MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1549

Examinations Policy 2025-26

This is the overarching policy for exams, but should be used in conjunction with our Laptop Policy; Contingency Plans and Malpractice Policy

Policy Date	To be Reviewed
November 2026	Annually

The purpose of this exam policy is:

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

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Exams Officer and a member of the SLT and approved by the Head of Centre (the Headteacher).

1. Exam Responsibilities

Head of Centre:

Overall responsibility for the school as an exam centre:

- The Head of Centre is responsible for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice. Refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.

Exams Officer:

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

- Advises the SLT, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff and candidates public and internal exam plans for all exams in which candidates will be involved. Communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- Ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them
- Consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary NEAs are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- When directed by SENCo makes applications for special consideration using the JCQ Access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are

eligible for adjustments in examinations and the Cambridge International Schools' Access Arrangements Policy
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- Accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- Line manages the senior exams invigilator in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- Submits candidates' NEA marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- Arranges for dissemination of exam 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 exams
- Ensures compliance with JCQ exam policy and presents evidence to JCQ Exams Inspector
- Organisation of teaching and learning, including the examination syllabuses followed by subject department at GCSE and A Level.

Heads of Department:

- Advising the exams officer on which candidates to enter for their subjects at GCSE and A Level and which optional papers within syllabuses should be entered for.
- Amendments to entries for their subject.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.

SENCo and SEN Manager:

- Administration of access arrangements in compliance with JCQ access arrangements and special considerations regulations and Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations
- 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
- Presents evidence to JCQ Exams Inspector and/or CIS Exams Inspector for Access Arrangements inspection

Lead invigilator/invigilators:

- Receipt of exam papers from Exams officer.
- Ensure the exams are administered in compliance with the JCQ regulations
- Record any incidents and inform Exams Officer of matters of concern at the earliest opportunity
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office

Candidates:

- Confirmation and acknowledgement of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.

IT staff:

- Set up and maintenance of word processing hardware
- Support for technical examinations such as Media, Music Technology, Computer Science and MFL
- Support for candidates who require a laptop

2. The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the head of centre.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE in Key Stage 4 and A Levels and AS Levels in Key Stage 5.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office must be informed by 1st November each year.

At key stage 4…

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body, unless the Head of Centre believes that such an entry would constitute a waste of public funds.

At key stage 5…

All students will complete A Level courses at the end of Year 13. Some may complete AS Level courses as well. Students are not entitled to take AS Level courses at the end of Year 12 and may, if they choose to sit only an AS Level qualification, have to take the exams at the end of Year 13.

3. Exam seasons and timetables

3.1 Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled according to the school calendar published each year.

External exams are scheduled in November and June.

All internal exams for Years 11, 12 and 13 are held under external exam conditions. Other internal exams do not necessarily follow the same procedures.

Which exam series are used in the centre is decided by the head of centre, deputy head, heads of department and the senior leadership team.

3.2 Timetables

The exams officer will circulate the exam timetables for both external and internal exams which are under external exam regulations once these are confirmed.

4. Entries, entry details, late entries and retakes

4.1 Entries

Candidates' exam entries are determined by heads of department and confirmed by the deputy head.

A candidate or parent/carer can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal which the school will consider. The school determines entries.

The centre does accept entries from external candidates where they have a previous relationship with the school. External candidates must provide photo identification when registering for the exam,

4.2 Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to heads of department via email and staff briefings.

Late entries are authorised by exams officer.

4.3 Retakes

Retake decisions will be made in consultation with the candidates and heads of department. Candidates will be expected to pay for entries for re-takes unless a member of the SLT has authorised otherwise.

5. Exam fees

GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

AS initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

A Level initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the Exam Department where the incurred cost is due to a school procedural error.

Candidates choosing to enter an exam after the standard fee deadline (as determined by the awarding body) will incur the difference in cost between the standard entry fee and the additional fee charged by the awarding body for late entry.

Candidates 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. If changes are made, at the request of the candidate, and the school would incur a cost due to the late nature of the change, this will be passed on to the candidate.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements, unless there are special circumstances that explain their absence.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the candidates, except as provided for in Section 4.3.

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result. (See also section 10.2: Enquiries about results [EARs]) Candidates requesting a return of a script will be charged an administration fee per script (see section 10.3).

6. The Equality Act 2010, special needs and access arrangements

6.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 includes the application of the DDA to general qualifications. All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law. The Centre offers facilities to allow disabled students to access exams, for example lifts and hand rails.

