



EXAMINATIONS GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS



Introduction

It is the aim of Thomas Becket Catholic school to make the examination experience as stress-free and successful as possible for all candidates. Well-informed pupils will realise that the rules and regulations are designed to ensure fairness and minimise disturbance and it is in the interest of all that 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 pupils to achieve their potential. Mock exams operate with the same standards and rules in order to familiarise pupils with the process.

This booklet is intended to provide information about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and to help guide and support pupils and parents through the examination process. Please read it carefully and show it to your son/daughter so that they are also aware of the examination regulations and the procedures to follow in the event of any problems occurring. It also contains the formal notices that are required by regulation to be given to each candidate.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the exams office by emailing us at exams@tbcs.nor.olicatschools.org

exams policy and procedures

The exams' policies and procedures can be located on the school website. Please ensure you take the time to read these and any accompanying documentation.



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exam Seasons

exams will be offered to candidates as follows (provided that individual modules are available from the exam board):

Throughout the year	BTEC Onscreen tests are organised, on demand, throughout the year. Controlled assessments as specified by awarding bodies
October	Year 13 Mocks Year 11 Mocks
November GCSE Re-sits	(Mathematics and English only)
January	Vocational exams (BTEC, NCFE, Cambridge Nationals) Year 13 Mocks Year 11 Mocks
summer	Vocational exams (BTEC, NCFE, Cambridge Nationals) GCSE exams GCE exams

Any changes to the exam seasons offered at the school will be decided by the Senior Leadership Team.

Entries

The exams team liaise with teaching staff to determine which examinations each candidate are to be entered for.

Funding

The exams Office will fund one entry per candidate for each GCSE/GCE subject that they sit.

The school reserves the right to reclaim entry fees from parents if a candidate:

- a. fails to sit the examination without reasonable cause
- b. does not attend the school regularly for the necessary course of study
- c. does not complete and submit the necessary work to attain a pass grade by the correct time (i.e. coursework and assessments)
- d. infringes the examination boards' regulations concerning unfair practice in an examination

Misconduct

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the awarding bodies issue strict rules regarding the whole examination process. Any breach is referred to as 'misconduct' and the sanctions for misconduct can result in disqualification from all examinations taken in that examination series.

Any cases of misconduct will be reported to the examination Officer in the first instance, who will act according to JCQ or any other governing bodies' regulations.

Candidates must be aware of their responsibilities.



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Notice to Candidates: JCQ Notifications

Candidates must ensure that they are familiar with the following documents which can be located on JCQ Website:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents/>

- Information for candidates – coursework
- Information for candidates – Non-examined Assessments
- Information for candidates – on screen tests
- Information for candidates – written exams
- Information for candidates – privacy notice
- Information for candidates – social media

In addition:

- Prohibited devices and warning to candidates, can be located here:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters/>

Course Work and Assessments

Some examinations have teacher assessed units that are not examined but work is marked internally and grades sent to the examination board. There are protocols to ensure standardisation of marking and a sample of the work is requested by exam boards for moderation. These are known as Non-examined Assessments (NEA). When a candidate is advised of the grade that will be sent to the awarding body, they have a right to appeal that mark. In the first instance they must talk to the teacher and use the specified appeals process, which does have strict time limits. Further details can be found in the school policy.

Before the examinations

exam Timetables

Non-summer examinations

Dates for non-summer examinations will be made available to eligible candidates by the exams Office

Summer 2024

Throughout the year Non-examined Assessments and language speaking exams take place. Some items of work are then submitted to the awarding bodies according to a subject specific timescale. (e.g. a number of subjects have a May deadline)

Written exams generally fall between 1st May – 21st June 2024**

***Please note that awarding bodies may, in an emergency, re-schedule any examination up to and including 26th June. It is the candidate's responsibility to be available.*

Results Available GCE & Level 3 Vocational Thursday 15th August 2024
GCSE & Level 1/2 Vocational Thursday 22nd August 2024

Information with regards to the collection of results will be issued closer to the time.



