



ARK Putney Academy

**GCSE and AS/A2
Public Examinations**

**Information for
Parents and Students
2021/22**

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Introduction

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.

APA 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.

If you have any other questions please feel free to make enquiries from the exams officer. You can contact the exams officer by:-

Telephone: 0208 788 3421

e-mail: s.lambird@arkputneyacademy.org

Who is responsible for the examinations?

The 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 Principal.

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.

The 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 centre policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject, for the most appropriate level of exam. However, the school reserves the right to withdraw any student from an exam after taking into consideration mock exam performance. In this case, parents will be consulted.

What do I need to do if a student has problems that may affect his/her examination performance?

Some candidates may be eligible for extra time or special arrangements in examinations. It is important that you advise the School of any difficulties at the time of enrolment. Request for Access Arrangement must be made through the SEN Department. Any application must be supported by an Educational Psychologist's report/medical certificate.

Access Arrangements cover the entire course and should be applied for as early as possible. Arrangements must be approved before an examination or assessment and are intended to allow attainment to be demonstrated.

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 if necessary an application for special consideration can be made to the boards.

Parents should be aware that regulations have changed in the last few years, and a diagnosis of Dyslexia is no longer sufficient to allow a candidate extra time. The awarding bodies now require 'evidence of need in the normal working arrangements' i.e. the candidate uses extra time in class and for tests and mock exams.

The decision to either grant or apply for access arrangements will always be made by the centre on the basis of an assessment report produced by an EP or suitably qualified Specialist Teacher and the centre staff's own knowledge of the candidate's needs and normal way of working.

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 the 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.

Non-exam assessments deadlines

Some subjects have an element of non-exam assessment included in them which has to be completed. Students work will be marked and assessed by the school and moderated by the awarding body well before the formal exam sessions take place. The School sets deadlines that allow time for this process and to meet the awarding body deadlines. These cannot be changed. Students who do not complete non-exam assessment or submit on time will not be allocated a mark for this portion and their overall grade will suffer.

Internal Appeals Procedure

Students may make appeals to the School regarding the procedures used in internal assessment, but not the actual marks or grades submitted by the School for moderation. *See the Internal Appeals Policy.*

A student or parent wishing to appeal against the procedure used in internal assessments should contact the Assistant Principal as soon as possible to discuss the appeal, and the School must receive a written appeal *at least two weeks before the date of the last external exam in the subject.* On receipt of a written appeal, the Assistant Principal will conduct an enquiry into the internal assessment. This enquiry will consider whether the procedures used in the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body. The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including details of any relevant communication with the awarding body and of any steps taken to further protect the interests of the candidates.

How do students know when the date exams take place?

The main period for exams is from mid May until the end of June but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier. There may also be GCSE English and Maths resit exams in November. All candidates will receive an 'Individual Student Timetable' which will give the dates and sessions (a.m. or p.m.) of the written papers they are taking. Oral and practical exam times will be arranged by the subject teacher. The timetable will be displayed on the notice board in the main foyer, this will include start times and the location of the examinations. A seating plan showing the exact position of each candidate will also be displayed on the notice board.

Contingency Day

The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is an additional day at the end of the exam period. It will only be used in the event of major local or national disruption to the summer exam series, in which case it is possible that timetable dates could be affected. Students will need to make sure that they are available until the end of the summer exam series.

At what times do the exam sessions begin?

Unless otherwise advised, all exams at APA start at **9.00 am** for morning papers and **2.00 pm** for afternoon papers. Candidates are asked to report no later than **8.45 am** for morning examinations and **1.45 pm** for afternoon examinations.

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.

Where will the examinations be held?

The main location for written papers is in the Hall, but other rooms are also frequently used particularly in the summer when there is a large number of candidates.

Candidates are asked to be there 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. The candidate will sit at the desk bearing a card with their candidate number.

What happens if a student has more than one exam at the same time?

