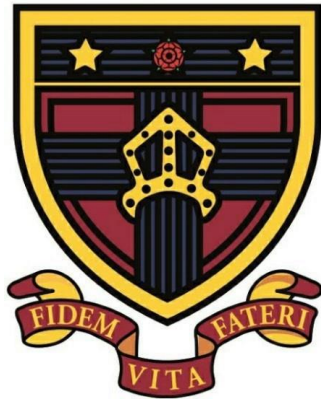


St. Mary's College



EXAMS POLICY 2024/2025

St. Mary's College Exams policy

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The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates;
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.
- to ensure all exams and external assessments are conducted in accordance with national and examining body regulations and specifically the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Exams "ICE".

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in St. Mary's College exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exams policy will be reviewed every year by the Vice Principal, SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and Exams Officer.

Where references are made to JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

1. Exam responsibilities

The Principal

- has overall responsibility for St. Mary's College as an exams Centre and advises on appeals and remarks.
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document 'Suspected malpractice' policies and procedures.
- has delegated responsibility for external exams to the Vice Principal who, in turn, line manages the Exams Officer.
- Approves students on registered courses not being entered for the final qualifications.

The Exams Officer

- manages the administration of external exams in accordance with ICE
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual exams timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- oversees the production and distribution, to all centre staff and candidates, of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events.
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exams timetable that will affect them.
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary Non-Examination Assessment (NEA)s are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Ensure staff have access to all JCQ instruction booklets for NEA/coursework.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams.
- receives checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- with the SENCo, administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publication. Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- identifies and manages, along with the Vice Principal, exam timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges.
- liaises with the SENCO over organising the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams.
- Works with teaching staff to ensure candidates' NEAs marks are submitted, and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- tracks, dispatches, and stores returned NEAs.
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any post results service requests.

- makes applications for special consideration in accordance with the JCQ document.
- reports all suspicious or actual incidents of malpractice and follows procedures contained in the JCQ document suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments – policies and procedures.
- prepares reports for teaching staff on results day, including downloading relevant reports from examining body websites.
- produces analysis of the exam results as requested by the Vice Principal and Principal.
- facilitates the annual inspection by the JCQ inspector and reports the outcome of the inspection to the Vice Principal.

Heads of Department & Heads of Year are responsible for:

- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exams entries or amendments to entries.
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Officer.
- ensuring all relevant members of their department are familiar with the relevant assessment framework and objectives for all relevant examinations.
- ensuring all relevant teaching staff are made aware of Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments.
- ensuring secure storage of NEA/coursework materials as required by the JCQ instructions and subject specification.
- reporting any issues regarding NEA/coursework to the Exams Officer who will advise on what action is required.
- accurate completion of coursework / NEA declaration sheets.
- decisions on post-results procedures.
- The Head of Careers is responsible for:
- guidance and careers information including the relevance of the choice of examinations to the pupil's ambitions where requested.

Teachers are responsible for:

- supplying information on entries, NEAs as required by the head of department and/or Exams Officer.
- allowing students use of notified Access Arrangements during lessons and assessments.
- maintaining accurate records of student progress enabling accurate prediction of results.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) is responsible for:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Exams Officer in good time so that they are able to put in place exam day arrangements
- processing any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required).
- working with the Exams Officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exams rooms.

Lead invigilator/invigilators (identified as the most senior colleague on the daily cover list for external exams) are responsible for:

- assisting the Exams Officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations.
- collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam.
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring their safe and secure return to the exams office or college office.

Candidates are responsible for:

- confirmation and signing of entries.
- understanding Centre-assessed work regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the work as their own.
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all exams according to the JCQ regulations.

2. Qualifications offered

- The qualifications offered at St. Mary's College are decided by the Heads of Department in consultation with their Line Managers and the Vice Principal.
- The types of qualifications currently offered are GCSE, iGCSE, AS and A Level.
- The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found on the College's website for that year. If there is to be a change of specification for the next year, the Exams Officer must be informed as soon as possible.
- Informing the Exams Officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.
- Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by the Head of Department in consultation with the Vice Principal.

