



**The Kassia Academy**

Part of KINGS ACADEMY TRUST

# **EXAM INFORMATION FOR PUPILS AND PARENT/CARERS POLICY**

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*We do things differently.....*

## **H. E. R. E**

**HIGH STANDARDS    EMPATHY    RESILIENCE    EMOTIONAL RESPONSE**

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## Introduction

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

The school will make every effort to ensure that candidates receive the best possible preparation for their examinations, 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 candidates to achieve their best. Mock exams are run to the same standards and rules in order that candidates 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 candidates 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 to the Exams Officer. You can contact the school reception

**Telephone 01925 452010**

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

## Who is responsible for the examinations?

The exams officer is responsible for administering all public examination arrangements and for oversight of candidates during exams, under direct responsibility from the head. There is a team of adult invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times and who are supervised by the exams officer. Invigilators may not be teachers if of the same subject as the exam they are invigilating. The awarding bodies or examination boards set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the school is required to follow the rules set out by the exam boards.

## Who is entered for public examinations?

Only exceptionally, after consultation with parents, and with the written consent of the Head, will candidates not be entered.

## Issue of Candidate Numbers

Candidates are given an examination card with their name, examination candidate number and the schools examination centre number. The examination number is unique to each candidate and is the same for all examinations in both Year 10 and Year 11.

## Can candidates take holidays during term time?

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the exam boards and are subject to change until close to the time that candidates start study leave. Parents are reminded that they require the

Headteacher's permission to take candidates out of school and they book holidays during term time at their own risk. The school strongly advises parents/carers not to take holidays during term time. It is not good practice and interrupts candidates' exam preparation.

## Controlled Assessment deadlines

Most subjects have an element of controlled assessment included in them which has to be completed, marked and assessed either by school staff or external assessors. The marks and work are sent to the boards well before the formal exam sessions take place. The school sets deadlines that allow time for this process and to meet the board deadlines. These cannot be changed. Candidates who do not submit a controlled assessment on time will not be allocated a mark for this portion and their overall grade will suffer. They may also not be eligible for special consideration for the formal exams should they be ill as they will not have completed the minimum 35% of the course.

## What information will candidates receive about their examination entries?

When the entries have been entered on the schools' computer system, candidates will receive an entry summary detailing the subjects and tiers for which they been entered. This should be checked and you should inform the school if you believe there are any errors or problems.

This document serves two purposes:

- a. to check that all entries have been made and are correct,
- b. to inform parents that they undertake to pay the entry fees should their son/daughter fail to take the examination without good reason.

Once the examination boards have received entries, Statements of Entry will be issued showing the subjects entered with that board, and giving the dates of the examination. These should be checked and kept safely by the candidate, as they are evidence that an entry has been made.

They should be brought by the candidate to each examination as an additional check on papers entered, tiers of entry, candidate number etc. but not written on. Sometimes candidates will receive updated statements if the entries made for them change.

## What are modular examinations?

Modular GCSE involve the written examinations on sections of the syllabus being taken at intervals throughout the course rather than all at the end.

Most modular sessions are in November, January, March and June according to the Board used. Candidates 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. GCSE examinations are now linear not modular.

## Where will the examinations be held?

The main locations for written papers are the Sports Hall.

Candidates are asked to 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 are asked to 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.

## How do I know when the date exams take place?

The main period for Summer is from the start of May – until the end of June/early July but some oral examinations and practical examinations may take place earlier. All candidates will receive individual examination timetables which will give them the dates and sessions (morning or afternoon) of the papers they are taking. It is helpful if parents make sure a copy of this timetable is available to them at home with their son's/daughter's exams highlighted.

## At what times do the exam sessions begin?

The exam boards dictate the permissible start times for exams. Candidates are asked to report no later than 8.45am for morning examinations and 1.15pm for afternoon examinations. The length of examination papers varies and they will frequently not finish until after the school has finished. Candidates and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home.

Some candidates may also receive an allowance of extra time for the examinations 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 exam, but parents should be warned there is a tendency for candidates to confuse AM and PM sessions. Please ensure your son/daughter checks his/her exam commitments for each day on the previous evening.

## What happens if a candidate has more than one exam at the same time?

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time this is known as a clash. If these are for the same subject this is intentional on the part of the board and the exams are meant to run one after another. If not, then this should be picked up during the checking process and reported immediately to the exams 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 exam 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. Attempting to communicate with any other candidate will invariably result in the disqualification of the exam for all of the candidates involved.

## How are candidates supervised?

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

The invigilators call candidates in by candidate number or subject group. Candidates should locate their seats with reference to the examination seating plan which is displayed outside of

the examination room.

### What happens if a candidate 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 exams officer. Depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the candidate to be admitted. However, we are bound by examination board regulations on this matter. Normally candidates with a genuine reason and who are brought straight to school may be admitted within the first 30 minutes of the start time, after this time the board will decide whether to accept any paper sat.

Candidates who arrive more than 1 hour after the start or after the end of the exam will not be admitted.

