Examination Guidance for Students, Parents and Carers

Document prepared for 2025/2026

Introduction

The following information is a summary for students, parents, and carers to help offer practical guidance around the rules and regulations when taking examinations and what to expect on the day of the 'real exams'. It is intended to compliment information shared via other means such as school assemblies, teachers, emails, and briefings from the school Exam Officer, as well as School Policy and the Joint Council for Qualifications Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

The examination season can be an anxious time for students, parents, and carers. It is very important that the examinations run as smoothly as possible, and it is hoped that by working together, the whole experience will be as positive and as stress free as possible.

Please remember our school is bound by the regulations set out by **The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).** These are a national set of rules. Take your time to read the various instructions and warnings, because it is vital for these to be understood and adhered to, so that everyone has a chance to do their best work on exam day.

The exam boards we use include AQA, WJEC, Pearson and OCR. Different subjects use different boards. The exam boards set the timetable for their exams, writing and getting the exam papers to us and then marking them and issuing the resulting grades.

Any concerns or queries relating to the running of the examinations should be directed to: Mrs Winborn, Ratton School Exams Officer. Email address kwinborn@ratton.co.uk

Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict regulations are in place. **Any** alleged, suspected, or actual incidents of malpractice will be subject to investigation and reported to the relevant Awarding Body and may result in disqualification. Students and parents with concerns or questions around exam malpractice are encouraged to contact Mrs Winborn, Exams Officer.

Whilst cheating of any description will be taken very seriously, so will any breach of the regulations. The rules may seem harsh sometimes, yet they are designed to prevent anyone from being accused of cheating in the first place.

Where you will take your exams

All exams will take place in the Hall, Gym, Small Gym, The Hive, or other designated space as determined by the School.

Just before the exam series starts, you will be told where you will be seated for each of your exams. **Before each actual exam, you will need to go to a waiting point first for 8:45 am and 1:00 pm.**

If you are due to be in the Hall, then you need to go to Refresh first. You will be directed to leave any bags, including your **turned off** phones, watches, and any other unauthorised material at the back of the Hall.

If you are in the Gym or the Small Gym, your meeting point will be in the PE Changing Rooms first. The Changing rooms will not be used for people to get changed in, so either room can be used by anyone. You will be directed to leave any bags, including your **turned off** phones, watches, and any other unauthorised material in the changing rooms.

If you are in the Hive for your exams, you need to go directly to the Hive.

If you are allocated to a different room to those above, you will be advised separately of your arrangements.

What time your exams will start and finish

Morning exams start at **9:00am**; afternoon exams at **1.15pm.** We must have a prompt start so don't be late. It is best to arrive 15 mins early to school to ensure you are on time. If you get a bus or train to school, consider getting an earlier one to make sure you are here on time. In you are driven to school, leave home with more than enough time to get here, in case that new set of roadworks pops up on your usual route.

What if something has to change

Keep looking at your school emails as this is the way the Exams Officer will communicate any changes to the exams.

Supervision during your exams

Exams are supervised by a team of Invigilators. Invigilators **must** follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by the JCQ and Awarding Bodies. If you need to attract the attention of an Invigilator when in an exam room, please raise your hand and wait for an Invigilator to come to you. You do not need to call out loud to get an invigilator's attention, raising your hand nice and high will be enough.

Exam room conditions

Once you enter your examination room and make your way to your designated seat, you must remain **silent**. Talking is not permitted until the examination room has been vacated at the end of any exam. Communication between candidates will be taken as misconduct and dealt with accordingly. Do not even smile, mutter, make noises or mouth words to other candidates because this looks like you are trying to communicate with others.

Do not disturb other candidates, everyone needs a fair opportunity to work on their exam paper. This includes rocking in your seat or moving your table. Do not attempt to borrow anything from another candidate during the exam. If you need something, then raise your hand and liaise with an invigilator.

You must not change seat unless directed to do so by the exams officer or an invigilator. If you find there is an issue with your desk, raise your hand and an invigilator will come and assist you.

When in your seat, you must face the front and not turn around in your seat. If you are not facing the front or turning around in your seat, it looks like you are making attempts to communicate with other students.

A candidate card will be placed on each examination desk. This will have your Name, Candidate Number and Exam Paper details upon it.

