



# EXAMINATIONS POLICY

### Mount St Joseph Document Control Table

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### Document History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes on Revisions</b>
1.0	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2018	Condensed original guidance
1.1	1 <sup>ST</sup> Sept 2019	Reviewed – no amendments recommended
1.2	1 <sup>ST</sup> Sept 2020	Reviewed – no amendments recommended
1.3	1 <sup>ST</sup> Sept 2021	FCSE, ASDAN and ALAN Certification removal. Change from QDCA guidance to JCQ
1.4	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2022	Reviewed and amendments made to responsibilities of various senior staff.
	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2023	No recommended amendments

## ***A Community of Learners, Believers, Friends***

*We believe that every child is uniquely created and loved by God and called by Him to fulfil a special purpose. It is our privilege to help each child to identify, nurture and use his/her talents to build a better world. To this end we will work in partnership with parents, parishes our community of schools and with the wider community.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Exam Policy is to ensure that the integrity of Mount St and the candidates is preserved:

- to ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient examination system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the examination processes to read, understand and implement this policy. This Examination Policy will be reviewed annually.

This Examination Policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, and the Examinations Officer. The documentation is split into fourteen main sections: -

- 1) Exam responsibilities
- 2) The statutory tests and qualifications offered
- 3) Exam seasons and timetables
- 4) Entries, entry details and late entries
- 5) Exam fees
- 6) The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Equality Act 2010, special needs and access arrangements
- 7) Estimated grades
- 8) Managing invigilators and exam days

- 9) Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration
- 10) Coursework, appeals against internal assessments, reviews of centre assessed marking
- 11) Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)
- 12) Certificates
- 13) Emergency evacuation procedure for examinations
- 14) Contingency Planning

## **Section 1 – Examination Responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

Overall responsibility for the school as an Examination Centre:

- Advises on appeals and re-marks.
- The Headteacher is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the QDCA document suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

### **Examinations Officer**

Manages the administration of public and internal examinations and analysis of exam results:

- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, Subject and Class Teachers and other relevant support staff on annual examination timetables and application procedures as set by the various Examination Boards.
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all examinations in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- Ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the examination timetable that will affect them.
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with QDCA guidelines.

- Provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts.
- Administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the QDCA Access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations.
- Identifies and manages examination timetable clashes.
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all examination costs/charges.
- Line manages the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of students during examinations
- Prepares and presents reports to the SLT showing results achieved in relation to expected grades and comparable data for previous years, indicating where future procedural improvements might be made
- Submits candidates' coursework/ controlled assessment marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework/ controlled assessments and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- Arranges for dissemination of examination results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations.

### **Deputy Headteacher**

- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- Overseeing of examination process.

### **Assistant Headteacher (Standards)**

- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4.

## **Heads of Department**

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about examination entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework/controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.

Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the examinations officer.

## **Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)**

- Guidance and careers information.

## **Teachers**

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to Heads of Department/School/Curriculum.

## **SENDCO**

- Administration of access arrangements.
- Identification and testing of candidates, requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims.

## **Lead Invigilator (Exams officer)**

- Collection of examination papers and other material from the Examinations Office before the start of the examination.
- Collection of all examination papers in the correct order at the end of the examination and their return to the Examinations Office. Clerical Assistant / Admin support

- Booking in of all completed examination papers and other material after the examination.
- Arrange the collection of all examination papers by couriers.

## **Candidates**

- Confirmation and signing of entries.

Understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework/controlled assessment as their own.

## **Section 2 – The statutory tests and qualifications offered**

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are decided by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (curriculum) and the Senior Leadership Team.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, BTEC and OCR Nationals.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the Mount St Joseph published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the Examinations Officer must be informed by Head of Department by the latest, the second week in September after the course has started.

Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject or all NCTs will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, SENDCO, subject teachers, heads of department and the Deputy Headteacher (curriculum).

### **At key stage 3**

All candidates will take English, Mathematics and Science as internal exams. The school will consider the use of intervention or booster strategies in connection with any candidates who are unlikely to attain the minimum level.

### **At key stage 4**

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

## **Section 3 – Exam seasons and timetables**

### **3.1 Exam seasons**

Internal exams are scheduled and published in the school calendar.

External exams are scheduled in January and June.

Which examination series are used in the School is decided by the Headteacher, Director of Standards, Director of Key Stage 4 and the Heads of Department.

### **3.2 Timetables**

Once confirmed, the Examinations Officer will circulate the examination timetables for internal examinations and external examinations.

## **Section 4 – Entries, entry details and late entries**

### **4.1 Entries**

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Headteacher, Senior Leadership team, Head of Curriculum, Head of Department and the Subject Teachers.

Candidates, or parents/carers, can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.

The School does accept entries from external candidates.

### **4.2 Late entries**

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email and notice board.

Late entries are authorised by the Examinations Officer, Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher.

## **Section 5 – Exam Fees**

The School will pay all normal examination fees on behalf of candidates.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by Departments.

Candidates or Departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

## **Section 6 – The Equality Act (2010) and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), special needs and access arrangements for examinations.**

### **6.1 DDA**

The Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All examination staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.



## **6.2 Special needs**

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENDCO and Educational Psychologist / specialist teacher.

The SENDCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENDCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

## **6.3 Access arrangements**

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENDCO with the Examinations Officer and Deputy Headteacher (curriculum).

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENDCO with the Examinations Officer and authorised by the Deputy Headteacher.

## **Section 7 – Estimated grades**

### **Estimated grades**

The Heads of Department will submit estimated grades to the Examinations Officer when requested by the Assistant Headteacher (standards).

## **Section 8 – Managing Invigilators and Examination Days**

### **8.1 Managing Invigilators**

External Invigilators will be used for external exams. The recruitment of Invigilators is the responsibility of the Deputy Headteacher.

Securing the necessary Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) clearance for new Invigilators is the responsibility of the HR administrator.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the School.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the school Governors.

## **8.2 Examination Days**

The Examinations Officer will book all examination rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the Invigilators.

The Deputy Headteacher (curriculum) or Examinations Officer will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

In practical examinations Subject Teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Examination papers must not be read by Subject Teachers or removed from the examination room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to Heads of Department at the end of the exam session by the Exams officer.

## **Section 9 – Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration**

### **9.1 Candidates**

The school's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the school accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the examination room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the examination room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them. Details will be recorded in the 'Absence from examinations' book.

The Examinations Officer will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an examination and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

### **9.2 Clash candidates**

The Examinations Officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

### **9.3 Special consideration**

Should a candidate be ill before an examination, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the examination itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an examination, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the School, the Examinations Officer, or the Examination Invigilator, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the examination, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The Examinations Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the examination.

## **Section 10 – Coursework and appeals against internal assessments**

### **10.1 Coursework**

Candidates who have to prepare coursework/controlled assessment should do so by the end of the course or the deadline specified by their course leader (whichever is earlier).

Heads of Department will ensure all coursework/controlled assessment is ready for despatch at the correct time. The Examinations Officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Exams Office by the Heads of Department.

### **10.2 Appeals against internal assessments**

The School is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the Examinations Officer.

The main points are:

- Appeals will only be entertained if they apply to the process leading to an assessment. There is no appeal against the mark or grade awarded
- Candidates may appeal if they feel their coursework has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the specification for the qualification
- Appeals should be made in writing by 30th June to the Headteacher (or other nominee) who will decide whether the process used conformed to the necessary requirements
- The Headteacher's findings will be notified in writing, copied to the Director of Key Stage 4 and Examinations Officer and recorded for awarding body inspection.

### **10.3 Reviews of marking - centre assessed marks**

Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
4. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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. Mount St Joseph 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 Mount St Joseph and is not covered by this procedure.

## **Section 11 – Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS) 11.1**

### **Results**

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Deputy Headteacher.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Business manager.

### **11.2 Enquiries about results (EARs)**

EARs may be requested by School staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking.

If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and Headteacher will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark.

When the School does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of the Head of Department, they will be charged.

### **11.3 Access to scripts (ATs)**

After the release of results, candidates may ask Heads of Department to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

School staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

## **Section 12 – Certificates**

Certificates are presented in person.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so and sign for the certificates. Replacement certificates are only issued by the Awarding Body. The School retains certificates for 12 months.

### **Section 13 – Emergency evacuation procedure for examinations**

The invigilator must take the following action in an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb scare, flooding.

- Stop the candidates from writing and inform them that they are still under exam conditions.
- Collect the attendance register (**in order to ensure all candidates are present**).
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority figure.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible where they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination.
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send to the relevant awarding body.

In assessing whether to continue the examination, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- The length of time that has passed since the official start time.
- Whether the minimum time for remaining in the examination has passed to maintain the integrity of the examination.

- The amount of time left to complete the examination(s).
- Whether there is sufficient time to complete the examinations before another session starts.
- Whether continuing the examination takes candidates over the session limit of 3 hours, taking particular care to consider candidates with access arrangements which include extra time.

The Headteacher, or their nominated deputy, will then decide whether it is appropriate to continue the session using the criteria set out above. In making this decision, the Headteacher, or their nominated deputy, must be satisfied that communication between candidates has not taken place outside of the examination room. Only if completely satisfied that no communication whatsoever has taken place, must candidates be allowed to continue with the examination.

If the session is to be abandoned, this will be either:

- because of consideration of the criteria above;
- because re-entry to the premises cannot be secured; or
- because the risk of communication between candidates, which would invalidate the examination, cannot be eliminated.

If the examination has to be abandoned:

- The Examinations Officer should take the first opportunity to contact the relevant exam board and then seek to apply for Special Consideration for all the candidates affected.

Partially completed papers should be sent to the exam board as usual, unless they have specifically requested that papers should not be submitted.

## **Section 14 – Contingency Planning**

Mount St Joseph will prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments and make sure that staff are aware of these plans. Consideration will be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

In the event that the Headteacher decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body **will** be informed as soon as possible.

The awarding bodies designate a specific day each year as a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

**Mount St Joseph will therefore remind candidates that they must remain available should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.**

In the event of contingency plans been required Mount St Joseph will consult the following guidance:

- ['Emergency planning and response'](#) from the Department for Education in England
- ['Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools'](#) from the Department for Education in England
- ['Exceptional closure days'](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- ['Procedures for handling bomb threats'](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.