



**CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK
2025-26**

St Monica's RC High School



ST TERESA
of **CALCUTTA**
Catholic Academy Trust

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INTRODUCTION

Examinations can be a stressful time for students and parent(s)/carer(s). It is the aim of St Monica's RC High School ("St Monica's") to make the examination experience as stress-free and as successful as possible for all students.

Purpose of Handbook

- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To inform candidates about malpractice in exams/assessments
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ 'information for candidates' documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have. Any further questions can be asked to teachers, the Exams Officer and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Malpractice

The awarding bodies (exam boards) set down strict criteria, which must be followed for the conduct of examinations and St Monica's is required to follow them precisely. You should therefore, pay particular attention to pages 6 and 7 in this Handbook and the appendices that can be found at the back of this booklet and on our school website.

Invigilators

St Monica's employs a team of invigilators to conduct the exams. They have a key role in ensuring that the integrity of all exams is upheld and that exams are conducted in accordance with JCQ regulations and school policy. They will distribute and collect the exam papers and deal with any problems that occur during the exam.

Please note that they are unable to discuss the exam paper with you or explain the questions.

Students are expected to behave in a **respectful manner** towards all members of the invigilation team and to follow their instructions at all times – disruptive students will be removed from the examination room by the SLT. All incidents will be logged by the Invigilators and passed on to the Exams Officer.

Contact Numbers

Please ensure that school has your up-to-date telephone numbers.

Further questions

If you or your parent(s)/carer(s) have any queries or need help or guidance at any time before, during or after the exams please contact:

Ms S Knol, Exams Officer
0161 773 6436, option 4 for exams
sknol@stmonicas.stoccat.org.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION

Non-examination Assessments

Your subject teachers will keep you informed about dates and deadlines for your assessments. Relevant JCQ information about these can be found in the links at the end of this booklet.

Individual Candidate Timetable

The GCSE timetable is on St Monica's website.

You will receive an individual candidate timetable in April. This will show details of each exam such as date, time and duration of exam, paper details, venue and seat number. You must check every entry on your statement very carefully.

Please check that all personal details (date of birth, spelling of names) are accurate as these will appear on your certificates and it may be difficult to change them once certificates are awarded.

If you think something is wrong, please see [Ms Knol, end of Geography corridor](#).

Centre Number

The centre number for St Monica's RC High School is **32234**.

The number is also displayed in every exam room.

You will have to **write this number on every exam paper**.

Candidate Number (also known as Exam Number)

Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number. It is written on the Exam ID photo card on your desk and next to your name on exam registers. Your candidate number is also shown on the front of your individual candidate timetable.

You will have to **write this number on every exam paper**.

Access Arrangements

If you have Access Arrangements, then these will be printed on your Exam ID photo card. Please check that you've been given the correct Access Arrangements and inform an invigilator if you think that something isn't correct.

For every exam

- You must wear full school uniform;
- Normal school regulations apply to hair, jewellery, make-up, etc. in accordance with current school policy.

Toilet use

Please go to the toilet **BEFORE** the start of the exam.

Requests to use the toilets during an exam will be logged and should be infrequent and **ONLY** in cases of emergency. If you go to the toilet during an exam, you will be escorted by an invigilator who will ask you to remove your blazer and empty your pockets to ensure there are no aids for the exam.

Students with a specific medical condition must submit a medical note at the earliest opportunity.

REMEMBER YOU DO NOT GET BACK THE TIME YOU TAKE TO GO TO THE TOILET!!!

BE PREPARED FOR YOUR EXAMS

Equipment

All candidates will be given a clear pencil case, with a pen, pencils, highlighter, rubber, ruler and protractor.

The pencil case and content remain the property of the school and should therefore not be taken out of the exam room or written on, nor should they be damaged/broken.

Please ensure that you arrive for every exam with any additional required equipment. Especially where calculators are permitted, it is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that they've got a working calculator with them that meets the awarding bodies' regulations as follows:

Calculators must be:

- of a size suitable for use on the desk;
- either battery or solar powered;
- free of lids, cases and covers.

