



Exams Policy

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 school 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 exams are run to the same standards and rules in order that students are familiar with the process beforehand.

This booklet is intended to inform about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions to help to guide and support students and parents through the examination process.

It also contains the formal notices that are required by regulation to be given to each candidate.

After reading this booklet, if you have any further questions about the examination arrangements at Driffield School please contact the Examinations Office.

You can contact the exams office by

Telephone: 01377 253631 ext.223 or 225
E-mail: exams@driffield.e-riding.sch.uk

On exams days it is best to **contact 01377 253631 ext 223** before 9am and leave a message, with the nature of your query, since the main priority will be the starting of exam sessions on time.

Who is responsible for the examinations?

The school Exams Officer is responsible for administering all public examination arrangements and for oversight of students during exams, under direct responsibility from the Head of Centre, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher: Teaching and Learning.

There is a team of adult invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times and who are supervised by the Exams Officer, and the Exams Assistant.

The awarding bodies or examination boards set down 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 the school's policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of exam. Only by exception, after consultation with parents, and with the consent of the Assistant Headteacher KS4, will students not be entered.

Should exam students take holidays during term time?

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the exam boards but are subject to change by the board until close to the time that students start study leave. The Exams Officer will not give actual dates for exams to parents or students in advance, wishing to book holidays. However, exams are held in November, January, March, May and June. Parents are reminded that they require permission to take students out of the school and they book holidays during term time at their own risk. We recommend no holidays before the 1st July and no holidays will be authorised during the exam period.

Coursework deadlines

Most of the subjects have an element of coursework included in them which has to be completed, marked and assessed and the marks and work sent to the boards well before the formal exam sessions take place. The school sets deadlines that allow time for this process and to meet the board deadlines. These cannot be changed. Students who don't submit coursework on time will not be allocated a mark for this portion and their overall grade will suffer. They may also not be eligible for special consideration for the formal exams should they be ill as they will not have completed the minimum 35% of the course.

What arrangements are made for study leave?

Study leave begins for Year 11, 12 and 13 students during May on dates notified by the school. After those dates students are only required to be in school when they actually have examinations. For exams in the January series for Year 12 and Y13, there is no study leave.

What information will students receive about their examination entries?

When the entries have been entered on the school's computer system, students will receive a student entry summary detailing the subjects and tiers for which they been entered. This should be checked and students are asked to inform the school if they believe there are any errors or problems.

This document serves two purposes:

- I. to check that all entries have been made and are correct,
- II. to inform parents that they undertake to pay the entry fees should their son/daughter fail to take the examination without good reason

What is a GCE examination?

Advanced level exams are known as GCE subjects and are now examined in 2 parts and in modules. Three modules are taken in Y12 and three more modules in Year 13. All six modules will then count towards the final 'A2' level grade. Any module at AS or A2 can be re-taken at a cost to the student. At the start of Y13 students will have an individual interview to determine the best option for the second year of their course.

What are modular examinations?

Modular GCSE and AS/A2 levels involve the written examinations on sections of the syllabus being taken at intervals throughout the course rather than all at the end.

Most modular examination sessions are in November, January, March and June according to the Board used. Students have the opportunity to retake certain units on the advice of their subject teachers but the school only pays the entry fee if the original examination was missed through illness and a medical certificate was produced.

Where will the examinations be held?

The main locations for written papers are the main halls, gym, rooms 111-118, 202-203 and the Year 12 common room. Candidates are asked to be there at least 15 minutes before the advertised start time to enable seating procedures to be carried out efficiently, and to allow for any unforeseen room changes. They are asked to wait quietly outside the room until invited to enter. Where a candidate sits will be determined by their candidate number, which appears on all statements of entry. The candidate will sit at the desk bearing a card with their candidate number. This arrangement follows examination board rules and the school cannot change it.

How do I know the date exams take place?

The main period for exams is from the start of May – until the end of June/early July but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier.

All candidates will receive individual school produced entry statements of AS, A2 and GCSE examinations, which will give them the dates and sessions (a.m or p.m) of the papers they are taking. This will include the location and approximate start times. If the candidate loses their timetable they will be charged 50p for a replacement to be printed for them. They can however access the information themselves using the VTLE – Kaleidos.

If students know the exact codes of their unit exams – available from their subject teacher, they may be able to use the online tool to access when their exams will take place:

<http://www.modernisationonline.org.uk/comptimetable/>

This however, only offers a rough guide and should not be totally relied upon.

