



St Columb's College

Candidate Examination Handbook

2023-2024

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Introduction

St Columb's College is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment process in place in the Examination Centre and are made aware of the required Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

Pupils are prepared for GCSE examinations which they sit, in most subjects, at the end of Year 12. CCEA is the Examination Board currently used for most GCSE subjects in Key Stage 4 (we also use WJEC and OCR for specific qualifications). Modular GCSEs are undertaken in some subjects where students will sit a percentage of their examination in Year 11. Controlled Assessment is undertaken in a number of subjects and all pupils are provided with a calendar outlining schedules for the timing of Controlled Assessment and Modules in their various subjects.

In Sixth Form pupils are prepared for A-level and AS-level examinations, Applied AS/A-level qualifications, Cambridge Technicals and BTECs. The majority of A-level subject entries are made through CCEA. Details of other Examination Boards currently used at this level are as follows:

AQA:	English Literature
WJEC:	Sport & Physical Education
OCR:	Cambridge Technical Level 3 Introductory Diploma in Information Technology
Pearson:	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Business
	BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Business (<i>equivalent to two A-levels</i>)
	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Engineering
	BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Sports Coaching and Development (<i>equivalent to three A-levels</i>)

Aim of the Candidate Examination Handbook

The aim of this Handbook is to help you get through the examinations period by explaining the procedures and answering any questions that you may have.

Please read this booklet carefully and if you have any questions - or are still not sure about anything - then please come along to the Examinations Office (English Corridor), Finance Office or to Chemistry 2 and ask Mr J Broderick or Mrs A O'Kane - we are here to help you.

Changes to Tier of Entry

You will be issued with a list of examinations for which you have been entered at the time when entries are being made. You must ensure that all your entries are correct at that stage.

Should your teacher feel that it would be better for you to change tier for a particular examination (from Higher to Foundation or vice versa) your parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) will be notified of this recommendation by letter.

PLEASE NOTE: No candidates will be permitted to change a Tier of Entry on the day the examination takes place.

Examination timetables

Your individual examination timetable is **REALLY IMPORTANT** and should be kept safely for reference purposes.

Please check your personal details. Your legal name - as recorded on the school's records - will appear on your certificates. Contact Mrs O'Kane or Mr Broderick if something is incorrect.

Please read your timetable **VERY CAREFULLY** and make sure you know **when** and **where** your examinations are going to take place. Check **your seat number** (shown on your timetable) before each examination, as you will not have the same seat for every examination.

Your timetable is unique to **YOU**. Please familiarise yourself with the location and seat in your examination centre in advance. All students **MUST** refer to their individual timetables for information on examination times and venues. **DO NOT** ask your friends where the examination is - theirs may be somewhere different! Your timetable will tell you the **date** and **time** of each of your examinations.

The Centre Number for St Columb's College is **71865**.

Your Examination Number is on your Smartcard and has four digits. It will **NEVER** change for external examinations.

Display your examination timetable somewhere obvious at home so that you and your family can see it and so that you are all aware when you should be at school taking an examination.

If you lose your timetable, you will be able to get a replacement from Mrs O'Kane or Mr Broderick.

What to do if you identify that you have two or more examination papers timetabled at the same time (an examination clash)

If you have a clash of examinations, arrangements will be made for you to take these subjects one after the other. If the total time is more than three hours, the examinations will be split between the morning and afternoon sessions. If this happens, an invigilator will supervise you over lunchtime (you will be in what is known as 'quarantine'), **so you will need to bring a packed lunch and a drink with you**. Any clashes **SHOULD** have been picked up and resolved before you are given your individual timetable. You will be informed in advance if you have any quarantine time. You **WILL NOT** be allowed to communicate with anyone else during quarantine and you **WILL NOT** be allowed to use your mobile phone (or any other electronic communication device) during quarantine.

You will be informed of any special arrangements involving clashes before your examinations.

If you notice a clash on your individual timetable which has not been resolved, you **must** tell Mrs O'Kane or Mr Broderick **IMMEDIATELY**.

