

Public exams at Sacred Heart: A guide to parents and candidates (June 2023)

Public exams are highly regulated assessments with a well established framework of rules and procedures laid down by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the umbrella organisation for the UK's main exam boards. Most of these are common sense and will be familiar to anyone who has sat GCSEs or A Levels. In addition to these, schools implement their own procedures to ensure the smooth and trouble-free delivery of exams in their venues. This document is a summary of those rules and procedures.

Full details of all matters pertaining to public exams, including general regulations, access arrangements, special considerations and appeals are publicly available at the JCQ website - <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>.

Rules and regulations

Rules listed below are laid down by the JCQ and are non-negotiable. The school is obliged to report any breaches of these rules to the relevant exam board, which may result in them applying sanctions, which can include disqualification from one or more components.

- From the moment a candidate enters an exam room, to the moment they leave, they are said to be 'under examination conditions'. This means they must not communicate with each other, and should go straight to their desk. They should follow the instructions of invigilators at all times.
- Candidates must
 - raise their hand if they need the attention of an invigilator.
 - not open the exam paper until they are told to do so, and must stop writing immediately when the invigilator announces the exam has finished.
 - not lend anything to, or borrow from, another candidate.
 - not turn around.
 - not leave their desk without permission.
 - not leave the exam room without an invigilator. If they do, they will not be re-admitted.
 - keep their exam papers flat on the desk.
- Permitted and required items in an exam room:
 - equipment needed to complete the exams.
 - two black pens. (All exams must be written in black ink only).
 - pencil and eraser.
 - ruler and other mathematical equipment when relevant.
 - highlighter pens (only printed material may be highlighted. Candidates must not highlight their own work).
 - calculator (without a case or lid).
 - a 'see through' pencil case or plastic bag.
 - (Note: Some basic items of stationery will be available to be borrowed but candidates must not assume this. No calculators will be available).
 - small bottle of water, which must be see through.
- Prohibited items:
 - mobile phones, whether switched on or off must not be brought into an exam room, either in a bag or a pocket. To do so will almost certainly lead to disqualification.
 - digital audio players or ipods.
 - headphones, earphones and earpods.
 - wrist watches of any kind.
 - revision notes or text books.
 - water bottles which are not 'see through' or contain a non-transparent liquid.
 - pencil cases which are not 'see through'.
 - calculator lids or cases.
 - food of any kind.

Procedures and organisation

- Morning exams start at 8.45am, afternoon exams at 1.30pm
- Candidates must attend for their exams no later than ten minutes before the published start times
 - If a candidate is late she must report to the invigilator. The candidate may be admitted and allowed the full time to complete the exam, but this is at the discretion of the school.
 - If a candidate is more than one hour late, the exam board must be informed and they may not accept the paper.
- In all exams candidates must sit at the desk they are told to. In most cases, these will be arranged in candidate number order. Cards showing candidate names and numbers will be on each desk.
- Candidates must not approach the invigilator desk.
- For exams in the Sports Hall, candidates must assemble on the netball courts in candidate number order. (Note that this may not always be the same as alphabetical order). They must assemble at 8.35am for morning exams, and 1.20pm for afternoon exams.
- For exams in W7/8, candidates must assemble in the area outside the old gym, at the times shown above.
- For exams in any other rooms, candidates must assemble outside those rooms at the times shown above.
- Normal school uniform must be worn. Coats and bags must not be brought into the Sports Hall, except in cases where candidates have an exam clash.
- In other exam rooms, coats and bags must be left at the front of the room where directed.
- Blazers may be placed on the back of chairs.
- If a candidate is escorted to the toilet at any time in during the exam, the blazer must remain on the back of the chair.
- Candidates permitted to use a laptop must use the USB stick provided, and are advised to save their work at regular intervals. At the end of the exam, they must present the USB stick to the invigilator who will print the work out while they are present. They will be asked to sign the work to confirm it as their own.
- Candidates may not leave the exam until the full time has elapsed. In the case of those with extra-time, candidates may leave at the end of the standard time, or the end of extra time, but not in between.
- Toilet breaks will not be permitted in the last 15 minutes of any exam.
- Where a candidate has two exams timetabled concurrently (an 'exams clash') they will be allowed to sit one of them earlier or later on the same day. For the time in between the two exams, the candidate must remain supervised and under the conditions outlined above, (except for being permitted to revise from notes and to consume food and drink).
- Where a candidate is permitted to have supervised rest-breaks, she must alert the invigilator that she wishes to avail of this concession. The exam paper must be closed or turned over, and the candidate must sit back from the desk or leave the exam room with an escort.
- If a fire alarm sounds and evacuation is required, candidates must follow the direction of the invigilators. They must remain under exam conditions at all times during the evacuation. All papers and equipment must be left on the desks.
- At any time in the exam, if a candidate feels unwell, or that something is wrong (e.g. they have the wrong paper or there is an error in it) she must raise her hand to attract the attention of an invigilator.