



## Public Examinations

# Information for Parents and Students 2022/23



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## **Introduction**

Public examinations 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 exams run smoothly.

The Centre, Armfield Academy, 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 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 you about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and to help guide and support students and parents through the examination process.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to make enquiries to the Exams Office. You can contact the Exams Office by:

Telephone: 01253 207702

e-mail: [exams@armfield.fcat.org.uk](mailto:exams@armfield.fcat.org.uk)

**Who is responsible for the examinations?**

The Examinations Team are responsible for administering all public examination arrangements and for overseeing of students during exams, under direct responsibility from the Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Sherwood.

There is a team of invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times and who are supervised by the Exams Officer. The awarding bodies set strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the school is required to follow them precisely.

**Who is entered for public examinations?**

It is Armfield Academy's policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject for the most appropriate level of exam. Only by exception and after consultation with parents will students not be entered.

**Can students take holidays during term time?**

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the exam boards and are subject to change until close to the beginning of the exam series. The Exams Officer cannot give actual dates for exams in advance to parents or students wishing to book holidays.

Parents are reminded that they require the Headteacher's permission to take students out of school and they book holidays during term time at their own risk. A request form can be obtained from Reception. It is strongly against good practice, careful preparation and school policy to take holidays in term time.

**Coursework/Controlled Assessment deadlines**

Some subjects have an element of coursework/controlled assessments included in them which has to be completed, then marked and assessed, and the marks and work sent to the boards well before the formal exam sessions take place.

Armfield Academy sets interim deadlines that allow time for this process and to meet board deadlines. Students in years 10 and 11 will be notified of the deadlines by their subject teachers well in advance. These cannot be changed. Students who do not submit coursework/controlled assessments on time may not be allocated a mark for this component and their overall grade could suffer.

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

When the entries have been generated, students will receive a student entry summary detailing the subjects, units and tiers for which they have been entered. This should be checked and you are asked to inform the Exams Officer if you believe there are any errors or problems.

This document serves two purposes:

1. To check that all entries have been made and are correct, this includes the spelling of the student's legal name as this is how it will appear on certificates.
2. To inform parents that they may have to pay the entry fees should their son/daughter fail to take the examination without good reason.

**How do I know when the exams take place?**

Examinations take place at the end of Year 11. The main period for exams is from the start of May until the end of June but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier.

All candidates will receive a school produced timetable of all public examinations. This will document the start times of each exam. 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. A full list of the summer series 2023 examinations is detailed on page 14 and also available on the Armfield Academy website.

**What happens if a student 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 notified 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. Students 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 disqualification from the exam for all of the candidates involved.

**Will there be any opportunities for re-sitting an examination?**

The Government made a national decision that as of September 2013 all examinations must be taken in the final session of the course. This is referred to as Linear Examination. This therefore means that there is no longer an opportunity to re-sit the examination.

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

All candidates are given a copy of the 'Information for Candidates' notice produced by the examining bodies. This document gives general regulations for conduct, which must be observed. A copy of this can be found on the school website.

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

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, Exams Officer and Invigilators have the power to remove disruptive candidates.

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

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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 students wear for examinations?**

Examinations are a school activity and school students 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.

Candidates should bring as little as possible in the way of coats into the examination room and baggage e.g. handbags or school bags will not be permitted in the room. Items of jewellery, such as rings or bracelets should not be worn as they make a noise on desks and would be deemed a disruption to other candidates. Candidates must not wear watches, as this will be classed as a breach of examination regulations and could result in the candidate's paper being cancelled.

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

The main location for written papers is the Sports Hall. Candidates are asked to be there 15 minutes before the advertised start time to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently and to allow for any unforeseen room changes.

There will be a seating plan displayed outside the examination hall. A member of staff will remind students of the conditions to be adhered to when entering the exam hall and they are asked to wait quietly until invited to enter. Where a candidate sits will be determined by their candidate number, which appears on their individual timetable. The candidate will sit at the desk bearing a card with their name, candidate number and examination code. This arrangement follows examination board rules and the school cannot change it.

### **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 8.45 am for morning examinations and 1.15 pm for afternoon examinations. The length of examination papers varies and they will frequently not finish until after the school day has finished. Students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home.

Students will not be allowed out of an exam early for any reason.

Some students 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 students to confuse **AM** and **PM** sessions. Please ensure your son/daughter checks his/her exam commitments for each day on the previous evening.

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

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.

Pens should be **black ink** only for all exam papers.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the examination. The school is not always able to provide spare equipment to loan on the day.

### **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/personal CD/tape/minidisk players/MP3/MP4 players, watches and any electronic mass storage device – unless permitted for individual language exams.**

These items should not be brought into the examination room.

The use of tippex or correction pens/fluid is not permitted. Candidates should neatly 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. No food items or chewing gum are allowed.

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

Candidates may bring water with them into the exam room in a **clear plastic bottle with the label removed**. No cans or pouches will be allowed. Clear bottles with any writing on them are also not permitted. 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**

Some subject papers, especially Mathematics, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators for certain papers. 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

Built-in symbolic algebra manipulations

Symbolic differentiation or integration

Capability of remote communication with other machines or the internet

The use, or attempted use, of any such calculators will be regarded as malpractice.

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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 and watches?**

The regulations state that mobile phones and watches are not to be brought into examination rooms under any circumstances. This applies to all public and internal school examinations. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present opportunities for malpractice.

