examination period**

Students will have been informed by subject departments, of the arrangements for return of books etc. Please ensure that all textbooks and equipment are returned promptly to school. Failure to return books and equipment could result in results being withheld by the school

## **When and how are the results distributed?**

Results for examinations taken throughout the year will be given out to students during the school day. Details will be given to students at appropriate times. Results will normally be available for collection from 10.15 am – 12.00pm. Students wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results **must** send a signed letter of authorisation with the collector. Results will not be given over the telephone under any circumstances.

Any uncollected A2, AS and GCSE results will be held in school. 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 officer or at the school reception. Result slips for AS and GCSE not collected or posted on results day will be retained in centre for collection at the start of term, again with the necessary authority.

## **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 EAR (enquiry about result) that is very expensive. Post result booklets will be available on results days. If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the school can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate board. Details of the procedures and the fees involved are available from the examinations officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the head of department concerned or if not available head of year or examination manager. The final date for submission to the board is 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008 for summer examinations and four weeks after results for others.

If the results have serious implications for the student's future plans then advice should be sought from the careers adviser or a member of the schools leadership team.

### **How do I go about obtaining 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 MGGS2 form the Post results booklet 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. You may also need to purchase a copy of the mark scheme.

### **How do I decline an A Level grade?**

From September 2007 AS and A2 grades no longer require un-claiming before re-sitting. A new grade claim will simply be added to the next entry. The examination board will always consolidate the highest marks.

### **How do candidates apply to re-sit?**

It is possible to re-sit some GCSE and most AS or A2 modules; requests to re-sit units must be made on the correct form, via the examinations office and accompanied by the appropriate examination fees. Students should discuss their decision to re-sit with their subject teacher or relevant department head, who will be able to offer expert advice.

GCSE re-sits – It is not encouraged that students re-sit GCSE's after the end of their year 11 studies. In exceptional cases and with the agreement of the head teacher these can be accommodated but students and parents need to take into consideration the pressure of their daughters new studies and the benefit of the re-sit.

Students who have sat units or modules of GCSE subjects in Year 10 may benefit from the option to re-sit at the end of Year 11. This particularly applies to science candidates who feel they may improve their marks and overall grade. All re-sit payments are the candidates responsibility and must be made before the appropriate deadline. Please speak to the examination officer for more details.

GCE AS/A level re-sits – Year 13 students will be given the option to re-sit year 12 units in either the January or the summer of their Year 13 studies. All associated fees are the responsibility of the candidate and need to be made within the deadlines given.

Fees may vary depending on the subject and must be paid by the deadlines set. Refunds are not normally given.

### **How should fees be paid?**

Where students are requesting a chargeable service, fees should accompany a completed form MGGS1 or MGGS2 or Re-sit form and paid at the school outlet before school or at break time. Cheques should be made payable to MGGS card and cash payments are also accepted.

### **When do students receive certificates?**

The examination boards issue certificates well after the results have been issued. The school distributes the ones issued for the main summer's examinations at or after the centres presentation afternoons each year. Students are required either to collect in person, or to have the certificate posted by recorded delivery for which there is a charge of £4.50 to cover costs. 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 3 years are destroyed; 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 substantial fee per certificate (£37.00).

### **Complaints**

Should a candidate or parent wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the examination process please contact the examination officer in the first instance. All complaints are taken very seriously and will be escalated to the appropriate level for attention. All complaints are brought to the attention of the Headteacher.

### **I would like more information**

The schools examination officer will be able to help with most school specific queries. Their contact details are listed at the front of this booklet.

Each of the examination boards have very good websites with information for parent and students. They regularly update them with qualification information, timetables and hints and tips. Listed below are some useful links.

[www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)

Edexcel Examination Board

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Assessment and Qualification Alliance

[www.ocr.org](http://www.ocr.org)

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations

[www.naa.org.uk](http://www.naa.org.uk)

National Assessment agency

[www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)

Joint Council for Qualifications

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize)

BBC GCSE revision website

[www.MGGS.org](http://www.MGGS.org)

MGGS Website exams section