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Individual Timetables

awarding bodies issue examination dates and times, which, in conjunction with examination entries, enables the exams team to produce and issue timetables to candidates. This will be in paper form but will also be emailed to candidates school email address and published on MCAS.

Timetables show date and start time of each examination that a candidate is due to sit, and specify subjects they are being entered for and the levels of entry, where applicable. Candidates are responsible for checking that these are correct and directing any concerns immediately to the exams Office. Some subjects only have one tier of entry, others have foundation or higher tiers.

The candidate must check everything on their timetable very carefully, particularly that all personal details (date of birth, spelling of names) are accurate, as these will appear on certificates and it may be difficult to change them once certificates are awarded. Timetables do not show coursework or assessments that take place in a timeframe rather than at a set time. Candidates must note carefully any dates, times and deadlines issued for these assessments that will be issued by their teachers.

Clashes

A few candidates may have a clash where two subjects are timetabled at the same time. The school will make special timetable arrangements for these candidates only. Your son/daughter must check their individual timetable. If you think there is a clash that has not been resolved, candidates are urged to go to the Exams Office immediately. As a last resort, and if a clash cannot be resolved in any other way, overnight supervision arrangements may be put in place where parents and students will need to sign to accept a number of conditions to ensure the candidate cannot meet, communicate or have access to internet/TV etc.

Candidate Number:

Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number which will be shown on their exam timetable and name place card. This is the number that will be entered on examination papers.

Special Arrangements/Medical Information

Any special arrangements or medical information (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy etc.) regarding a candidate will be printed on their name place card. This is to assist exam staff and invigilators in implementing the arrangements and being aware of any special needs. If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the exams Office regarding this.

Contact Details

Please check that school has at least two up-to-date emergency contact telephone numbers and an e-mail address on record.



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Equipment

Please make sure your son/daughter has all the correct equipment before your examinations. Check the regulations in the Notice to Candidates and the information on the following pages.

Candidates are all given a comprehensive learning kit of equipment for examinations. They must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the examination.

Candidates using their own equipment must be in a clear pencil case or bag. Candidates must not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, highlighters or gel pens in their answers. Pencils must be used for graphs and diagrams only unless otherwise directed.

For mathematics and science exams, candidates using their own calculators must make sure they conform to the examination regulations. If in doubt, check with the subject teacher. Remove any covers or instructions and make sure batteries are new. Specialist maths equipment (for example compass, set square, protractor) are included in the learning pack.

Exam board regulations state that no unauthorised materials or equipment may be taken into exam rooms (e.g. notes, calculator cases/instruction leaflets, bags, coats, mobile phones, iPods, MP3 players, watches etc.). Candidates will have a designated area to store belongings whilst they are taking their exams. However, the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss of personal belongings and therefore candidates are advised not to bring anything of value especially mobile phones, ipods, MP3 players etc., to the school during the exam period.

Electronic devices of any sort **MUST NOT BE BROUGHT INTO THE EXAMINATION**

ROOM except calculators permitted by the exam board. If a mobile phone (or any other type of electronic communication or storage device) is found in the candidate's possession during an examination (even if it is turned off) it will be taken from them and a report made to the appropriate exam board. No exceptions can be made.

No food is allowed in the examination rooms (unless on medical grounds, with prior consent from the examination team or whilst under clash supervision). Candidates may bring water but it must be in a transparent bottle without a label.

During the examinations

Examination Regulations

All candidates must read this carefully and note that to break any of the examination rules or regulations could lead to disqualification from all subjects. The school is duty bound to report any breach of regulations to the awarding body.

Attendance at examinations

Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetable and arriving at the school on the correct day and time, properly dressed and equipped. Candidates must arrive 10 minutes prior to the start time of their examination. They must wait quietly outside the exam room to be scanned and invited to enter by the examination invigilators.