The centre number, subject title and paper code, actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each exam will be clearly displayed and visible to you in the exam room, as well as a clock.

Students **must**:

- Check that they have sat in the correct seat – by making sure the desk sat at has the right name on the Candidate Card.
- Ensure they have the correct examination paper by checking the subject and tier of entry.
- When told to do so, ensure the centre number (**56375**), candidate number and legal name (as per exam card on the desk), have been written clearly on the answer booklet and on any additional pages, using a black pen only.

Do not start the examination until instructed by the Exams Officer or Invigilator. Candidates must not open the question paper until they are told that the examination begins. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant Awarding Body as malpractice by a candidate.

If extra paper is required, pupils should raise their hand and wait for an Invigilator. Additional answer sheets must be placed securely with answer booklets. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use.

Do not draw anything which is not an answer to a question, draw any graffiti or write offensive comments, such as swear words on examination papers. If you do, an Awarding Body have the option to refuse to mark your paper.

The use of Tippex and correcting pens are strictly forbidden. Highlighters or gel pens must not be used in answers. **All written work must be in black ink.**

Students should always remain seated.

You should make sure you go to the toilet before any exam. If you find you need to go to the toilet, you will not be allowed to go to the toilet in the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of any exam. Please raise your hand and when the invigilator comes to you, explain that you need the toilet. They will accompany you from the exam room to the toilet. You may have to wait if there is more than one candidate asking to use the toilet at the same time.

If the exam has a speaking or listening element to it, there will be no opportunity to have a toilet break.

If you leave the exam room and are unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you will **not** be allowed to return, and this will be reported as malpractice to the Exam Board.

What do I need

You are responsible for bringing the equipment and resources needed for the examination. You will need:

A black pen (or two in case one runs out)
A calculator (unless you are told otherwise, e.g. Maths Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper)
Pencil
Ruler
Eraser (rubber)
Clear Pencil Case
Clear bottle of water with the label removed. (No large 2 litre bottles.)

What must I not have

Phones or **any** watches are not allowed in the examination room. These must be switched off and put in your bag before you leave your bag in a designated area.

You must not have in your possession any electronic communication or storage devices such as iPods, MP3/4 players, earphones of any description (unless agreed beforehand as an access arrangement), reading pens, smart glasses and any other products with text or digital facilities.

You must not have in your pockets, or in your pencil case, any notes, or any other pieces of paper (for example bus tickets or cash cards). You must not bring in any fidget toys, drawings or other 'good luck charms'. You are not allowed to bring in any medication yourself. The best advice is to check and empty **all** your pockets before entering the examination room and carry your stationery in your hands, so you don't need to go to a pocket for anything.

You are not allowed to bring tissues of any kind in with you. If you need to use tissues during the exam, raise your hand and an invigilator will supply them to you.

If you enter the exam room, take your seat and suddenly realise you have brought in **anything**, even by mistake, it **must** be surrendered to an invigilator straight away.

Remember: possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to sanctions and possible disqualification

Written timetabled exams

An individualised GCSE Exam Timetable will be provided in advance on EduLink.

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

The timetables for the examinations are set by the Examination Boards and cannot be changed. It is common for timetable clashes to happen, and there is a regulated way to work through the situation.

When a candidate is listed for two examinations at the same time (except for foreign language reading and listening exams), a candidate will have a plan created for them which will enable them to take one exam after another. Due to taking exams this way, you will need to remain supervised within school. This is to ensure the security and integrity of the entire process.

Candidates who are identified as having a timetable clash will be notified of arrangements and the specific procedures to be followed.

Using calculators

Candidates must be aware of JCQ Awarding Body instructions regarding the use of calculators in your exams.

Calculators must be:

- of a size suitable for use on the desk;
- either battery or solar powered;
- free of lids, cases and covers which have printed instructions or formulae.

Calculators must not:

- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
  - language translators;
  - symbolic algebra manipulation;
  - symbolic differentiation or integration;
  - communication with other machines or the internet;
- be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason;
- During an examination, a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:
  - databanks;
  - dictionaries;
  - mathematical formulae; − text. − Some calculators have an ‘exam mode’.

This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

- the calculator’s power supply;
- the calculator’s working condition;
- clearing anything stored in the calculator.