Any student found to have a phone or watch 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 or watch should not be brought to school. 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. 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 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.

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

External invigilators will supervise students 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 to resolve any issues.

### **What happens if a student cannot find his/her place in the exam room?**

Occasionally, problems arise because a student's number card is not where he/she thinks it should be. There are a number of possible reasons for this and the situation has to be investigated.

Your son/daughter will be asked to wait at the front for a few moments whilst the invigilator on duty checks the entry and sorts the problem out with the Exams Officer.

Every effort is made to keep these problems to a minimum and they will not prejudice any student's chance of taking an examination for which he/she has been entered. Students who have been officially withdrawn from an examination will not be permitted to sit the papers. It is helpful if the candidate has his/her timetable.



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### **How are the exams started?**

The exam will be announced formally and candidates cautioned that they are subject to the exam regulations. Students will be asked to check they have the correct paper, paying particular attention to the subject and tier. Students must not open their papers until instructed by the member of staff making the formal announcement.

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.

When all candidates are ready to start the paper, the time will be announced and the instruction to begin will be issued.

### **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 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 the 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 should note that the exam boards are unlikely to accept their work.

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

A student who is absent 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 Armfield Academy can seek to recover the exam fees if a child fails to turn up for an examination without prior notification or good reason.

### **What do I do if my child is unwell at the time of one of the examinations?**

If your child is unable to come into the centre to sit an examination due to ill health you must telephone the school immediately. Advice will be given to you depending on the circumstances and evidence may be requested.

If your child does attend the examination but is feeling unwell, please notify the Exams Officer as it is often helpful for the invigilators to be aware that a candidate is not feeling well. The Exams Officer may also be able to request special consideration from the exam board on the grounds of illness.

### **What do I need to do if a student 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.

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The Exams Officer and Headteacher are empowered to grant some limited special examination arrangements but only given the correct professional evidence, under strict criteria, and at their sole discretion.

The SEND Team 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 exams, should be notified 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 is likely to be small and that no feedback is ever provided by Examination Boards.

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

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

### **What happens at the end of an exam?**

When the time is finished, students will be instructed to ensure their name and candidate number is on all their answer sheets and then will be told to put their pens down.

The invigilators will then collect all the exam answer sheets and question papers as quickly as possible. Students will be reminded that they have to adhere to exam conditions until they have left the exam room. They will be asked to leave as quietly as possible and remain silent until they are outside the building.

### **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 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 student to work abnormally long hours during the revision period.

It is 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, some opportunities for relaxation, eat well and exercise.

### **Contingency Day- What is this?**

For the Summer 2023 examination series a contingency exam date for GCSE's will be arranged by the examination awarding bodies which all students and parents must be aware of. This contingency day will be put in place "in the event of widespread, sustained national or local disruption to examinations during the Summer 2023 examination series."

The decision comes following examination bodies deciding that it is necessary to have the option to postpone an examination in the event of a national incident and rearrange for a later date to allow all students a fair and equal chance.

The date has yet to be set for contingency day 2023. Once the date is set, this means that all exam candidates across England, Wales and Northern Ireland must be available to sit exams up until, and including, the contingency date.

Please make a note of this date once it is available and ensure students sitting exams in the Summer 2023 series do not plan a holiday or be at a distance from the school until after this date.

If you have any queries regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact the school's exam team.

Telephone: 01253 207702

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

A collection day is organised at the end of the summer term and students are invited to attend to return all books, equipment etc. Please ensure that all textbooks and equipment are returned promptly to the school.

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

Examination results arrive at the school in August and results will normally be available for collection on **24<sup>th</sup> August 2023** from 10.00 am-12.00pm.

Students wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results must send a signed letter of authorisation with the collector. The collector will have to show proof of identification. 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), either with the Exams Officer or at the school reception. Result slips not collected or posted on results day will be retained in school for collection, 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. If you have serious concerns about a result, in the first instance you should contact the Head of Department concerned to discuss the issue.

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

**Enquiries about results**

Following results day, departments will begin the process of looking at student's results and, where there are anomalies, undertake a review of marking to the examination boards. On results day students will have the opportunity to sign a consent form, allowing the school to submit a review of marking on their behalf. A letter detailing this process will be enclosed with their examination results. It is important to read this letter carefully, as results can go down a grade as well as up. Students are still permitted to 'opt out' of the review of marking process if they have consented on results day by notifying the school.

Parents also have the opportunity to request an appeal for a particular subject. In order to process this request parents should firstly speak to the teacher/ Head of Department to ascertain the likelihood of a successful appeal or contact the Exams Officer for advice. Appeals at the request of a parent will be charged for and must be paid in full prior to the appeal being submitted to the exam board. The outcome of the appeal will be notified once the review of marking process is complete. If the appeal is successful, this payment will be reimbursed. All appeal requests must be made to the school prior to the closing date.

**When do students receive certificates?**

The examining boards issue certificates well after the examinations have taken place. The school distributes the ones issued for the main summer's exams at the school's Certificate Evening each year. If a student is unable to attend this evening, the certificates will be retained by the school and the student can collect them from reception at any time. 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 will be kept at Armfield Academy for a minimum of 1 year. The school does not keep copies of the certificates and if a candidate requires a replacement they will have to apply directly to the exam boards. Proof of identity will be required, such as an original birth certificate and a substantial fee per certificate.



