



**CHEPSTOW
SCHOOL**

INSPIRING LEARNING
YSBRYDOLI DYSGU

Examination Information

Guidance to Parents & Students

2023/4

Introduction

Public examinations can be a stressful time for students and parents and it is therefore important that all those involved are given as much relevant information as possible. Well informed students will realise that the regulations are there for the benefit of every student across all centres. This ensures that the exams run smoothly and are conducted in a standardised manner nationwide, which promotes equality and equity for all candidates.

The school will make every effort to ensure that all students receive the best possible preparation for their examinations, that the administrative arrangements run smoothly, and that the examinations are conducted in accordance with the regulations. Internal exams (Mock exams) are run to the same standards and regulations as external exams, in order that students are familiar with the examination process and know exactly what to expect.

This booklet is designed to inform you of the examination regulations, procedures and protocols and to help guide and support students and parents through the examination process. It aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

The school must conform to the regulations laid down by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) the regulating body governing all the examination boards. It is therefore important that students fully understand the regulations and how they apply to them.

If you have any exam related queries, please contact the Examinations Office as follows:

Examinations Officer: Mrs Angela Warren

Telephone: 01291 635 777 (Ext: 5601 or 5625)

Email: angelawarren@chepstowschool.net

Please note that on exam days, if you have an important or urgent message please do not use email to contact us as we may not read your message in time!

Please contact the main school reception on 01291 635777 and ask them to pass on a message, as the Exams Office staff will be involved with the running of the exams.

What information will students receive about their examination entries?

All students taking exams will receive a personalised examination timetable outlining details of the date, start time and duration of all of their **written examinations only** (as scheduled by the Examination Board).

Depending on the subjects taken, students may also have some additional internally set examinations (known as Non-examination Assessment Units - NEA) For example: Language Oral exams, Drama Performance, Music Performance, Art, Craft and Design and Science Practical examinations). These exams will **not show** as scheduled on your personalised written exam timetable, but you will be given a **generic timetable listing the dates only. All other details and times for these internally arranged exams will be given to students directly by their subject teacher.**

Nearer to the start of the main exams, students will receive a **second and final copy** of their personalised exam timetable which will show additional information regarding the venue of each exam and seat number. It will also show the revised start times for any timetable clashes students may have. **Students must sit in the correct seat** according to their timetable, which also corresponds to the seating plan on display outside each exam venue. On each exam desk students will find their candidate ID card which bears their **legal name, photograph and candidate (exam) number.**

The seat number and venue may be different for each exam, so students are advised to **bring their timetable with them to all of their exams.**

Students: *You should check your timetables carefully and contact the Exams Officer should you have any queries. It is your responsibility to check your exam entries and tiers (where applicable) and to know when and where your exams are taking place and to arrive on time.*

If you miss an exam there will be no opportunity to take it on another day and you may also be charged for it. (Please also see the section regarding 'What happens if a student is absent for an Exam?' on page 8)

Where will the examinations be held?

The main venues for the exams are the Sports Hall and other selected classrooms used as smaller exam rooms.

Students should be ready and waiting outside the exam venue **15 minutes before the start of the exam** to enable seating procedures to be carried out calmly and efficiently and to enable the exams to start promptly.

Prior to entering the room, students will be directed to the designated areas where they **must** deposit their bags and personal belongings **including all items which are prohibited from the exams** such as mobile phones, watches and other digital devices. (Please refer to the section regarding 'Prohibited items in Exams' for the full list of items on page 7)

Who is responsible for the examinations?

The school's Examinations Officer and exams team are responsible for administering all public examination arrangements and for the supervision of students during the exams; under direct responsibility from the Head of Centre/Headteacher.

There is a team of trained Invigilators who are present at all times to supervise students during their exams, and they are supervised by and report to the Exams Officer.

The JCQ set strict regulations regarding the invigilation of exams and these regulations must be adhered to by the invigilators at all times.

Students taking holidays or planned absence during term time/exam time

Dates for all the written exams are rigidly fixed by the Exam Boards and must be sat at the set time on the set day, and **cannot be rescheduled to accommodate holidays, personal plans or even medical appointments. They cannot be rescheduled for any reason.** It is against good practice and strongly recommended that students **do not attempt to take holidays** or have a planned absence during term time, especially around the exam season.

Non-Examination Assessments (NEA) formerly known as Controlled Assessments

It is important to be present for all these NEA exams as they contribute significantly to your overall qualification. The dates will be arranged by departments and they will usually be run in the classrooms. If you are absent during any assessments, teachers should be able to give you the chance to make up the work or complete the assessment at a later date. These are the only exams which can be rescheduled, **so long as it is within the assessment time window** as dictated by the exam board.

At what time do the exam sessions begin?