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Candidates who arrive late for an examination may still be admitted at the discretion of the centre's policy. If they are admitted, they will receive the full examination time as required by JCQ regulations. If special consideration applies, then you must speak to the examinations Officer (see Absence from examinations).

Full school uniform must be worn by all candidates for examinations.

Absence from examinations

If your son/daughter experiences difficulties during the examination period (e.g. illness, injury, personal problems) please inform the school at the earliest possible opportunity so we can help or advise you.

Only in 'exceptional circumstances' are candidates allowed special consideration for absence from any part of an examination. It is essential that medical or other appropriate evidence is obtained on the day by the candidate/parent and given to the examination Officer without delay.

Behaviour

Candidates must not attempt to communicate with or distract other candidates.

Writing on examination desks is regarded as vandalism and candidates will be asked to pay for any damage.

Drawing graffiti or writing offensive comments on the examination papers may result in the examination board refusing to accept the paper.

Examination Name Place Cards

examination name place cards are used to identify candidates in an exam, convey key information to both candidates and invigilators. These cards must not under any circumstances be defaced or removed from the examination room. If any intentional damage is caused to the card, the replacement cost will be charged to parents.

Invigilators and exam Instructions

The school employs fully trained external invigilators to conduct the examinations. Candidates are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards all invigilators and follow their instructions at all times.

Invigilators are in the examination rooms to supervise the conduct of the examination. They will distribute and collect the examination papers, tell candidates when to start and finish the examination, hand out extra writing paper if required and deal with any problems that occur during the examination, for example if a candidate is feeling ill.

Please note that invigilators cannot discuss the examination paper with candidates or explain the questions.

Pupils who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the examination room by members of the Examination Team/Senior Leadership Team.



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For the award of a grade by Special Consideration, where a candidate misses part of an examination through illness or personal misfortune, a minimum of 25% of the examination (including coursework) must be completed.

Please note that misreading the timetable will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of absence.

PARENTS AND CANDIDATES ARE REMINDED THAT THE SCHOOL WILL REQUIRE PAYMENT OF ENTRY PLUS ADMINISTRATION FEES, IF A CANDIDATE FAILS TO ATTEND AN EXAMINATION WITHOUT GOOD REASON OR WITHOUT INFORMING THE SCHOOL.

Exam Instructions

Candidates must listen carefully to the instructions and notices read out by the invigilators – there may be amendments to the exam paper that they need to know about

Candidates must check that they have the correct question paper – check the subject, paper and tier of entry.

Candidates will be required to enter name, centre number and candidate number on their examination paper. A name place card carrying all these details will be on the candidate's desk. The name entered must be their legal name as detailed on the exam card. Any query about the accuracy of this must be discussed with the exams Officer. Candidates must not write their details on the front of the paper or open the paper until they are instructed to do so by the exam invigilator.

Candidates must read all of the instructions carefully and number their answers clearly.

Candidates must stay in the examination room for at least one hour after the published start time of the exam (or for the duration of the exam if it is less than one hour). Candidates will not be allowed to leave an examination room early. If the candidate has finished the paper they must use any time remaining to check over their answers and ensure that they have completed their details correctly.

At the end of the examination all work must be handed in – candidates must remember to cross through any rough work but leave it legible, as credit is sometimes awarded for workings. If they have used more than one answer book each page must be marked with name, candidate number and clearly show answer number. These must be placed in their script at the first page that the extra work refers to.

Invigilators will collect the exam papers before the candidates leave the room. Absolute silence must be maintained during this time. Candidates must leave the room in silence and show consideration for those candidates who may still be working.

Candidates must remember they are still under examination conditions until they have left the examination room and the immediate vicinity.



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Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper must NOT be taken from the exam room.