Calculators must not:

- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
 - language translators;
 - symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - communication with other machines or the internet.
- have retrievable information stored in them – this includes:
 - databanks;
 - dictionaries;
 - mathematical formulas;
 - text.
- be borrowed from another candidate during an exam for any reason

For every exam, **you must:**

- write clearly in **BLACK** ink, unless the instructions on the front of the question paper says otherwise.

You must not use:

- correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens or gel pens in your answers;
- highlighter pens **in your answers** (although you may use them to highlight questions within the question paper or question/answer booklet and to highlight extracts in any resource material provided).

EXAM ATTENDANCE

Attendance at examinations

Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetable and arriving at school on the correct day and time, properly dressed and equipped. Unless otherwise notified, the following times apply:

- Morning exams start at 9 am;
- Afternoon exams start at 1 pm;
- The start and finish time of the exam will be displayed in the exam room;
- You will be expected to stay in the exam room until the end of the exam.

You must put your hand up to get the attention of an Invigilator if:

- you need more paper;
- you feel unwell;
- you have a particular problem and you do not know what to do.

Being unwell on the day of your exam

If you are unwell but want to sit your exam, then either you or your parent/carer must let the Exams Officer or a member of SLT know and the invigilators in the exam room will be made aware of your illness.

If you are too unwell to sit your exam, school must be informed of this as soon as possible and evidence or certification of your illness must be obtained and forwarded to the Exams Officer. Please note that a GCSE exam **CANNOT** be done at a different time later on.

Being late/ very late for your exam

It's at the discretion of every exam centre to decide whether or not to allow students to enter an exam room late. At St Monica's we do allow students who arrive late into the exam room and they will be given the full amount of time set for the exam.

Yet, once a student is 1 hour or more late, we cannot guarantee that the integrity of the exam has not been compromised and we will therefore only allow students into the exam room in exceptional circumstances. The exam boards will have to be informed of this and may not accept the exam script.

Every exam not sat, lowers your overall grade.

BEING ON TIME FOR YOUR EXAMS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

EXAM CONDITIONS

YOU ARE UNDER FORMAL EXAM CONDITIONS FROM THE MOMENT YOU ENTER THE EXAM ROOM

- Please ensure you arrive **ON TIME** for **EVERY** exam and be fully equipped;
- **BE SILENT** as soon as you enter the exam room and **REMAIN SILENT** until after you have left the exam room;
- **DO NOT OPEN** your question paper until the exam starts;
- **DO NOT WRITE** on your question paper until told to do so;
- Be respectful of other students and make sure that you **DO NOT COMMUNICATE** at all or disturb them, e.g. Don't tap you your equipment on the desk, swing on your chair, lift up your desk or engage in anything else that might disturb other students;
- Bags and belongings are **NOT** permitted in the exam room;
- You must listen to and follow the instructions in the exam room at all times;
- Only material that is listed on question papers is allowed in the exam;
- You must not lend equipment or attempt to borrow from another candidate in the exam room;
- There will be an exam ID photocard on your desk with your name, exam number and Access Arrangements – **DO NOT DEFACE** or write on your photo in any way;
- **ONLY WATER** may be brought into the exam room, which is contained in a clear, non-coloured plastic bottle from which the label has been removed. Any other drink will be confiscated;
- Food is not allowed.

THE SCHOOL MUST REPORT ANY BREACH OF JCQ REGULATIONS TO THE AWARDING BODY

MALPRACTICE IN EXAMINATIONS

Malpractice

As a candidate **you are responsible for your behaviour** during exams and assessments. You need to be aware of the following:

- To maintain the integrity of exams, strict rules and regulations are in place.
- Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the regulations (breaking the rules).
- Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies. This may lead to your disqualification.