3. Exam series

- Internal exams (mock or trial exams) and assessments are scheduled at a suitable time in the academic year and, if applicable, published in the college calendar.
- External exams and assessments are scheduled as per the annual JCQ timetable. Internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

4. Exam timetables

- Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for external exams as soon as possible before each series begins, ensuring a copy is available on the school website.

5. Entries, entry details and late entries

- Candidates or parents/carers can request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal. St. Mary's College sometimes accepts entries from private candidates.
- St. Mary's College does not act as an exams Centre for other organisations. Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email.
- Heads of department will provide estimated entry information to the Exams Officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines.
- Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the Head of Department.
- GCSE re-sits/retakes are allowed
- AS re-sits/retakes are allowed.
- A level resits/retakes are allowed.
- Re-sit decisions will be made by the Head of Department in consultation with the Line Manager and the Vice Principal.

6. Exam fees

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

The Exams Officer will publish the deadline for actions well in advance for each exams series. GCSE entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.

AS entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.

A level entry exam fees are paid by the Centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the candidates where appropriate.

Reimbursement will not be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary NEAs requirements.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are paid by the candidates.

Candidates must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should St. Mary's College not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insist on pursuing the enquiry.

7. Equality Legislation

All St. Mary's College staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

St. Mary's College will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

8. Access arrangements

The SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of SENCo.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo and Exams Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCo in conjunction with the Exams Officer and Vice Principal.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENCo in conjunction with the Exams Officer and Vice Principal.

9. Contingency planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Contingency plans are available via email and/or briefing meetings and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and awarding organisations.

10. Private candidates

Managing private candidates is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

11. Managing invigilators

External staff may be used to invigilate examinations in addition to internal staff used for cover. Wherever possible internal staff will only be used when they have 'suspended' lessons.

These invigilators will be used for external exams.

Recruitment of external invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer & SENCo.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer, SENCo and Principal's PA.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the Centre.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Exams Officer & SENCo.

12. Malpractice

The Principal in consultation with Exams Officer and Vice Principal are responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

13. Exam days

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms, and will be advised of requirements one week in advance.

The Senior Invigilator will start and finish all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Senior staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates. Any staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the exam room and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to Heads of Department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations.

After an exam, the Exams Officer will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies, working in conjunction with College office staff.

14. Candidates

The Exams Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series.

St. Mary's College published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and St. Mary's College accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time.

Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

The Senior invigilator and invigilation team in tandem with the college office staff are responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

15. Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will, in liaison with the Vice Principal be responsible as necessary for organising supervision, supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

16. Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an exam because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert St. Mary's College Exams Officer to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within 5 working days of the exam.

The Exams Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within 5 working days of the exam.

17. Internal assessment

It is the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer and College office will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.

Students will be made aware of marks for internally assessed/non-examined assessments by the deadline specified in writing to students and parents by the Exams Officer. Any appeals against NEA marking will be dealt with in accordance with St. Mary's College NEA appeals policy document.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the Exams Officer by the Head of Department. The Exams Officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with St. Mary's College complaints policy document.

18. Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the Centre
- by post to their home address - posted (first class)
- by signing for upon collection
- by being scanned and emailed by prior arrangement with the College office
- over the phone with the College office if a password has already been set up. The results slip will be in the form of a St. Mary's College produced document.
- Through Firefly.

Arrangements for St. Mary's College to be open on results days are made by the Vice Principal. The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Vice Principal.

19. Enquiries about Results (EAR)

EARs may be requested by St. Mary's College staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re- moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by St. Mary's College or the candidate depending upon the origin of the request.

All final decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Heads of Department.

If a candidate's request for an EAR is not supported, the candidate may appeal and the Centre will respond by following the process in its complaints policy document.

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer following the JCQ guidance.

20. Access to Scripts (ATS)

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written exam papers within 30 days of the receipt of results.