The **Official start times** dictated by JCQ are as follows:

9:00am for all morning exams (referred to as AM)
1:30pm for all afternoon exams (referred to as PM)

However, centres are allowed to deviate by 30 minutes either side of these **official start times** to suit the needs of the school & students and fit in with the school day.

At Chepstow School we run AM exams at 9:00am **but all PM exams start at the earlier time of 1:00pm**

(Note: There may be some exceptions to these times relating to timetable clashes, so students need to carefully check their timetables)

The duration of examinations varies and sometimes students will not finish until after the school day finishes even with the earlier start time. **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 their examinations and as a result their finish times will be later. **It is the students' responsibility to be aware of the start and finishing time of each exam.** Please ensure your child checks their exam timetable well in advance, to be aware of any late finishing time in order to make any necessary travel arrangements.

What happens if a student has more than 1 exam at the same time?

If a student is timetabled to sit two or more exams at the same time, this is known as a '**timetable clash**' and is not uncommon. For some subjects there is a 'planned clash' where it is intended by the exam board that two papers should run consecutively. Where this occurs students must take each exam as scheduled, one after the other. (A short supervised break in between is allowed). Where a student has a clash between different subjects, the clash will be identified by the Exams Officer in advance and the exams will be rescheduled in accordance with the JCQ Regulations regarding timetable clashes. This will depend on the total duration of the combined clash exams.

If an exam is allowed to be rescheduled from a **morning to an afternoon session on the same day**, or if an exam is allowed to be **brought forward from an afternoon session to the morning session on the same day**, the **student/s will have to be supervised in isolation** from the end of the first exam until the start of the second exam (and of course during the exams).

Where this occurs, students will have to remain under supervision between the two exams so they are advised to bring some revision or reading material **and food/drink refreshments since they will not be allowed to mix with other students or go to the canteen.** This period of isolation is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the examination and is a JCQ stipulation.

How are the students supervised?

A team of trained invigilators will supervise students under the direct management of the Exams Officer and the School Senior Leadership Team. Once students enter the exam room they must remain supervised and follow the invigilators' instructions at all times. The invigilators are employees of the school and are experienced in exam procedures. They usually work in teams and are able to contact the Exams Officer by radio or phone should there be any issues.

Invigilators are there to supervise the exam and to assist students should they have any queries. We are well aware that students may be feeling nervous, but our invigilators are a friendly team and have the students' best interests at heart and want them all to achieve their full potential. **We strongly encourage students not to be afraid to ask for assistance** by raising their hand to speak to an invigilator.

We cannot help a student if we are not made aware of the problem at the time, no matter how great or small! Even though 'exam protocols' must remain formal, we want our students to feel as comfortable and well supported as possible during their examinations.

Once in the exam room, students are 'under exam conditions' which means they must not talk to one another and they must follow the instructions given to them by the invigilators at all times. They must quietly find their way to their seat. On their desk will be a candidate ID card bearing their name, exam number and photograph. There is also a seating plan outside every venue to assist them in finding their seat (this information is also on their personalised timetable)

Exam papers will already be laid out on the exam desks; these must **not be opened** until students are instructed to do so.

What happens if a student is late?

If a student knows they are going to be late for an exam for whatever reason, they should telephone the school immediately on the main contact number (01291 635777) and get a message to the Examinations Officer. Depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the student to be admitted late. However, we are bound by the JCQ Regulations on this matter. Students who arrive within 1 hour of the **official start times** (for an examination that lasts an hour or more) may usually be admitted at the Centre's discretion.

Students who arrive 1 hour or more after the **official exam start time** for exams of an hour or more, or after the end of the exam for exams of less than 1 Hour, will **not be admitted**.

What should students bring to the examinations?

Students are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need for the examination.

Students should bring their own writing equipment, in a **transparent pencil case or small transparent plastic bag. It should include the following items:**

- ✓ **BLACK ball point pen/biros** – (gel pens, fountain pens should **not** be used)
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Eraser
- ✓ Pencil Sharpener
- ✓ 12" /30cm Ruler
- ✓ Compass
- ✓ Protractor
- ✓ Coloured pencils for D&T & Geography exams
- ✓ Calculator –Official Exam approved type (for Maths, Science, Business Studies & Economics exams)

Only black ball point pens can be used for exams and students are reminded of this on numerous occasions. Exam papers are frequently scanned and during the scanning process, other coloured ink will not be detected.

- ✓ **Bottle of water** -no more than 500ml – in a **clear plastic bottle** bearing **no labels or logos** and with a sport cap lid.
- ✓ **Packet of tissues** (optional but advised)
- ✓ **Personalised Exam Timetable**
- ✓ **Highlighter pen** (advised for English Lit & Lang. but only to highlight text on the question paper but **must not** be used in their answers)

What items are prohibited from the exams?
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Some items are strictly banned from exam venues and **should not be brought into the examination room under any circumstances.** The Exam Boards treat possession of these items as Malpractice (**irrespective of whether a student intends to use them or not**) and this could lead to disqualification for the student in that exam paper or even for the entire qualification.