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 8.45am for morning examinations and 1.00pm for afternoon examinations. The length of examination papers varies and they will frequently not finish until

after 3.30pm (the end of the normal school day). Students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home.

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 happens if a student has more than 1 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 usually 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 by the student 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. We try very hard to avoid having to implement this.

If an exam is delayed from a morning to an afternoon session the candidate will be supervised over lunchtime. They 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 the loss of all those exams for all of the candidates involved.

How are students supervised?

Adult 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 regulations, references and CRB checks. They usually work in teams and can contact the Exams Officer by two way radio to resolve any issues.

The Invigilators call candidates in by candidate number or subject group. Students should find the desk with their candidate number card on it.

In some sessions, papers may already be on exam desks, these must not be opened until candidates are advised to do so.

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 in that venue 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 officially withdrawn themselves from an examination will be permitted to sit the papers but will be billed the cost of a double entry GCE unit £30.00, GCSE single award £70.00 and double award £115.00.

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 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 taken.

Candidates who arrive more than 1 hour after the start or after the end of the exam will not be admitted.

What should students bring to the examinations?

Candidates should ensure they have all the equipment needed for each exam – including any books, pens, pencils etc as these will not be provided by the school on the day. Candidates should bring writing equipment, coloured pencils, erasers etc in a transparent 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, as these have to be collected in for some mathematics papers, which are non-calculator.

Pens should be **black only**, candidates must not use gel pens. Modular papers require the use of a **black biro only**. Some subject papers will require the use of dictionaries or set texts, and candidates will be advised by their subject teachers about this.

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

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 - unless permitted for individual language exams.

These items can be handed to an invigilator **before the start** of an exam, but the school cannot be responsible for the security of these while the examination is in progress

The use of tippex or correction pens is not permitted. Candidates should 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 a drink with them into the exam room. However no more than 750ml of still water or dilute squash may be brought, preferably in a sport cap bottle. Bottle Labels

must be removed before the drink will be permitted in the exam room. No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed due to the risk of spillage. 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.

What are the regulations regarding mobile phones?

The regulations state that mobile phones are not to be brought into examination rooms under any circumstances. This applies to all public and school/mock examinations. They cause disturbance to other candidates if they ring and can present opportunities for malpractice. Any student found to have a phone 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 should not be brought to school. We can take no responsibility for the security of mobile phones brought to school.

Regulations governing the use of calculators

Some subject papers, especially Maths non-calculator papers, explicitly prohibit the use of calculators. 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
- 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. Candidates 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 of any form. 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 from which they can decide within limits 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 Officers instructions carefully.

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

A student who absents themselves 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 examinations which have been marked.

Parents should be aware that the school will seek to recover the exam fees if a student does not turn up for an examination and parents be asked for a payment of £35.00 per single award GCSE, £47.00 per double award GCSE and £12.50 per GCE unit, depending on the examining board. It is in all our interests to ensure that the school's examination budget is not wasted.

How are exams started?

The Invigilators will usually announce the exam formally, and candidates cautioned that they are subject to the regulations. 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.

What do I do if my son/daughter is unwell at the time of one of the examinations?

Even if you would not normally visit your doctor's surgery for minor illnesses it is important that you do so at examination time. Your doctor will advise as to whether your son/daughter is fit to sit the examination. If the candidate takes the paper, your doctor should give you a letter, which the school can forward to the examination board asking for special consideration on the grounds of illness. If the candidate is unable through illness to sit a paper the board **may**, after examining the doctor's letter and any evidence of performance on other papers, decide to award a grade. It is unlikely that an AS grade will be awarded if a unit is missed as the candidate will be expected to re-take at a later date. It is essential that you see your doctor on the day of the examination or previously. Retrospective information is not accepted by the examination boards and any doctors' letters must be forwarded to the Exams Officer **without delay**, as there is a tight deadline.

Please telephone the school if your son/daughter will **not** be attending an examination or if he/she will be present but is unwell. It is often helpful for the invigilator to be aware that a candidate is not feeling well.

Please be aware that any medical certificate must be accompanied by a note detailing the examinations to which it refers and the date on which the papers were sat. We cannot guarantee otherwise that all relevant examinations will be covered

There is a standard JCQ form (JCQ/ME Form14) available from the Exams Officer available for self-certification for a missed exam/s, which must be countersigned by your doctor/nurse or surgery receptionist.