Malpractice

This is a global term covering any breach in exam regulations or any behaviour issues that impact on any individual or the integrity of the examinations. The school as an approved exam Centre has a responsibility for reporting any potential malpractice that is then investigated. There are 9 possible penalties ranging from a 'Warning' through to a 'Candidate Debarral'

Full details can be found at:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

Emergencies

Contact Numbers

It is essential that you contact a member of the exam team immediately if you have any difficulty on the day of your examination. Equally, if you or your parents need help or advice at any time, please contact the exams team for advice.

examinations Officer: Mr D Knowles

Email: exams@tbcs.nor.olicatschools.org

The main school telephone number is: 01604 493211

Emergency Evacuation/Lockdown Procedure

In the event of an emergency evacuation candidates will be asked to stop writing when an evacuation alarm sounds. The Examination Officer will instruct candidates regarding evacuation. Candidates, supervised by invigilators, will be instructed to leave in silence and make their way to the specified examination assembly point where they remain under exam conditions. Candidates must leave everything on their desks and must not attempt to communicate with anyone else during the evacuation. A roll call will be taken using the exam register.

Upon return to the exam room, candidates must not start writing until the invigilator tells them to.

All candidates will be allowed the full working time for the examination and a report will be sent to the awarding body detailing the incident.

If it is impossible to maintain exam conditions the Examination Officer will be required to appraise the awarding bodies of this incident and the examination would cease. (Due regard must be given to timings and wider exam security) when the Examination Officer reports the situation.

In the event that the lockdown alarm is activated, students should hide under their desks and not come out until instructed to by a member of the leadership team.



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After the examination

Special Consideration

If during the course of the examination process, illness, injury, bereavement etc., occurs, the examination Office will make an application for 'Special Consideration'

The way that this is applied is used explained in this linked document:

www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Guide_to_spec_con_process_2023_24_FINAL.pdf

Notification of Results

Provisional results for GCSE exams taken in the November examination season will be distributed to candidates by the examination Officer on the day of publication.

Provisional results from the main summer exams will be available for collection by candidates only on the day notified by the awarding body (The school will notify candidates of the exact day and time). Results will also be emailed on the afternoon of results day.

Pupils who are unable to collect must make alternative arrangements with the Examination Officer.

Results will not be given to "friends" under any circumstances.

Post Results Service

In the event that a candidate is not happy with their result they must speak with their teacher.

The awarding bodies offer a post results service which is split into different categories:-

Review of Results (ROR) Service.

When a Review of Results is instigated, grades may increase, remain unchanged or go down.

Below is a brief outline of the services available. Further details and fees payable will be made available by the examination Officer to accompany the publications of results.

Types of Service

Service 1 (Clerical re-check)

This is a re-check of all clerical procedures leading to the issue of a result. The outcome of the re-check will be reported along with a statement of the total mark for each unit, or component included in the enquiry, Service 1 enquiries will involve the following checks:-

- a) The pages have all been marked
- b) The marks have all been counted
- c) The result matches the marks on the paper



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Service 2 (Post-results review of marking)

This is a post-results review of the original marking to ensure that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly. The service is available for individual units or components. The service will include:

- a. The clerical re-checks detailed in Service 1
- b. If requested, a photocopy of the reviewed script(s)
- c. A second examiner will review the paper/recording again

Priority Service 2 (Post-results review of marking)

This service is as Service 2, but is only available if the following criteria are met:

- a) The enquiry is about a Level 3 examination
- b) A candidate's place in further/higher education is dependent upon the outcome.

Access to Scripts

Candidates will be able to request access to their own scripts for general interest or to inform future learning. Original scripts will be returned.

Centres can apply for scripts to support staff in teaching or (for Level 3 examinations only) photocopied scripts to help decide whether to lodge a review of results. In all cases where the school intends to use candidates' written scripts as examples to other candidates, prior written permission must be obtained from the candidates concerned.

Guidelines to Candidates Regarding Review of Results

Candidates requesting review of marking or access to scripts will be charged.

Fees vary between awarding bodies. Please contact the exams Office for the latest charge. A charge may be added to the exam board charges in order to cover the cost of administration.