Prohibited items include the following (although this list is not exhaustive):

- × **ALL Mobile Phones**
- × **iPods**
- × **MP3/MP4 Players**
- × **Headphones**
- × **All types of watches**
- × **Fit Bits**
- × **Any potential technological /Web enabled sources of information**
- × **Notes and books**
- × **Correction fluid or correction pens**
- × **Lucky mascots**
- × **Food (see exceptions below)**

All the items listed above should be left at home. If they are brought into school on the day of an exam, they should be left in the students' bag in the designated bag storage area. **The school cannot be held responsible for the loss of any item whilst in the storage area.**

The use of correction pens/fluid is not permitted. Students should clearly cross through any work which they do not wish to be marked in their answer booklet.

Food items are **NOT** permitted, unless necessary for medical reasons. Please advise the Exams Officer should this apply to your child.

May students bring a drink?

Students may bring a drink of water with them into the exam room, but they **MUST remove the label** on the bottle. Water should be in a **clear plastic bottle** with no permanent labels or logos. We would advise no more than 500ml of still water in a sport cap bottle. **No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed.** Drinking too much may cause an issue with students needing to visit the toilet and students may not be allowed to use toilet facilities immediately if they request this, due to staffing and supervision.

Regulations governing the use of calculators

Some subject papers, especially the Non- Calculator Maths paper, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. Students must not have on them or attempt to use any form of calculator for these exams. If they have a calculator with them, they will be asked to place them on the floor under their desks.

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

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. Students are responsible for clearing any information and/or program before the examination.

What is meant by Malpractice?

Malpractice is the term that the Exam Boards use for any irregularity or breach of the regulations in any form. The Exams Officer is bound to report all infringements to the Exam Board and JCQ who will then decide on what action to take, based on the nature of the infringement. There is a tariff system and some infringements carry the highest penalty of automatic loss of marks and disqualification as the penalty. The Exam Boards take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that students take heed of the regulations and the instructions they are given by the Exams team at all times.

What happens if a student is absent for an examination and rules on Special Consideration?

Students who are absent from examinations, will only receive a grade based on those elements of the examination which they have actually taken. All examinations are measuring what a candidate knows and can do. **The overall grades awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination/s.**

However, the Exams Officer can make an application for '**Special Consideration**' if the reason for the absence is validated by meeting the JCQ 'Special Consideration' criteria and this must also be signed off by the Headteacher.

*'Special Consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control **at the time of the assessment.** It is applied*

when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment.'

Most common examples of situations where a student could be eligible for Special Consideration are: illness, bereavement, serious incident/crisis **all occurring at the time of the assessment**.

In the above instances, a doctor's letter would be required if the absence were for medical reasons, and a letter from parents/carers would be required to confirm any other bereavement or serious incident.

Before Special Consideration is even considered, the student must have completed a minimum of 25% of the qualification for GCSE & GCE. The enhancement granted is on a scale of 1% - 5% (maximum).

If a student is absent Parents/Carers should contact the Exams Officer who can advise on the next steps regarding Special Consideration.

In all cases, the outcome of all applications for Special Consideration is granted by JCQ/Exam Boards and is **not decided by the school**.

Parents/Carers should be aware that the school will seek to recover the exam fees if a child does not turn up for an examination **without a valid reason**.

How are exams started?

The Exams Officer, Lead Invigilator or a member of the SLT will formally make the announcement to all students at the start of the exam. All students are cautioned that they are subject to the examination regulations which are read out to them, as a final reminder.

All the necessary instructions regarding the exam paper/s are then read out and students are told to complete their details on their answer paper/booklet. Students are given clear instructions when they can start writing and they are advised of the exam duration and the finish time. The start and finish time for each exam is displayed on the wall in all exam venues together with a clock/s.

What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

A 'Warning to Candidate' Notice published by JCQ gives general guidelines to candidates regarding conduct and regulations. Each student is given a copy of this with their examination timetable which they should read carefully.

The school and examination boards take any breach of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should please impress upon their child to read the regulations carefully and abide by them at all times. Bad behaviour in an examination may disturb or upset other students and will **not be tolerated**.

The Head of Centre and Examinations Officer reserve the right to remove disruptive students.

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

Students who try to communicate with other students 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 disqualification for the whole of that examination.

What should students wear for examinations?