If a candidate is timetabled to sit two or more exams in different subjects at the same time this is known as a clash. This should be picked up when checking their individual exam timetable 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. This is essential to avoid compromising the integrity of the examination and needs to be organised well in advance.

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 preferably their lunch and a drink.

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 awarding body regulations on this matter. Normally candidates with a genuine reason and who are brought straight to centre may be admitted within the first 30 minutes of the start time, after this time the Board will decide whether to accept any paper sat.

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 a candidate sits a paper but is unwell, the Exams Officer can apply for special considerations, a Medical certificate must be supplied.

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 can be countersigned by your doctor/nurse or surgery receptionist.

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.

What should students bring to the examinations?

Candidates should bring writing equipment, coloured pencils, erasers etc. in a transparent plastic bag or pencil case. Non-transparent pencil boxes or cases will not be permitted in the examination room.

Pens should be black ink only. A HB Pencil will be required for papers with multiple choice questions. Some subject papers will require the use of 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 students **not** bring with them?

Ideally, all unauthorised items such as, Mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 Players, Smartwatches and wrist watches which have a data storage device should not be brought into the examination room. The awarding bodies treat mere possession of these items as an infringement.

If brought into the examination room, these items should be left switched off and left in candidates bags or handed to an invigilator before the start of an exam, but the centre 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.

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. No fizzy drinks, cans or pouches will be allowed due to the risk of spillage. Labels must be removed.

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.

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

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

Regulations governing the use of calculators

Some subject papers, especially Maths, 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.

What are the regulations regarding mobile phones?

The regulations state that ideally, mobile phones are not to be brought into examination rooms. 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 awarding body. 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.

What is meant by Malpractice?

Malpractice is the term that the awarding bodies 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 awarding bodies take the integrity of exams very seriously and it is important that candidates heed the Exam Officers instructions carefully.

What standards of behaviour are expected during examinations?

All candidates are given a copy of a 'Notice to Candidates' produced by the awarding bodies, which gives general guidelines for conduct, which must be observed.

APA and the awarding bodies regard breaches of examination regulations very seriously. Parents should please impress on your son/daughter the importance of good behaviour in an examination, any student that disturbs or upsets other candidates will be removed from the exam room, and the circumstances will be reported to the awarding body.

This may result in the candidate not receiving a grade for the whole of that examination.

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.

When and how are the results distributed?

Results for summer 2021 examinations will be available at the school on the following dates: -

GCE results - 18th August 2021 - Summer exams

GCSE results - 25th August 2021 – Summer exams

Results will normally be available for collection from 10.00 a.m on results day. Students wanting a relative or friend to collect their results **must** send a signed letter of authorisation with the collector.

Any uncollected GCSE or A level results will be posted 1st class on the same day.

What can students 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 before proceeding to an EAR (enquiry about result).

If there are serious grounds for concern about a result then the centre can initiate an enquiry with the appropriate awarding body.

Details of the procedures, deadline dates and fees are available from the Exams Officer and the process should be started as soon as possible after consultation with the subject teachers and the head of department concerned.

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

It is currently possible to have access to marked scripts. You will need to contact the Exams Officer and complete an enquiry form and pay a fee for each 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.

How do students apply to re-sit?

Students should discuss their decision to re-sit with their subject teacher/Head of Department, who will need to inform the Exams Officer.

If the decision to resit is made after the deadline for exam entries a late fee will be payable in addition to the exam fee.

Who pays for re-sits?

The school will pay re-sit fees for GCSE English and Maths on the border of a grade 4. If students wish to better a grade above grade 4 they will be charged.

When do students receive certificates?

The awarding bodies issue certificates in May and November. Certificates will be posted to students by first class post unless instructed otherwise. A friend or family member may collect them but only bearing a letter of request signed by the candidate and some form of ID.

Certificates returned to the School as undelivered will be kept for five years and will be returned to the awarding body if uncollected after this time. Replacement certificates will be issued by the awarding body only in exceptional circumstances, evidence of which will be required. In all other cases a Certifying Statement of Results will be issued. There will be a fee for this service.

Date of Policy: December 2021