Food and drink in exam rooms

Food is not permitted in the exam room. Candidates may bring a **small** bottle of water; the bottle must be clear with all labels removed. Anything else is regarded as unauthorised material and will be removed from you.

What you should wear for your exams

Candidates are required to wear full school uniform for every examination. During the Summer exams, if the weather is particularly hot, the direction may be given for candidates to remove their ties and blazers.

What to do if you arrive late for an exam

In the event of a candidate being delayed, the school must be notified immediately. If a candidate is late to an exam, it ***may*** still be possible for the examination to be sat, under certain regulated circumstances. Candidates who are late for their exam **must** report to the School Reception and wait there. Reception staff will inform the Exams Officer, Mrs Winborn and you will be collected from there. Under **no circumstances** must you enter the exam room without being accompanied after the exam has begun.

Candidates arriving late to an examination will be subject to an investigation. Depending on the amount of time a candidate is late, Awarding Bodies may then refuse to accept and mark the examination. Please arrive on time, do not jeopardise your result.

What to do if you are unwell on the day of an exam

In the event of a candidate missing an exam due to illness, the school **must** be notified as soon as possible. It is strongly advised to obtain a doctor's certificate as evidence to aid in any special consideration applications.

What happens in the event of the Fire Alarm sounding in the exam room?

If the fire alarm sounds during the examination candidates should remain seated and await instructions from the Invigilators. The Emergency Evacuation procedure will be actioned. All exam papers should be closed and left on desks. Candidates must remain silent and under exam conditions even during an evacuation of an exam room.

Internal appeals procedures

Details about how the students will get their exam results will be supplied at the end of the exam season. Within this, will be details of how any review of marking or appeal requests will be managed for written examinations only. Students will be advised separately by class teachers as to how coursework and non-examination assessment elements will be marked. All timescales given must be adhered to. Please direct any appeal enquiries to Mrs Winborn.

Complaints Policy

Students and parents with concerns or questions around the exam complaints policy are encouraged to contact Mrs Winborn, Exams Officer.

Contingency Day

Wednesday 24th June 2026 – The designation of a 'Contingency Day' within the common examination timetable is to allow leeway in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations in the UK. Students must remain available until this date.

And finally….

This guidance document represents a summary of the rules and regulations which must happen to facilitate the regulatory requirements. We would urge **all** students and parents to read the following JCQ information too, via these links or by visiting the JCQ Website:

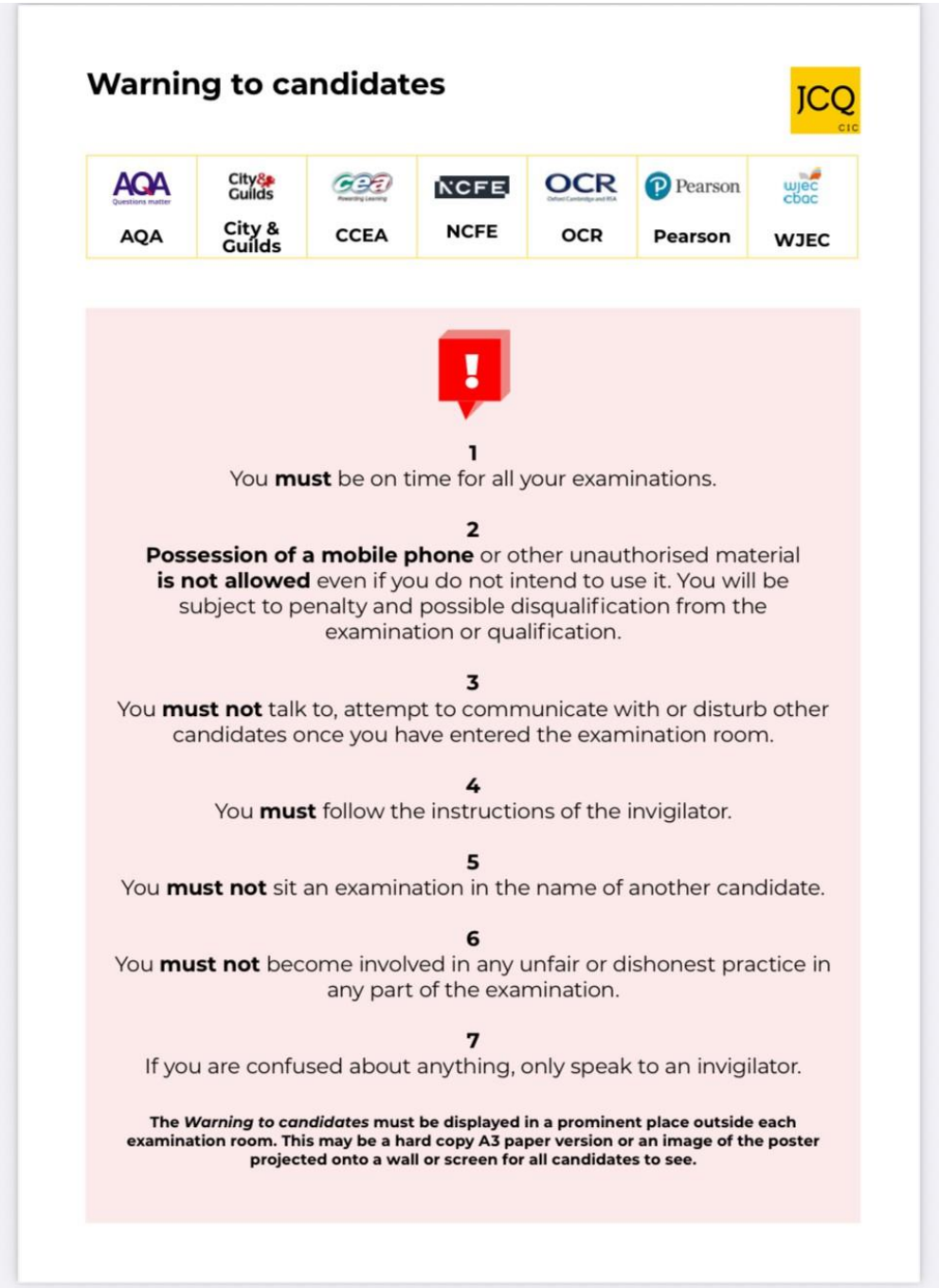
Information for candidates documents - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications

Students will see the posters at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, at or near, to the entrance to your exam rooms. Take notice of them and stick to the rules. Don't jeopardize your exam results, through the necessity of being reported, **even by an innocent mistake**.

Exam Room Posters - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications

Appendix 1

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **mus**t note that *"Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in* ***DISQUALIFICATION*** *from your examination and your overall qualification."*



Warning to candidates

JCQ CIC

AQA | City & Guilds | CCEA | NCFE | OCR | Pearson | WJEC

1
You **must** be on time for all your examinations.

2
Possession of a mobile phone or other unauthorised material **is not allowed** even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the examination or qualification.

3
You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.

4
You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.

5
You **must not** sit an examination in the name of another candidate.

6
You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.

7
If you are confused about anything, only speak to an invigilator.

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

Appendix 2

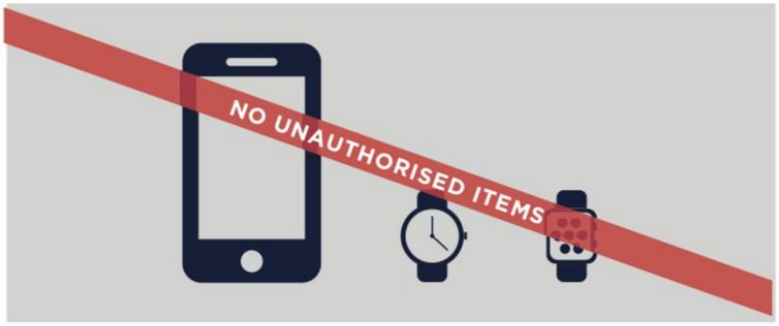
This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **mus**t note that *"Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in* ***DISQUALIFICATION*** *from your examination and your overall qualification."*

JCQ CIC

AQA City & Guilds CCEA NCFE OCR Pearson WJEC

NO MOBILE PHONES
NO WATCHES

NO TECHNOLOGICAL OR WEB-ENABLED POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION



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

DISQUALIFICATION

from your examination and your overall qualification.

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

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