Before putting in a request, we strongly advise talking to your teacher in the first instance.

The decision to submit a request for a marking review must only be taken after careful consideration as grades can go down as well as up, or remain unchanged.

Application for a post results service must be made via the appropriate form available from the exams Office. A sheet providing deadline dates for review of results services is provided by the exams Office.

Candidate Consent

Before any application for a review of Result or Access to Scripts service can be made, a signed Candidate Consent Form has to be provided by the candidate which is available from the exams Office.



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Certificates

Once the review of marking period has passed, the awarding bodies send certificates confirming the candidate's results, this generally in late November for summer examinations. Certificates are collated by the Examinations Team in preparation for distribution.

Collection arrangements for external candidates will be posted on the school's website.

Internal candidates will be notified by staff when they may collect their certificates,

Certificates are very valuable documents. Some awarding bodies will only issue replacements in very exceptional circumstances (loss does not count). Instead, they may only supply a 'Statement of Results'. awarding bodies that do replace certificates make a charge. Costs vary between awarding bodies. Prices are subject to annual increases, and are currently in the region of £50 per certificate. Candidates will be required to sign for their certificates on collection, due to their value. It is recommended that certificates are treated like other valuable documentation.

Candidates must collect certificates in person. Alternatively, candidates may notify us in writing of a person who they authorise to collect and sign for their certificates on their behalf. Proof of identity for the nominated person will be required.

The exams Office will safely store any certificates for at least the minimum period of one year currently specified by JCQ. (The school currently stores certificates for longer, 5 years, but reserve the right to review this at any time). Once the storage period has passed the school arranges for the secure disposal in line with the exam regulations. Replacement certificates/ statement of results can be obtained directly from exam boards on payment of the appropriate fee.

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Q. What do we do if there's a clash on my son/daughters timetable?

- The school will re-schedule papers internally (on the same day if possible) where there is a clash of subjects. Candidates will normally sit one paper then have a break during which they will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. They will then sit the second subject paper. The correct times will be on your son/daughter's individual candidate timetable. It may be necessary for them to bring a packed lunch if they have exams in the morning and afternoon as they will have to remain in isolation until both examinations are completed. If in doubt consult the Examination Officer.

Q. What does my son/daughter do if they think they have the wrong paper?

- Invigilators will ask them to check before the exam starts. If they think something is wrong, they need to put their hand up and tell the invigilator immediately.

Q. What do we do if my son/daughter has an accident or is ill before the exam?

- Inform the school at the earliest opportunity so we can help or advise you. In the case of an accident that means you are unable to write it may be possible to provide you with a scribe to write your answers but we will need as much prior notice as possible.
- You will need to obtain medical evidence (from your GP or hospital) if you wish the school to make an appeal for Special Consideration on your behalf (see below).

Q. What is an Appeal for Special Consideration?

- Special Consideration is an adjustment to the marks or grades of a candidate who is eligible for consideration. The allowance for Special Consideration is from 0% (consideration given but addition of marks considered inappropriate) to 5% (reserved for exceptional cases). Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and no feedback is ever provided. Candidates will only be eligible for Special Consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but their performance in the examination or in the production of coursework was affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. examples of such circumstances may be illness, accident or injury, bereavement, domestic crisis. The examination Officer must be informed immediately, so that the necessary paperwork can be



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completed (within 7 days of the last exam session for each subject) and the candidate will be required to provide evidence to support such an application.

Q. What does my son/daughter do if they feel ill during the exam?

- They must put their hand up and an invigilator will assist them. They must inform an invigilator if they feel ill before or during an exam and they feel this may have affected their performance.