6.2 Additional Educational Needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO, in the light of advice from doctors and / or educational psychologists. The SEN Manager maintains a record of need for relevant candidates which is stored within the SEN department.

The SEN Manager 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 SEN Manager will then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates may 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 SENCO, usually delegated to the SEN Manager, and the exams officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the exams officer in conjunction with the SEN Manager who provides relevant evidence

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Teaching Support Manager with the Exams Officer.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Officer

The SENCo will provide a summary of a candidate's access arrangements to the candidate and parent/guardian who must sign and return it to the SEN Manager

7. Managing invigilators and exam days

7.1 Managing invigilators

Appropriately trained external and internal invigilators will be used for exam supervision.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officers

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Headteacher's PA

CRB fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators are timetabled by the Exams Office and briefed by the Exams Officer

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Business Manager

Invigilator training will be provided by the Exams Officer to all invigilators prior to the start of the Summer exam season.

7.2 Exam days

The Exams Officer will make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

Internal candidates will be identified using their SIMS photograph, a copy of which will be placed on the candidate's desk.

As MGS accepts only external candidates who have previously attended the school, their SIMS photograph will be used. They will also be required to provide photographic ID when attending their exam.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team will check and identify candidates before they enter the exam room using prior knowledge of the student cohort. Invigilators will use the photographic ID cards to verify the identity of each candidate within the exam room.

Where it is impossible to identify a candidate due to the wearing of religious clothing, such as a veil, the candidate will be approached by a member of staff of the same gender and taken to a private room where they will be politely asked to remove the religious clothing for identification purposes. The school will inform candidates in advance of this procedure and before their first examination. Once the identity of the candidate has been established, the candidate can replace the item of clothing, for example, their veil and proceed as normal to sit the examination.

Only those members of staff authorised by the Head of Centre may be present in the exam room at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted

A JCQ recording of the exam regulations will be administrated by the Lead Invigilator at the start of each exam session

In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties. In technical exams ICT staff must be present to ensure the systems are working properly.

8. Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

8.1 Candidates

In conjunction with the JCQ General Regulations, the Centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour will apply at all times

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

Candidates must attend exams with the prescribed equipment

Candidate information regarding exam protocols such as equipment requirements, toilet break policy, etc will be displayed in all exam rooms

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

Candidates, or their parent/guardian, must inform the school at the earliest opportunity of any circumstances that may affect the candidate's attendance.

The Attendance Officer, Exams Officer, and Receptionist will make all reasonable efforts to contact candidates who are late for their exams, or who are absent

8.2 Clash candidates

The exams officer will identify and resolve timetable clashes ensuring compliance of JCQ regulations

8.3 Special consideration

It is the responsibility of the candidate, or their parent/guardian, to inform the school of any absence or issue which require an application for special considerations

Any special consideration claim must be supported by appropriate evidence within five days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The exams officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body by the JCQ deadline

In exceptional cases a retrospective consideration application will be made by the Exams Officer, if supported by appropriate evidence.

9. Non-Examined Assessments

9.1 NEAs

Candidates who have to prepare portfolios should do so by the date stated in the annual school calendar.

Heads of department will ensure all coursework is ready for submission to the Exams Officer who will keep a record of what has been sent, when and to whom

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the exams office by the heads of department.

9.2 Appeals against internal assessments

The centre is obliged to publish a separate procedure on this subject, which is available from the exams office.

10. Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

10.1 Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre / by post to their home addresses.

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the head of centre.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the head of centre.

10.2 Post Results Services

PRS may be requested by Heads of Department or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. If the centre requests the enquiry the consent of each candidate involved in the request must be obtained in writing.

A candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this they will be charged. Fees are set by the relevant exam board. (See section 5: Exam fees)

Candidates will complete an online form and make payment to Finance to allow post result services to be administered.

10.3 Access to Scripts

After the release of results, candidates may request the return of papers for which they will be charged. Requested scripts will be subject to an administration fee of £10 per script.

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

11. Certificates

Usually certificates are presented in person to the candidate and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so in writing by the candidate. They must sign for the certificates and the letter of consent be attached to the signed list.

Certificates may be withheld from candidates who owe fees.

A transcript of results may be issued once the identity of the applicant is authenticated by photographic ID

Certificates will be available for collection from mid-December.

In line with JCQ regulations, the Centre reserves the right to destroy any unclaimed certificates by a secure method (for example by shredding or incineration) after holding them for a period of 12 months from the date of issue. A record of all certificates destroyed by a centre will be kept for a further period of four years from the date of their destruction.