What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

All candidates are given a copy of a 'notice to candidates' produced by the examining bodies, which gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed. The wording of this is included at the back of this booklet.

The school and the examination boards regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should please impress on your son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an examination, as any activities that may disturb or upset other candidates will not be tolerated.

The Head of Centre and Exams Officer 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 does help to maintain a calm atmosphere for those students who are nervous about their exams.

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 students are permitted to wear casual but sensible clothing. Students not dressed properly or modestly will not be permitted to sit exams.

Jackets, jumpers or other clothing are not allowed over the backs of the chairs.

Candidates should bring as little as possible in the way of coats and baggage into the examination room.

It is advised that items of jewellery, such as rings or bracelets should not be worn as they make a noise on the desk and would be deemed a disruption to other candidates, likewise keys around necks.

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. They must sit quietly at their desk so as not to disturb other candidates.

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. The Exams Officer and Head of Centre are empowered to grant extra time, the provision of a prompter or similar arrangements, but only given the correct evidence and at their sole discretion. The Student Services 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 a maximum of 5%. It is generally less and no feedback is ever provided.

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 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 probably 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 and some opportunities for relaxation.

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

Students will have been informed by subject departments of the arrangements for return of books etc. Please ensure that all textbooks and equipment are returned promptly to school and the book returns form signed accordingly. When all books and equipment are returned, a “clearance” letter will be given to the student to produce as evidence on results day that nothing is outstanding.

When and how are the results distributed?

A level GCE results arrive in school on approximately the second Thursday in August (normally around the 15th) and will normally be available for collection from 10.00am and AS GCE results from 2.00pm on the same day. GCSE/GNVQ results will be available for collection a week later from 11.00am. Students wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results **must** send a signed letter of authorisation with the collector. Results will not be given over the telephone or via email under any circumstances. A2/AS and GCSE 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), at the exams office. Please ensure you use the correct postage for the size of the envelope. Result slips not collected or posted on results day will be retained in school for collection at the start of term, again with the necessary authority. GCSE students must bring their “clearance” letter when they come to collect results – it is school policy not to issue results until all school property has been returned.

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. It is advisable to obtain a copy of the script and mark scheme before proceeding to an EAR (enquiry about result) that is very expensive. If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the school can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate board. Details of the procedures and the fees involved are available from the Exams Officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the Head of Department concerned or Assistant Headteacher: KS4 or Post 16 where appropriate.

If the results have serious implications for the student’s future plans then advice should be sought from the Connexions Careers Service or Assistant Headteacher: KS4 or Post 16 as appropriate.

How do I go about obtaining copies of marked examination scripts?

It is currently possible to have access to marked scripts for most AS/A2 units and some GCSE. You will need to complete a form from the school and pay a fee for each subject/paper. You should be aware that copies of marked scripts prior to an enquiry on results must be ordered within one week of the issue of results. You will also need to purchase a copy of the mark scheme.

How do I improve an A Level grade?

The school will apply to consolidate AS/A2 units together at the end of each course, in June, as standard. This will result in an AS/A2 grade being offered by the Boards. If a student intends to re-sit and improve the level, then they can ask for a new 'certificate grade' at the time they re-sit.

How do candidates apply to re-sit?

It is possible to re-sit modules; requests to re-sit units must be made via subject departments, and accompanied by the appropriate examination fees. Students should discuss their decision to re-sit with their subject teacher or relevant dept head, who will need to sign the form to signify approval.

Fees may vary depending on the subject and must be paid by the deadlines set. Refunds are not normally given.

How should fees be paid?

Where students are requesting a chargeable service, the application should be made at the Exams Office using the appropriate form.

Cheques should be made payable to Driffield School.

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 or after the school's presentation evening in March each year. Students are required either to collect in person, or to have the certificate posted by recorded delivery for which there is a charge of £1.50 to cover costs. A friend or family member may collect them but only bearing a letter of request signed by the candidate and some form of ID.

A student who has not certificated his/her GCE grade will not receive a certificate until the certification process is completed. This cannot be done retrospectively without a substantial financial penalty, which must be borne by the student. Certification can be applied for in the next exam season without charge.

Certificates uncollected after 1 year are destroyed; they can only be replaced by direct application to the boards by the candidate, and will require proof of identity such as an original birth certificate and a substantial fee per certificate (approx £30.00).