



THE STUDENTS

GUIDE TO EXAMS



A Guide to Exams for students



**ST TERESA
of CALCUTTA**
Catholic Academy Trust

INTRODUCTION



Dear Student,

As your examinations draw near, this booklet has been put together to support you during your preparations. It includes helpful guidance, key advice, and the exam board rules you must follow. Please take the time to read through it carefully, ensuring you understand all the expectations in place.

I wish you the very best of luck in your upcoming exams. Stay confident, stay focused, and do your very best—you are capable of great things!

Warm regards,

Mr. B. McDivitt
Exams Officer

www.msj.stoccat.org.uk

"A woodsman was once asked, 'What would you do if you had just five minutes to chop down a tree?' He answered, 'I would spend the first two and a half minutes sharpening my axe.'"

REVISION TIPS

1. Be equipped – If a plumber turns up to mend my radiator without tools, I know they are not going to do a good job! The same applies to revision.

The basics are: – stationary, calculator, flash cards, highlighters, post-it notes, a pad of paper, revision guides, past papers, water bottle, and healthy snacks.

2. Have a space to revise

Most people work best if they have a comfortable and suitable working environment. Use a quiet space with no distractions, ensure all your equipment is there and when you sit there it is your place of work.

3. Put your phone on Flight mode

For the periods you are revising turn your phone to flight mode! It may seem hard at first but once you have done it 3 or 4 times it will become normal and soon become a habit. You will also soon realise you are not missing out on much!

4. Nothing is achieved without a plan

Things rarely happen by chance, there has to be a plan in place to ensure it happens and the same is true of revision. Create a revision timetable and keep a copy in your study area and give a copy to your parent/carer to put on display too. You can then tick off as you go along so you can both see the time you have put in.

5. Know what you need to know

Ensure you have links to all the specifications of the examinations you are taking. Your teacher can help you to find these. Use them as a checklist to see exactly what it is you should know for your exams.

6. Practice, Practice, and Practice – Past or practice papers.

Get into a routine of completing the papers in timed, exam conditions. Highlighting areas or topics that need extra revision. Spend the following session revising these areas or ask your teacher to go over it again.

7. Flashcards

You can buy pre-filled cards or even better make your own and they can be used in conjunction with past papers and revision questions. Once you have identified an area that needs more work use the cards to memorise and learn the specific area.

“You are capable of more than you know. Aim high. Behave honorably.”

8. Spaced Learning

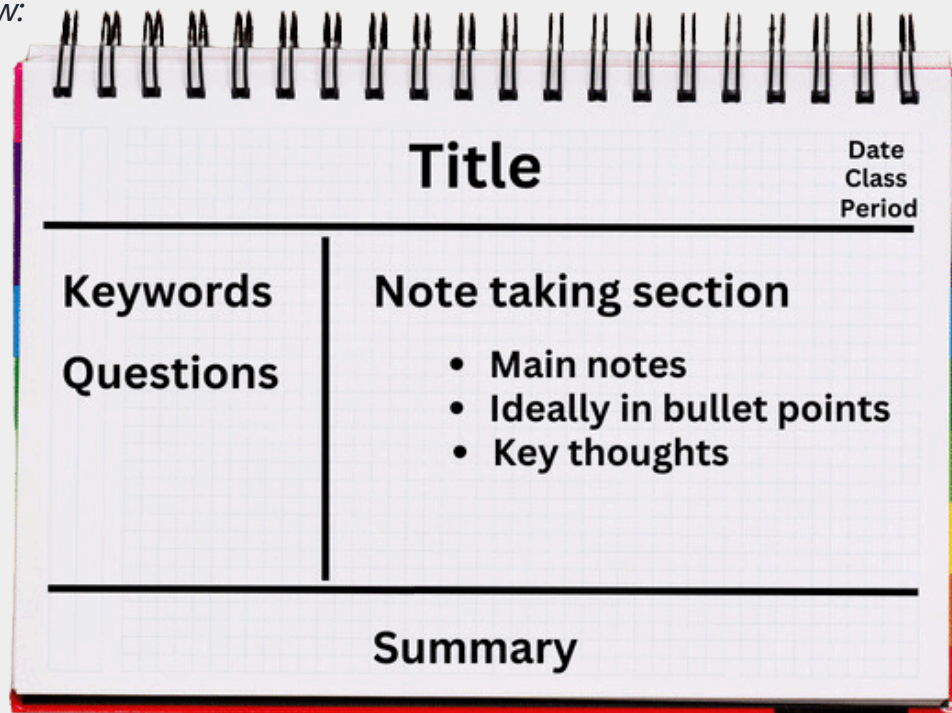
Don't revise all your topics in one go (cramming), it just doesn't stay in your head. You should revise 'chunks' of topics for small amounts of time (15 mins) and then move on to another 'chunk' from a different topic. This will improve your memory!