Examples of malpractice

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the exam room;
- Breaches of exam conditions such as talking at any time in the exam room, trying to get another candidate's attention, displaying disruptive behaviour or disturbing other candidates;
- Leaving the room without supervision (you will not be allowed back into the exam room);
- Attempting to or actually exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be exam related;
- Undermining the integrity of exams and assessments;
- Opening your exam paper before the exam begins;
- Writing on your exam paper before you're told to do so;
- Graffitiing your exam paper;
- Having writing on your hands and arms;
- Copying someone else's work or allowing your work to be copied;
- Having or sharing details about exam questions before the exam – whether you think these are real or fake;
- Taking exam material out of the exam room, including rough work;
- Unauthorised use of AI in assessments;
- Allowing others to help you produce assessment work or helping others with theirs;
- Sharing your work online;
- Passing off assessment work as your own when it's not.

Unauthorised items

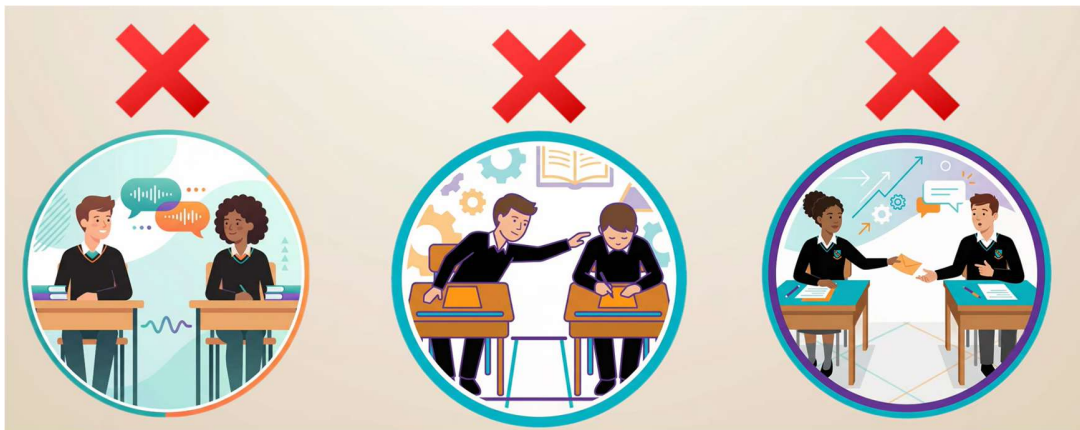
Being in possession of any unauthorised items or material is a breach of the exam regulations. Such items listed below must be handed to the Invigilator before the start of the exam:

- Mobile phones (even if turned off);
- Watches, whether a smartwatch or any other kind;
- Revision notes;
- Any other non-exam items. This includes mirrors, make-up, combs, etc.

Having the above with/on you during an exam, is breaking the rules. This will be taken away from you and a report will be made to the awarding body which can result in disqualification. Therefore, make sure your pockets are empty when walking into the exam hall.

WE WILL REPORT MALPRACTICE
NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE

EXAMPLES OF MALPRACTICE



NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENTS

Your subject teachers will keep you informed about dates and deadlines for your assessments. You will be informed of your centre assessed mark in time for you to make any relevant challenges and appeals before these are submitted to the exam board.

If at any stage during your exam course you have concerns about the procedures used in assessing your internally marked work for public exams (e.g. non examination assessment/coursework/portfolio/projects), you should see the Subject Head of Department or Exams Officer as soon as possible.

DO NOT plagiarise or make any unauthorized use of AI for your assessments. This is against the regulations and can lead to disqualification for the entire subject.

Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026.

You should also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You **must** retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.

APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

(centre assessed marks)

Certain components of GCSE (GCSE non-examination assessments) that contribute to the final grade of the qualification are internally assessed (marked) by the subject teacher. The marks awarded (the internal assessment decisions) are then submitted by the deadline set by the awarding body for external moderation.