St. Mary's College staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. Prior written permission must be obtained from any candidate where the Centre intends to request their script(s). Written consent from the candidate is acceptable by email.

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned.

The cost of EARs will be paid by St. Mary's College or the candidate depending upon the origin of the request.

Processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

21. Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at St. Mary's College
- by signing for upon collection

Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

St. Mary's College retains certificates indefinitely.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. A transcript of results may be issued if a candidate agrees to pay the costs incurred.

The following are attached as appendices to this policy:

- GCSE NEAss,
- Risk Management Process GCSE NEAss,
- Outlining Staff Responsibilities Appeals Against Internally Assessed Marks

Reviewed by Vice Principal Sept **2024 Date of next review – Sept 2025.**

Appendix 1

St. Mary's College

GCSE NEAs Risk

management process

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Timetabling			
Controlled assessment schedule clashes with other activities	Plan/establish priorities well ahead (e.g. at the start of the academic year)	Plan dates in consultation with school calendar - negotiate with other parties	Vice Principal
Too many NEAs close together across GCSE subjects	Plan NEAs so they are spaced over the duration of the course	Space NEAs to allow candidates some time between them	Head of Department and Vice Principal
Accommodation			
Insufficient space in classrooms for candidates	Once the size of the cohort is known at the start of the year, flag instances where regular classroom space may not be suitable to conduct NEAs.	Use more than one classroom or multiple sittings where necessary	HoD and Vice Principal
Insufficient facilities for all candidates	Careful planning ahead and booking of rooms / centre facilities		HoD and Vice Principal

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Downloading awarding body set tasks			
IT system unavailable on day of assessment	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date in all cases	Book IT equipment well ahead and download tasks before scheduled date of assessment	Head of Department
Teaching staff unable to access task details	Test secure access rights ahead of NEA schedule every year and every session	Ensure teaching staff have access rights for the correct area of awarding body secure extranet sites well ahead of the NEA schedule	Exams Officer
Loss of task details in transmission	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date	Contact awarding body and ask for replacement task; download again	Exams Officer
Absent candidates			
Candidates absent for all or part of assessment (various reasons)	Plan alternative session(s) for candidates		Head of Department

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Control levels for task taking			
The assessment is undertaken under incorrect level of control (time, resources, supervision and collaboration)	Ensure teaching staff know what level is applicable and understand what is involved. Provide training if required	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Head of Department
Supervision			
Student study diary/plan not provided or completed*	Ensure teaching staff are aware of the need for study diary/plans to be completed early in course	Ensure candidates start, continue and complete study diary/plans that are signed after every session	Head of Department
Teaching staff do not understand that the supervision of NEAs is their responsibility	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the nature of NEAs and their role in supervising assessments		Head of Department
A suitable supervisor has not been arranged for an assessment where teaching staff are not supervising	A suitable supervisor must be arranged for any NEA session where a teacher is not supervising, in line with the awarding body's specification		Vice Principal

* Not all GCSE NEAs will require the completion of a study diary or study plans

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Task setting			
Teaching staff fail to correctly set tasks	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the task setting arrangements as defined in the awarding body's specification**	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Head of Department
Assessments have not been moderated in line with the awarding body's specification	Check specification and plan required moderation appropriately	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Head of Department
Security of materials			
Assessment tasks not kept secure before assessment	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the importance of task security	Contact the awarding body to request/obtain different assessment tasks	Head of Department
Candidates' work not kept secure during or after assessment	Define the appropriate level of security, in line with the awarding body's requirements, for each department as necessary	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Head of Department
Insufficient or insecure storage space	Look at provision for suitable storage at the start of the GCSE course	Find alternative storage within the centre	Head of Department / Exams Officer

** All tasks whether set by the awarding body or the centre **must** be developed in line with the requirements of the specification.