9. Interleaving

Mix up the topics and subjects you do on your revision timetable, spending a long time on one thing often gives us the impression that we have mastered it but upon returning to it, we have forgotten it. Interleaving means returning to topics and subjects more often, increasing the chances of it "sticking".

10. The Cornell Method

The Cornell method of taking notes is an effective way of revising. It is a great method to get you to 'think' about your revision. Simply split your page into 3 sections as shown in the diagram below:



11. Teamwork

Revision doesn't have to be a sole pursuit! It is a great idea to break up study days by visiting a friend's house and a group of you working together, testing each other, and marking each other's work.

12. Do the hard work

To progress you need to be pushing yourself and putting in the hard work. Imagine training for a marathon, it takes hard work and effort, this should be the same when preparing for your examinations!

"Everything you want is out there waiting for you. But you have to take action to get it."

MASTERING EXAM STRESS:

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING

Being well prepared for your exams is the best way to overcome stress and anxiety, and gives you the best chance of getting good grades.

Take a few minutes to read the instructions and questions. Then you'll know exactly what's expected of you. Ask an exam supervisor if anything is unclear – they're there to help you.

Plan how much time you'll need for each question. Do not panic if you get stuck on a question, but try to leave yourself enough time at the end to come back to it.

Try a breathing exercise if you're feeling overwhelmed in the exam. Breathe in through your nose for 4 counts, hold it for 2 counts, and breathe out for 7 counts. Repeating this can help you feel calm.

Once the exam is finished, forget about it. Do not spend too much time going over it in your head or comparing answers with your friends. Just focus on the next exam instead.

Try writing down 3 things that went well, or for which you're grateful, at the end of every day. Even if you think the exam didn't go as well as you had hoped look for the positives and get ready for the next exam.

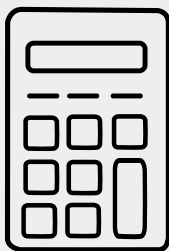
Believe in yourself! You've worked hard to get here, and we know you have what it takes to succeed. The only thing standing between you and your goals is doubt—so shake it off and show the world just how capable and incredible you are! You've got this!

“Fear, inherently, is not meant to limit you. Fear is the brain’s way of saying that there is something important for you to overcome.”

EXAM CHECKLIST



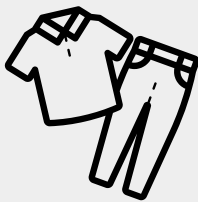
You should bring with you the correct equipment needed to do your exams as these will not necessarily be provided in the exam room. Only clear pencil cases are allowed on your desk, any others should be left in your bag. Black ink pens only, **do not use gel pens.**



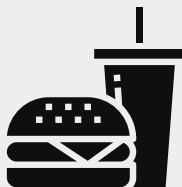
In an exam where you have the use of a calculator; please ensure the case/cover of your calculator does not have any printed formulae or instructions and that you have cleared anything stored in the memory.



There is absolutely **NO** talking or communication between students once you enter the exam room. If you have any questions, you should raise your hand and an Invigilator will come to you.



You should wear your **full uniform** for all your exams.



No food is allowed in the exam hall. If you have a special requirement – please see the Exams Officer before the exams.