St Monica's RC High School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

St Monica's ensures that all centre staff follow a robust Non-Examination Assessment policy (for the management of non-examination assessments). This policy details all procedures relating to non-examination assessments, including the marking and quality assurance processes which relevant teaching staff are required to follow.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. St Monica's is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardization will ensure consistency of marking.

On being informed of your centre assessed marks, if you believe that the above procedures were not followed in relation to the marking of your work, or that the assessor has not properly applied the mark scheme to your marking, then you may make use of the following appeals procedure to consider whether to request a review of the centre's marking.

1. You may request copies of materials (for example, a copy of your marked work, the relevant specification, the mark scheme and any other associated subject-specific documents) to assist you in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment. You will have to make this request to your teacher within 3 school days of having been given your marks.
2. St Monica's will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to you within 3 school days.
3. You will have 3 school days to review copies of materials and put in a request for a review of marking. You **must** do so in writing by completing the school's internal appeal form (request from Exams Officer) and submitting this to the subject teacher.
4. St Monica's will allow 3 school days for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform you of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline.
5. St Monica's will ensure that the review of marking is carried out by a reviewer who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of your work and has no personal interest in the review.
6. St Monica's will instruct the reviewer to ensure that your mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
7. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.
8. The outcome of the review of the centre's marking will be made known to the Head of Centre. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the review of the centre's marking bring any irregularity in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed immediately.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of St Monica's and is not covered by this procedure.

AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

Contingency Day – Summer 2026 examinations

The awarding bodies have designated **WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE 2026** as ‘contingency day’ for examinations. The designation of ‘contingency days’ within the common examination timetable is in the event of a national or significant local disruption to examinations in the United Kingdom. It is part of the awarding bodies’ standard contingency planning for examinations.

Contingency days cannot be used for catching up on exams you might have missed.

Notification of results/ results day

Results will be made available to you on **Thursday 20th August 2026**. You will be informed of the procedure beforehand.

If you cannot attend to collect your results, you can nominate somebody else to collect them for you and you must give your written authorisation to school. Please ensure that your request is marked clearly for the attention of Ms. S Knol – Exams Officer.

No results will be given out by telephone.

Post results

Important information regarding all post results procedures and services will be sent to you prior to results day and will also accompany your results day slip on 20th August 2026.

It’s advisable to speak with your subject teacher prior to submitting a request for any Post Result Service.

Collection of GCSE certificates – leavers summer 2026

All students will be invited to a **Certificate Evening** to collect their GCSE certificates.

If you are unable to attend the Certificate Evening, your certificates **must** be collected in person **AFTER** the Certificate Evening has taken place. Certificates will not be given to anyone without the candidate’s written permission.

Each month, the Exams Officer receives requests from former students requesting proof of qualifications as colleges, universities and prospective employees ask for these.

A **SUBSTANTIAL** fee will be charged by **EACH** exam board for a re-issue certificate.

Save £££s and collect your certificates!

APPENDICES 2025 – 26

You **must** read these appendices by JCQ before undertaking any assessments and/or GCSEs as they contain important information about your exams.

Appendix 1: Information for candidates – Warning to Candidates

This can be found on the link below:

[JCQ-ICE-Warning-to-candidates-2025.pdf](#)

Appendix 2: Information for candidates – Unauthorised Items Poster

This can be found on the link below:

[2025 Unauthorised-Items-poster](#)

Appendix 3: On your exam day checklist

This document can be found via the link below:

[JCQ-Preparing-to-sit-your-exams -2025_2026.pdf](#)

Appendix 4: Information for candidates – Poster Social Media

This can be found on the link below:

[JCQ Social Media Infographic v4](#)

Appendix 5: Information for candidates – Poster AI

This can be found on the link below:

[JCQ AI infographic v3](#)

Appendix 6: Information for candidates – Written Examinations

This can be found on the link below:

[IFC-Written Examinations 2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

Appendix 7: Information for candidates – Non examination assessments

This document can be found via the link below:

[IFC-NE Assessments 2025 FINAL.pdf](#)