Access arrangements

Candidates must meet JCQ regulations to be entitled to access arrangements (extra time/reader/scribe). Students meeting these regulations will be informed by Mrs S Tohill (Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinator) prior to any examinations taken.

Where you will take your examinations

Most GCSE, AS and A2 examinations will take place in our Sports Centre, Senior PE Hall and/or Junior Study. You may have examinations in other venues; these will be printed on your individual timetable so **please check that carefully** before the particular examinations take place. Please arrive at school **AT LEAST 20 MINUTES** before the start time shown on your timetable so that you are not in a rush before your examination begins. You will be told when you are allowed to enter the examination centre and you **MUST** sit at the desk that has been allocated to you - unless the invigilator instructs you otherwise. If you do not sit in the correct seat, the invigilator could mark you as absent or allocate you the wrong tier of paper. You are **NOT** allowed to enter the examination centre before the examination time.

What time your examinations will start and finish

All public examinations start at **9.15 a.m.** for morning papers and **1.30 p.m.** for afternoon papers. Any other changes of start time will be noted on your personalised examination timetable.

Please make sure you check your timetable **really carefully**. You should aim to be at school **AT LEAST 20 MINUTES** before the start of an examination. If for any reason you are going to be late and will miss the start of the examination, you **MUST** contact the school office (028 71 285000). You will then be told how long you have left before you will be refused entry to the examination. Candidates will only be allowed into the examination centre after more than 20 minutes have passed **in exceptional circumstances**. Please also be aware that if you are late for your examination, the Examination Board may not always accept your paper for marking, and you may not get the full time allowance for sitting the examination.

As mentioned already, no candidates will be permitted to change a Tier of Entry on the day the examination takes place.

Supervision during your examinations

You must be **SILENT AT ALL TIMES** when you are in the examination centre. This includes when you enter and leave the centre. If you need assistance, put your hand up clearly and wait for an invigilator to attend to you; **DO NOT** turn around and try to communicate with other students. Disruptive behaviour will be construed as malpractice and will be reported to the Examination Board. Once you have entered the examination centre, you will have to be escorted at all times if you need to leave for any reason.

How your identity is confirmed in the examination centre

Your **Smartcard** should be placed on your desk for identity purposes. If you are a consortium/external student taking an examination at St Columb's College, please bring in your school ID/passport/ driving licence. All such IDs must have a clear and recent photograph.

What equipment you need to bring to your examinations

You must provide all your own equipment; **no equipment will be available on the day**. You should bring your equipment in a transparent pencil case. See below re the use of calculators.

You may use a calculator - unless you are told otherwise (see below).

If you wish to highlight key parts of the text on the examination paper, you will need to bring a highlighter pen with you. **Highlighter pens must not be used in answer booklets, but are allowed to highlight parts of the printed questions. You are NOT ALLOWED to use correcting fluid, pens or the like in any answer booklets.**

Using calculators

You must be aware of the JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in your examinations which state:

10.1 In this section a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations.

10.2 This is the published guidance on calculators unless specifically varied by an awarding body in a qualification specification.

- 10.3 The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.
- 10.4 Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.
- 10.5 Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with the *Information for candidates* documents.
- 10.6 During an examination a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities:
- a) language translators;
 - b) symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - c) symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - d) communication with other machines or the internet;
- 10.7 During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:
- a) databanks;
 - b) dictionaries;
 - c) mathematical formulae;
 - d) text.
- 10.8 A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.
- 10.9 Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.
- 10.10 An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator.
- 10.11 Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an examination, it is acceptable for candidates to place their calculators on the floor under their desks in sight of the invigilator(s) for the non-calculator portion of the examination.
- 10.12 A series of FAQs on the use of calculators in examinations may be found at:
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>

[Taken from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations, 2023-2024*]

What you should not bring into the examination centre

Mobile phones, pagers, **all types** of watches, organisers, music players, headphones and any type of electronic communication or storage device are **not allowed** in the examination centre. The Examination Boards and St Columb's College do not allow you to bring any of these items into any examination centre or into any room being used for 'quarantine', either before or after an examination. You are **strongly advised** not to bring any such devices with you to school when you have an examination, as St Columb's College cannot take any responsibility if they are lost or damaged.