Only clear water bottles are allowed in the exam hall. These should be clear bottles with all labels removed and a spill-proof cap.

“Some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen.”

RULES & REGULATIONS

YOU MUST

1. Be on time for your exams.

Morning exams usually begin between 8:30 am and 9:00 am.

Afternoon exams begin between 12:30 pm and 1:00 pm.

Make sure you check your individual timetable for your exam start times.

If you are late, your work may **not** be accepted by the exam boards.

2. Always listen to the invigilator and always follow their instruction.

3. Ensure that all Mobile Phones, Smart Watches, Airpods, Earbuds, iPods, MP3 players, etc are switched off and handed into an Invigilator or the Exams Officer.

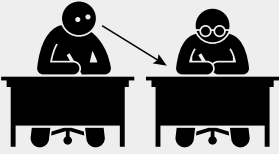
4. Remove ALL wristwatches as they are classed as unauthorised items and so should not be worn. Please ensure they are also handed in or left in your coat/bag.

5. Leave any notes in your coat/bag or hand to an invigilator.
Possession of unauthorised materials is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use them!

POSSESSION OF UNAUTHORISED MATERIALS IS BREAKING THE RULES, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT INTEND TO USE THEM!

"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."

YOU MUST NOT



1. Become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the exam.

If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, this will be reported to the exam board and it may mean being disqualified from all your exams – not just the one you were caught in.



2. Talk to, communicate with or disturb other students in any way once you have entered the exam room.

If you do so, the same may happen as in **No1**.



3. Use a dictionary or computer spell checker unless you are told otherwise.



4. Impersonate another candidate

This is a criminal offence and is dealt with by the police. You may be prosecuted in a court of law.



5. Leave the examination room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished - you will not be able to return.

Candidates have been disqualified from their exams in previous years due to their behaviour and/or having unauthorised material in their possession.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

“Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential.”

DURING THE EXAMINATION

- Check that you have the right question paper in front of you – and then check that the Subject, Date, Unit, and Tier are correct.
- Read the instructions carefully on the front of the question paper/and or on the answer booklet, so you understand what you need to do. Fill in all the information on the front of the question paper when told to do so but **do not open the exam paper until you have been instructed** the exam has begun.

TELL THE INVIGILATORS AT ONCE IF...

- If you think you have not been given the correct question paper.
- If any of the materials listed on the front of the paper are missing.
- If the paper is incomplete or badly printed.

If a page is meant to be blank, it will say so!

Write clearly and write in the designated sections of the exam paper only.

Don't rush. Pace yourself and allow the appropriate time for each question, your answers should be long enough to fit the marks on offer.

Show all your working out/rough work. Neatly cross it through when you've finished, but leave it legible and hand it in with the rest of your answers.

Do not write any inappropriate, offensive, or unnecessary material (or doodles) on your exam paper as these may be disqualified by the exam boards.

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.

The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time

Leave yourself 5-10 minutes at the end to read through and check all your answers. As boring as this may seem, it is very important. You will often find mistakes/omissions and you can put them right. It could mean the difference between you getting a Grade 4 and a Grade 5

DURING THE EXAM, PUT YOUR HAND UP IF:

- You need more paper
- You feel ill
- You have a problem and don't know what to do.

You must not ask for, and will not be given, any help with or explanation of the questions – this is part of the exam.

AT THE END OF THE EXAM STOP WRITING WHEN YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

Make sure your Name, Exam number, and Centre number are on all pieces of paper you hand in. Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet, but double-check check you have added all your candidate information to each additional sheet.

- Exam conditions DO NOT end until you have left the room.

DON'T BE TEMPTED TO TALK TO, TURN AROUND TO COMMUNICATE WITH, OR DISTURB OTHER STUDENTS. YOUR PAPER COULD STILL BE CANCELLED!

- You must not leave the exam room until you are told to do so. Once you have been dismissed, collect your belongings and leave the room quickly and in silence. REMEMBER – others may still be sitting their exam in the room.

- Do not take any exam stationery from the exam room.

This includes question papers, answer booklets, rough work, or any other material provided for the exam.