Examinations are a school activity and **students must wear the normal school uniform** and Sixth Form students must adhere to the Sixth Form dress code. We ask for the co-operation of parents in ensuring students are correctly dressed. All students know the uniform rules and it is their responsibility to ensure they observe them.

Jackets, jumpers or other clothing are **not** permitted to be draped over the back of chairs in an examination.

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

Please telephone the school if your child will not be attending an examination, or if they will be present but are feeling unwell. It is helpful for the invigilators to be aware of any students who are feeling unwell, so that they can be monitored carefully and could also be seated closer to an exit door.

Please contact the Exams Officer to discuss whether an application for Special Consideration can be made on medical grounds. If so, you will then need to get a Doctor's letter. Please be aware that any medical certificate/note written to cover exam absence must specifically refer to the dates of the absence.

What happens if a student finishes their exam early?

Students are **not** permitted to leave an exam early for any reason (except in an emergency or on medical grounds). They should use all of the available time given and spend any surplus time at the end checking over their answers. They must sit quietly at their desk so as not to disturb other students.

Any student who disrupts the examination room by not following these rules will be asked to leave and the circumstances will be reported to the examination board. This may result in the student being disqualified and not receiving a grade for the whole of that examination.

What would happen if the fire alarm sounds?

If the fire alarm sounds during an examination, the invigilators will instruct students on what to do. If an evacuation is necessary, students will be asked to leave their examination papers on their desks and will be told to leave the room **in silence**, and will be escorted to the designated fire assembly point. **Students must remain silent and not attempt to communicate with any other candidate during the evacuation.** When students are told it is safe to return they **must still remain silent and return to their original seats.**

A few minutes will be given for students to resettle and recompose before the Invigilators then instruct students to start again. **Students will be allowed the full working time for the examination.** A note of the time will have been made at the time of the alarm going off. The Exams Officer will report the incident to the Exam Board and may apply for Special Consideration for all students who were affected.

When and how are the results distributed?

Results Day is on the following dates:

A Level/GCE/ Level 3 qualifications: **Thursday 15th August 2024**

GCSE/Level 2 qualifications: **Thursday 22nd August 2024**

Further information will be released later on in the Summer term regarding the times and arrangements regarding results collection for both of the above days.

Students are advised to collect their results in person, however if this is not possible, then a student may authorise a 3rd party to collect their results on their behalf. 3rd Party Forms will be made available later on for students to complete and sign. All nominated persons authorised to collect results on behalf of students, **must present some form of valid photographic ID on collection.**

Alternatively, students may request to have their results emailed. **The request must be made to the Exams Officer and sent directly from the students' email account to which they want the results sent.** However, please be aware that priority will be given to all those attending on the day, so all requests for results to be emailed will be dealt with as soon as possible, but may not be before 2pm.

What can I do if my results are substantially different from what I anticipated?

It must be remembered that examinations can only measure performance on the day, and that students can do better or worse than anticipated for a variety of reasons. If you feel that your child has not been awarded the grade they were expecting or there is a significant disparity, you would in the first instance need to speak to the subject teacher or Head of Department to seek advice. If a re-mark is felt justified for any examinations you may wish to apply for one of the Post Results Services. You need to be aware that there are strict

deadlines and regulations as well as a fee for these services which you would be expected to pay.

Students would need to sign a consent form, acknowledging that they are aware that the outcome of a Re-mark of an examination could result in their final mark and grade being lowered, being raised or even remaining unchanged.

Further information regarding the Post Results Services will be made available to students on results day along with the fees, forms and deadline dates.

When do students receive certificates?

The Exam Boards issue all the certificates in the Autumn Term after the ***Post Results Services*** deadline date has passed. They are usually in school and ready for collection around the end of November.

Those students who remain in Sixth Form will be advised internally during the Autumn Term when the certificates are ready for collection. For all those students who leave the school, a message will be sent to parents/carers by email and a message will also be placed on the school website regarding the dates and time window when certificates may be collected (usually in November/December). Please check the school website.

It is very important that students collect their certificates. The certificates are the official evidence of qualifications achieved and are authenticated by the examination board. Whilst the results statement produced by school and given out on results day confirms a student's correct results at the time, it is not the authentic document as changes may be made if a student requests a re-mark. Prospective employers, Colleges of Further Education & Universities will always request to see the certificates as evidence of qualifications.

The school is only obliged to keep them for a minimum period of one year from the date of issue, after which date they can be returned to the exam board or destroyed.

After this period, it would be the student's responsibility to contact the Exam Board and request replacement certificates. Should a student lose their certificates, they would again, need to contact the exam board. There is a charge for replacement certificates which varies between Exam Boards but is approximately £30 - £40 per certificate.

We hope you have found the information in this booklet useful, in guiding you and your child through the Examination Process.

We wish all our students the very best of luck with their forthcoming examinations and for the future.