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Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Deadlines			
Deadlines not met by candidates	Ensure all candidates are briefed on deadlines and the penalties for not meeting them	Mark what candidates have produced by the deadline Seek guidance from awarding body on further action	Subject Teacher / Head of Department
Deadlines for marking and/or paperwork not met by teaching staff	Ensure teaching staff are given clear deadlines (prior to the awarding body deadline) to complete marking/paperwork (Marks can then be processed and submitted ahead of awarding body deadlines)	Seek guidance from awarding body	Head of Department
Authentication			
Candidate fails to sign authentication form	Ensure all candidates have authentication forms to sign Ensure that the authentication form is securely attached to their work when it is completed and handed in for marking	Find candidate and ensure authentication form is signed	Head of Department
Teaching staff fail to complete authentication forms or leave before completing the authentication process	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the importance of authentication forms and the requirement of a signature	Return the authentication form to the teacher for signature Ensure authentication forms are signed as work is marked	Head of Department

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action	Staff
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	Forward planning	Action	
Marking			
Teaching staff interpret marking descriptions incorrectly	Ensure appropriate training and practicing of marking Plan for sampling of marking during the practice phase	Arrange for re-marking Consult the awarding body's specification for appropriate procedures	Head of Department
Centre does not run the standardisation activity as required by the awarding body	Plan against the awarding body's requirements for standardisation, i.e. when and how this activity must be conducted	Check with the awarding body whether a later standardisation event can be arranged	Head of Department

Appendix 2

St. Mary's College

GCSE NEAs

Outlining staff responsibilities - GCSE NEAs

Senior leadership team

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of NEAs.
Ensure assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.
- At the start of the academic year, begin coordinating with heads of department/subject to schedule NEAs. (It is advisable that NEAs are spread throughout the academic years of Key Stage 4.)
- Map overall resource management requirements for the academic year. As part of this resolve:
 - clashes/problems over the timing or operation of NEAs;
 - issues arising from the need for particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc);
- Ensure that all staff involved have a calendar of events.
- Create, publish and update an internal appeals policy for NEAs.

Heads of department/faculty

- Decide on the awarding body and specification for a particular GCSE.
- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Ensure that individual teachers fully understand their responsibilities with regard to NEA.
- Ensure that individual teachers fully understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification, are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes **and** any other subject specific instructions.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or adapt sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with the awarding body's specification and control requirements.

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Teaching staff

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines detailed within the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting NEAs*.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body's specification for conducting NEAs, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Supply to the exams office details of all unit codes for NEAs.
- Obtain confidential materials/tasks set by awarding bodies in sufficient time to prepare for the assessment(s) and ensure that such materials are stored securely at all times.
- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to candidates as the specification allows.
- Ensure that candidates and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.
- Mark internally assessed components using the mark scheme provided by the awarding body. Submit marks to the awarding body by the published deadline, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Retain candidates' work securely between assessment sessions (if more than one).
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates' work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre.
- Ask the appropriate special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Exams Officer

- Where confidential materials are directly received by the exams office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Download and distribute marksheets for teaching staff to use.
- **In exceptional circumstances** where NEAs cannot be conducted in the classroom, arrange suitable accommodation where NEAs can be carried out at the direction of the senior leadership team.

Special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support

- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support staff are met.

Appendix 3

Appeals against internally assessed marks

(GCSE NEAs and GCE coursework units)

St. Mary's College is committed to ensuring that whenever staff mark candidates' NEA/coursework this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. St. Mary's College is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

If a candidate believes that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure.

NB: an appeal may only be made against the assessment process and not against the mark submitted to the awarding body.

1. Appeals should be made as early as possible, and no later than two weeks before the last timetabled examination in the series (e.g. the latest GCSE written paper in the June GCSE series).
2. Appeals **must** be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the examinations officer.
3. The head of centre will appoint a senior member of staff, i.e. the Vice Principal, to conduct an investigation. The senior member of staff will not have any involvement in the internal process for that subject.
4. The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for internal assessment conformed to the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.
5. The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body, and any changes made to internal assessment procedures.
6. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Principal and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any irregularity in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of St. Mary's College and is not covered by this procedure.