Q. If my son/daughter is late; can they still sit the examination?

- A candidate who arrives after the start of the examination may be allowed to enter the examination room and sit the examination. This is entirely at the discretion of the centre.
- A candidate who arrives after the start of the examination will be allowed the full time for the examination, depending on the Centre's organisational arrangements and provided that adequate supervision arrangements are in place.
- A candidate will be considered very late if they arrive: a) more than one hour after the awarding body's published starting time for an examination which lasts one hour or more, i.e. after 10.00am for a morning examination or after 2.00pm for an afternoon examination.
- For examinations that last less than one hour, a candidate will be considered very late if they arrive: a) after the awarding body's published finishing time for the examination.
- Where a candidate arrives very late for an examination we will:
 - a) Send the script to the awarding body/examiner in the normal way
 - b) Warn the candidate that the awarding body may not accept their script
 - c) Submit Form JCQ/VLA-Report on candidate admitted very late to examination room within seven days of the examination having taken place, providing the following information:

The reason the candidate arrived late, including any details of special arrangements made for the candidate to reach the centre;

The actual starting and finishing times of the examination;

The time the candidate started the examination;

The time the candidate finished the examination.

Note: If a candidate arrives in the afternoon for a paper that had been re-arranged for a morning session, the candidate may be allowed to take the paper at the published time as long as he or she has not had any contact with candidates who sat the paper earlier. The awarding body will then decide whether or not to accept the script.

If a candidate is late they should advise the exams Office as soon as they are aware of a problem occurring and report straight to the exams Office as soon as they arrive at the school.



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Q. If my son/daughter misses the examination can they take it on another day?

- No. Timetables are regulated by the exam boards and they must attend on the given date and time. You will be charged entry fees if an exam is missed without a good reason or not informing the school.

Q. What items are not allowed into the examination room?

- Only material that is listed on question papers (e.g. an anthology) is permitted in the examination room and candidates who are found to have any material with them that is not allowed will be reported to the appropriate examinations board. In such circumstances, a candidate would normally be disqualified from the paper or the subject concerned.
- Bags and coats and any other items not permitted under examination regulations must be left in the designated area.
- The school does not accept responsibility for any items left in the designated area so they are advised not to bring any valuables into school with them when they attend for an examination.
- No food is allowed in the exam room. Candidates may bring water in a transparent bottle without a label.
- Mobile telephones, MP3, ipads, watches, ear buds or other internet-enabled devices must not be brought into the exam room even if they are turned off.

Q. How do we know how long the exam is?

- The length of the examination is shown in minutes on the candidate's individual timetable under the heading 'duration'. Invigilators will tell the candidates when to start and finish the exam. The invigilators will write the finish time of the exam on a flip chart, poster or board at the front of the exam room.
- The school may arrange for some candidates with special educational needs to have extra time to complete the examination. This will be detailed on their individual exam timetable.
- There will be a clock in all examination rooms.

Q. Can my son/daughter leave the exam early?

- It is a requirement of the exam boards that all candidates must stay in the examination room for at least one hour after the published start time of the exam (or for the duration of the exam if it is less than one hour). It is not the school's policy to allow candidates to leave the exam room early, as this is disruptive to other candidates. A candidate may not leave the examination room without the permission of the invigilators.



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Q. Can my son/daughter go to the toilet during the exam?

- Ideally toilet visits should be avoided as this will impact on the candidate's time in the exam. We encourage candidates to ensure they have visited the toilet prior to entering the exam room. However, if it is absolutely necessary, they will be escorted by an invigilator. There are no toilet visits permitted within the first hour or last 10 minutes of any exam unless there is medical reason or an emergency.

Q. Why do candidates need to check the details on their timetable?

- The details on your timetable will be used when certificates are printed. If the name or date of birth on your certificates does not match your birth certificate it could cause your son/daughter problems if they are asked to show their certificates to a potential employer or college/university at some time in the future. You must also check that the subjects and tiers of entry they are entered for are correct and that no subjects are missing.

Q. What should we do if my son/daughter loses their exam timetable?

- General timetables will appear on the school website.
- Candidates can request duplicate copies of individual timetables from the exams Office.