It is **not permitted** to bring any revision notes or other paper into the examination centre.

If a mobile phone or similar electronic device (including iPod, MP3/4 player, memory stick, smartphone smartwatch, AirPods, earphones or headphones) is found in your possession during an examination or quarantine, **EVEN IF IT IS TURNED OFF**, the device will be taken from you and a report will be made to the appropriate Examination Board. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.**

MINIMUM JCQ penalties imposed by the Examination Boards are as follows (without exception):

- **In the candidate's possession, but no evidence of being used: loss of marks (amount to be decided by examination board.**
- **In the candidate's possession and evidence of being used: disqualification from that unit.**

Equally, there are penalties for bringing a watch into the examination centre.

Food and drink in examination centres

You **are allowed** to take into the examination centre a drink of water in a **clear plastic bottle** with **the label removed**. Chewing gum and any other food or drinks are not allowed. You will not be able to leave the examination centre to refill a bottle of water, and invigilators cannot leave to do this for you, so please make sure you have enough for the whole examination time. Drinks brought into any computer rooms must be left at the front of the room with the invigilator.

What you should wear for your examinations

Full school uniform **must** be worn at all times when taking examinations.

What to do if you are ill on the day of an examination

If you are feeling unwell before your examination, please inform Mrs O'Kane or your Year Head.

If you feel ill during an examination, put your hand up and tell the invigilator who will get assistance for you. After the examination, and before you leave school on the day of the examination, please let Mrs O'Kane or the Principal know. They need to know as we may be able to apply to the Examination Board on your behalf for special consideration. In the instance of illness this needs to be done on the day of the examination.

What happens if you are absent from an examination

If you are unable to attend due to sickness, a medical note from your doctor **MUST** be given to the Principal or Mrs O'Kane; it must be specific about dates and the exact reasons about why you could not sit your examination. A parental note or a letter from the school **WILL NOT** be accepted as evidence for special considerations by the Examination Board(s). Even with a medical note, the Examination Boards can refuse to issue you a final grade.

What happens if you suffer a bereavement or other family or personal circumstance prior to or in the course of your examinations

If you suffer from any personal or other circumstance which may have an impact on your performance in your examinations, please inform Mrs O'Kane or your Year Head or the Principal of the situation as soon as possible. We may be able to apply to the Examination Board(s) on your behalf for Special Consideration.

What will happen in the event of an emergency in the examination centre

In the event of an emergency, invigilators have been informed that they must take the following action (in accordance with JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* Regulation 25: Emergencies):

- a) stop the candidates from writing;

- b) collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present) and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority;
- c) advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet;
- d) ensure the candidates leave the room in silence;
- e) ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination;
- f) make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted;
- g) allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes;
- h) if there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination;

[Taken from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations, 2023-2024*]

Suspected malpractice

All Examination Boards have very strict rules and regulations. They make it clear that:

1. Their official examination sessions must be run under strictly fair conditions, with no form of deception. This rule severely excludes any form of communication between candidates during an examination, as well as any other practice that could conceivably be seen as an attempt to deceive.
2. Anyone attempting unfair practices can expect cancellation of their examination entries and the charges that this will incur, as well as possible exclusion from GCSE/AS and A2-level exams for a period of up to five years.
3. If you are found to be involved in any malpractice during an examination, you **WILL** be reported to the relevant Examination Board.

Social media

Sharing ideas and experiences about studying and revising can be helpful but there are limits to the amount of information you can share and you need to be careful not to break the rules. If you are in any doubt about what you can and cannot discuss online regarding your examinations, it is always best to check with your teacher.

If you receive what is or what looks to be assessment-related information through social media, or any other means, you **MUST** tell your teacher or another member of staff. You must show them what you have received. They will report the matter to the Examination Board and it will be investigated.