### What should candidates bring to the examinations?

The school will provide all equipment for pupils required in examinations.

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

Mobile phones

Smart watches

Personal CD/tape/minidisk players - unless permitted for individual language exams.

Potential technological/web enabled sources of information such as iPod, a mobile phone, air pods, earphones, ear buds a MP3/4 plater or a wrist watch which has a data storage device.

These items can be handed to an invigilator before the start of an exam, but the school cannot be responsible for the security of these while the examination is in progress **The use of tippex or correction pens is not permitted. Candidates should cross** through work they do not wish to be marked

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

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

### May candidates bring a drink?

Candidates may bring a drink with them into the exam room. However, no more than 750ml of still water or dilute squash may be brought, preferably in a sport cap bottle. No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed due to the risk of spillage. It is not permitted to have a label on the drinks bottle. Drinking too much may cause an issue since candidates may not be

allowed to use toilet facilities during short exams due to issues of supervision.

## Regulations governing the use of calculators

In this section a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations.

During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information

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. Lids must be removed from calculators.

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 or the internet

A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.

Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator become compliant with the above requirement.

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 school/mock examinations. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present opportunities for **malpractice**. Any candidate found to have a phone in the exam 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 into the exam. We can take no responsibility for the security of mobile phones brought to school.

## What is meant by Malpractice?

Malpractice is the term that the exam boards use for any irregularity, or breach of the regulations of any form. The exams 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 exam boards take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that candidates heed the exam officer's instructions carefully. The exam malpractice policy relates to such matters and can be viewed on request.

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

A candidate 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 examinations which have been marked.

Parents should be aware that the school will seek to recover the exam fees if a child does not turn up for an examination and parents will be asked for a payment to cover the cost of exam entry. It is in all our interests to ensure that the school's examination budget is not wasted.

### How are exams started?

The invigilators will usually announce the exam 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.

### What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

All candidates are made aware of the 'notice to candidates' produced by the examining bodies, which gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed.

The school and the examination boards regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should impress on their son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an examination, as any activities that may disturb or upset other candidates will not be tolerated.

### The school has the power to remove disruptive candidates.

Candidates are asked to wait quietly outside the exam venue and to enter and leave respectfully. This avoids disturbance to other candidates and does help to maintain a calm atmosphere for those candidates who are nervous about their exams. 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.

### What should candidates wear for examinations?

Candidates should bring as little as possible in the way of coats and baggage into the examination room. Jackets, jumpers or other clothing are not allowed over the backs of the chairs. These should not be brought to the examination hall or they must be placed away from candidates.

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

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 school 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 examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade.

**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 exams officer **without delay**, as there is a tight deadline.

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.

Please be aware that any medical certificate must be accompanied by a note detailing the examinations to which it refers and the date on which the papers were sat. We cannot guarantee otherwise that all relevant examinations will be covered.

There is a standard JCQ form (JCQ/ME Form14) available from the exams officer available for self-certification for a missed exam/s, which can be countersigned by your doctor/nurse or surgery receptionist.

### What do candidates do who finish early?

Candidates should use all of the available time on their exams and spend any time at the end checking their answers. They must sit quietly at their desk so as not to disturb other candidates.

### What do I need to do if a candidate has problems that may affect his/her examination performance?

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. The exams officer and Head of School are empowered to grant extra time, the provision of a prompter or similar arrangements, but only given the correct evidence and at their sole discretion. Any illness or family circumstances, which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be reported as soon as possible to the exams officer so that an application for special consideration can be made to the boards. Parents should be aware that any adjustment to marks is likely to be small and that no feedback is ever provided.

### How can parent's best help their son/daughter during the examination period?

Examinations are inevitably a stressful time for some candidates and support from both the 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 candidate 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 candidate if such help is requested, but often all that is needed is a quiet place to work and lots of encouragement. Candidates should get plenty of sleep and some opportunities for relaxation.

## What happens about the return of school books and equipment at the end of the examination period?

Candidates 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 the school.

## When and how are the results distributed?

Examination results arrive in school in August. Candidates will be advised of the date before they leave. Results will normally be available for collection from 10.00 a.m. Candidates 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. 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 exams officer or at the school reception. Results for examinations not collected or posted on results day will be retained in school for collection at the start of term.

## 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. 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 exams officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the head of department concerned.

If the results have serious implications for the candidate's future plans, then advice should be sought from the careers service.

## How do I go about obtaining copies of marked examination scripts?

It is currently possible to have access to marked scripts for some GCSE exams and BTECs. You will need to complete an ESR1 form from the school 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 will also need to purchase a copy of the mark scheme.

## When do candidates receive certificates?

The examining boards issue certificates well after the examinations have taken place. The candidates will receive their certificates at the Presentation Evening at the school. If candidates cannot attend then they can pick up their certificates in person from the school office. 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 one year 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.*

## What do I do with my certificates?

It is important that all certificates are kept safe. It would be a good idea to photocopy them just in case and to keep these copies in a different secure location. You will need to present the originals as evidence at college and to employers.