"You were born to win. But to be a winner, you must plan to win, prepare to win, and expect to win."

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ILL ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM

- If you are ill and are unable to attend an exam it is vital you phone the school first thing in the morning (01204 391800) to inform us.
- You must also obtain a note from your doctor detailing the reason for non-attendance. There is the possibility of submitting a Doctors Note to the Exam Boards to ask for special consideration. The Board looks at this in conjunction with other exam marks for the student in that particular subject, along with coursework marks and mock exam marks. This will **sometimes** then enable them to adjust the mark and grade accordingly, **although there is no guarantee that this will happen.**
- If you are feeling unwell, but still able to travel, we suggest you come to the exam and we can assess the situation then. **In most cases, it is better to take the exam if you can.**
- If in doubt – **PHONE THE SCHOOL**
- If you do not attend an exam without a valid reason, you will be charged for that exam. Make sure we have your mobile phone number in case we need to contact you.

LATENESS

- Please always be on time for your exams. Depending on how late you are, the exam boards would have to be informed and they may not accept your paper. However, if you are unavoidably running late please get to school as soon as possible and always inform the school that you are on the way and why you are late.

"It always seems impossible until it's done"

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What do I do if there is a clash on my timetable?

It will be indicated on the timetable if there is a clash of exams, with details of which exam to sit first and the start time of the following exam. If you have any questions then consult the Exams Officer immediately.

Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?

Invigilators will ask you to check before the exam starts. If you think something is wrong put your hand up and tell an Invigilator immediately as mistakes cannot be rectified after the exam.

Q. If I'm late can I still sit the exam?

This depends on how late you are. You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to reception. A member of staff will escort you to the exam room. You must not enter the exam room without permission once an exam has started. Depending on the length of the exam and how late you are school may have to inform the exam board and it is possible that they may not accept your work.

Q. If I miss the examination can I take it another day?

No. Timetables are regulated by the exam boards and you must attend on the given dates and times.

"Genius is 10% inspiration, 90% perspiration."

AFTER THE EXAMS HAVE ENDED

HOW DO I FIND OUT MY RESULTS?

Results will be available from the school on Thursday 21st of August, 2025, with the collection time to be confirmed. Result slips will be printed on school letterhead paper listing all your subjects, the exam boards, and results.

HOW DO I GET MY EXAM CERTIFICATES?

These will not arrive in school until around November 2025. Once they have been received and are ready to be distributed you will receive an invitation to attend certificate evening. If you can't attend then you will be able to collect these from the Main Reception after the event. We only hold exam certificates for a limited time so please ensure you collect these, they are a legal document and future employers will want to see them as proof of your exam results. They are expensive to replace so keep them safe!

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss you'll land among the stars."

On your exam day

This checklist will help make sure you are as prepared as possible for your exams, so that on the day itself you can focus on doing your best.

Before sitting your exams, ensure:

- ☐ You know the date, time and location of your exams – you might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner
- ☐ You know who to contact at school in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam

What you cannot take into the exam:

- ☐ Any type of phone
- ☐ Revision notes
- ☐ Any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)



What you will need:

- ☐ A clear pencil case
- ☐ At least two black ink pens – blue pens are not accepted
- ☐ An approved calculator for relevant exams
- ☐ Appropriate apparatus such as a ruler or protractor for relevant exams
- ☐ A clear water bottle if you wish to take one in – it is important it does not have a label on



Other important information:

- ☐ Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator
- ☐ Fill in your details on the front of your exam paper
- ☐ If you need additional answer sheets, please raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will provide you with one. Remember to add your details to this booklet as well
- ☐ If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, please raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will escort you from the examination room if possible
- ☐ Make sure you stay silent – talking to a fellow student could result in disqualification from all your exams

If you have any questions about the format on the day, please ask your teacher or exams officer.



Information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers



Things to do on social media:

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher



Things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment is not your own independent work



If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- !! • Receive a written warning
- !! • Lose marks
- !! • Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- !! • Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules: jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

*"You are braver than you believe, stronger
than you seem and smarter than you think."*



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