Results

November 2023 Series: 13th November → 23rd November 2023

GCSE English, Mathematics and Science results will be distributed during Registration on **Thursday 1st February 2024**.

March 2024 Series: 21st → 23rd February 2024

GCSE Science results will be distributed during Registration on **Thursday 18th April 2024**.

Summer 2024 Series:

AS-level examination results will be distributed on **Thursday 15th August 2024** in the Assembly Hall (times TBC) **for Year 13 students**. Results not collected will then be posted.

Year 14 pupils will be able to access their results for the subjects they had been studying with CCEA using the PIN code which will be provided by CCEA during the 2023-2024 school year. Year 14 pupils will be invited to collect a paper copy of all results on **Thursday 15th August 2024** in the Assembly Hall (times TBC). Results not collected will then be posted.

Year 12 GCSE-level examination results will be distributed on **Thursday 22nd August 2024** in the Sports Centre (times TBC). Results not collected will then be posted.

Year 11 GCSE-level examination results will be distributed on **Thursday 22nd August 2024** in the Sports Centre (times TBC). Results not collected will then be posted.

Post-results services

Post-results information will be made available on the school's website when made available by the Examination Boards.

This will be information regarding fees for re-sits, access to scripts and how to have an examination paper remarked. More details will be available at the time results are issued, or you can contact Mr Broderick.

Internal appeals procedures

The St Columb's College Internal Appeals Procedures will also be made available on the school website at the appropriate time.

JCQ No Mobile Phones, Watches, MP 3/4 Players Poster

This poster will be displayed outside each examination centre. You **must** note that *“Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in **DISQUALIFICATION** from your examination and your overall qualification.”*



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

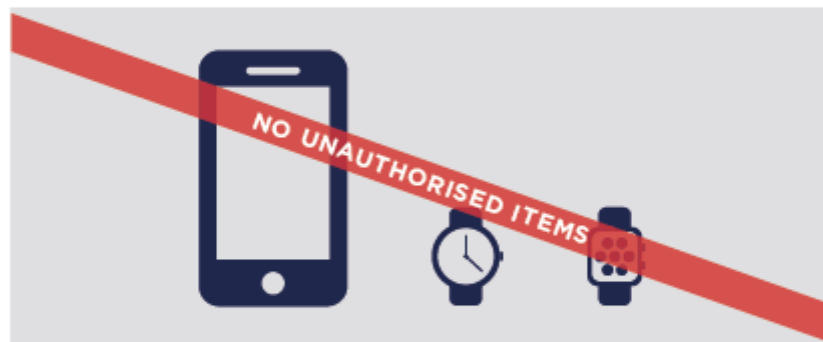
OCR

Pearson

WJEC

NO MOBILE PHONES NO WATCHES

NO POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB
ENABLED SOURCES OF INFORMATION



Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone
or any watch, is a serious offence and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION

from your examination and your overall qualification.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

©JCQP 2022 - Effective from 1 September 2022

JCQ Warning to Candidates

This poster will be displayed outside each examination centre. You **must** note all the warnings.



AQA	City & Guilds	CCEA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC
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Warning to Candidates

1. You **must** be on time for all your examinations.
2. **Possession of a mobile phone** or other unauthorised material **is not allowed** even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the exam/qualification.
3. You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.
4. You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.
5. You **must not** sit an examination in the name of another candidate.
6. You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.
7. If you are confused about anything, only speak to an invigilator.

The *Warning to Candidates* must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room. This may be a hard copy A3 paper version or an image of the poster projected onto a wall or screen for all candidates to see.

Prayer Before Examinations

Loving God
be with me now,
as I prepare to sit my exams.
Thank you for the many talents, gifts and opportunities you have given me.
Calm my nerves and anxiety, help me
to remember all that I have studied,
to express it clearly and to answer the questions
the very best that I can.
Holy Spirit remain with me during my exam
- and always.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

St Columba, pray for us.