



Highfields School  
BE THE BEST YOU CAN

# Examination Handbook

## Year 11

A guide to parents/carers & students

GCSE examinations 2026

BE THE BEST YOU CAN



## Introduction

Exams can cause stress: this booklet has been written to help you understand what to do about your GCSE exams this summer. Please read it carefully as it should answer most of your questions. It contains advice about where to go, at what time, what to take with you, what to do if you are ill and much more.

Keep this booklet in a safe place and consult it frequently. Go through it with other people, for example your form tutor and parents. The more people who know what is expected of you, the less likely you are to make a mistake like turning up for an exam at the wrong time. Turning up too early could be mildly embarrassing, turning up too late would be disastrous – **you CANNOT take an exam at a different time.**

Use the times and dates that are printed on your statement of entry to make yourself a timetable. Make sure that you know exactly what subjects you are entered for and the level at which you are entered. Ask your subject teacher if you are unsure.

The GCSE examinations start **Thursday 7 May (BTEC Travel & Tourism Friday 1 May)**

**Students must attend all timetabled lessons as normal except when they are taking an examination.**

**From Thursday 7 May to Friday 22 May**

From the beginning of exams up until half term you **must** continue to come into school for exams, revision sessions and normal timetabled lessons.



## Exam contingency day – Wednesday 24 June

All students must ensure that they are available to sit exams up to and including this date, in case national or local disruption during the summer 2026 examination series means that one or more exams needs to be rearranged.

### Times and Places

**Place:** The majority of exams will take place in the **Sports Hall**.

Modern Foreign Language listening exams will be in classrooms.

Art exams will be art rooms.

Music exams will be in performing arts/music room.

Exams for some students with particular access arrangements will take place in other rooms.

**Time:** Exams **start** at **8.50am** in the morning and afternoon exams start at either **1.00pm, 1.15pm or 1.30pm**.

Please check the registers on the Wheeldon hall and coffee bar windows for the exact start times for each of your exams.

Exams may end after the normal end of school day in some circumstances, such as students sitting longer exams with extra time, or a clash occurring during an afternoon session.

**Arrival:** **At least 20 minutes before** the start of an exam. Please go to the registers, check your desk number and wait for instructions. Put bags, coats etc. in your locker.



## Uniform

Whenever you are in school, for whatever reason including revision sessions and language orals, you must wear **correct school uniform**. If you fail to obey this rule, you will be asked to go home to change or you will be loaned the appropriate item(s) of uniform. Please do not arrive for an examination inappropriately dressed; this will cause embarrassment and may be distressing at a time when you want to remain calm.

## Food Arrangements

The upper school canteen will be open as normal at break and lunchtimes throughout the exam period, but you are strongly advised to bring your own refreshments.

## Late Arrival

If you arrive within 1 hour of the start, you may still take your exam. You must report to the exam invigilator in the exam room **as soon as you arrive**.

You will be given extra time at the end of the exam, but it is up to the exam board to decide whether they accept your reason for lateness and whether they will mark any work you did after the official end of the exam. The school will always try to phone anyone who fails to arrive for the exam. If you oversleep / miss the bus, then the quickest way to get to school could be by taxi. School will lend you the money for a taxi.

## Examination Materials

You **must** have a complete set of pens, pencils, rubbers, pencil sharpener, a ruler and calculator as appropriate, all carried in a **clear plastic bag or pencil case**. A HB pencil is needed for multiple choice questions. **You can only write in black ink**. Please write inside the black lines on the answer booklet. Make sure that you have spare pens, pencils, cartridges etc. **Correction fluid is not allowed**.



## Mobile Phones/Electronic Equipment/Watches

**You must not take a phone, any electronic equipment or any kind of wrist watch in to the examination room.**

There will be a clock in all examination rooms for students to check the time during an exam.

We strongly advise all students to leave their valuables at home since the school is not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to students' personal belongings

## Calculators

You will need to have a calculator for some exams, including business studies, DT subjects, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. Make sure that it is suitable for the exam and that, if necessary, it has a new battery. Do not bring any instruction booklets into the exam room. Programmable calculators must have their memories erased.

## Clashes

There will be a few students who have two exams scheduled to take place at the same time. Students affected will be informed in writing of the arrangements. If two exams clash and are of a combined length of up to and including 3 hours then the exams must be sat back-to-back, with a supervised rest period of up to 20 minutes in the exam room between the two exams. If the combined time is over 3 hours one of your exams will be moved to the other session on the same day. **You will be supervised in between exams so will require refreshments.**

## In the Examination Room

The exam boards have rules and regulations, which are designed to ensure that, as far as possible, all candidates take their exams under the same conditions. These rules and regulations are shown at the back of this booklet, on the school website and



in the exam room. The school has to report anyone who disobeys these regulations and it can mean that the candidate's paper is cancelled. The exam board may also disqualify the student from all other exams.

## Exam Desk Numbers

Desks will be numbered by row A1 – A25, B1 – B25 through to K1 – K25 – see plan in Appendix 1.

Please make a note of your desk number – Letter **AND** Number. Seats will be allocated by candidate number; however, there may be times when students are seated out of sequence. Please check the lists on the coffee bar notice board carefully.

## Examination Rules and Regulations

**Read the following rules and regulations carefully and comply with them.**

1. You must be **silent** from the moment you enter the exam room until you leave.
2. You must not take any notes into the room. Everything you need must be in a **clear** plastic bag or pencil case.
3. Bags, books, cases and instructions for calculators, outdoor clothing, food, sweets and drinks must be left in your locker. Invigilators will provide water if deemed necessary. If you need to take water into the exam please ensure that it is in a **clear, un-labelled, plastic bottle**.
4. **Mobile phones and watches are not allowed in the exam.** If a phone or watch is found on a person in any exam, we must report it and the exam board may cancel your whole subject result and all subjects for that board. **Even when your phone is turned off, if it is on your person, the board will cancel the paper you are taking.**
5. Desk numbers for every exam are displayed on the notice board in the coffee bar the day before the exam. Make sure that you sit at the desk allocated to you. All the desks in the sports hall are numbered with a card.



6. Do **not** communicate **in any way** (not just talking) with other students or disturb them. **Always face the front. Do not turn around.**
7. Do not leave your seat without permission. If you need something, hold up your hand and wait for a member of staff to come to you.
8. If you feel ill or need to go to the toilet you will be taken by a member of staff.
9. Write your name, candidate number and centre number on every booklet or sheet of paper you use. Highfields School centre number is **23250** and this is displayed prominently in the exam room.
10. Take time to read all the instructions on the exam paper and carry them out exactly – for example, where there is a choice of questions, make sure that you answer the correct one(s).
11. When you have finished, **check** your work thoroughly. Don't waste this valuable time.

## End of Exam Procedure

At the end of the exam, after all papers have been collected in, you will be dismissed from the exam room. You must leave in silence. **Do not talk until you are well away from the exam room**, as other students may still be doing an exam.

## Illness and Other Emergencies

If you feel ill during an exam, tell a member of staff at once and they will take care of you. If you fall ill at home and cannot get to school to take your exam, you must do the following:

1. Telephone school or get someone to do it for you as soon as you can. The school number is 01629 581888.



2. **On rare occasions** we can apply to the exam board for Special Consideration because you missed an exam but this must be done within 7 days of taking the exam. In order to support your application, you can get a medical note from your doctor and give it to the Examinations Officer **immediately**. It should be noted that this does not guarantee that you will get a grade.

However, it is much better to try and get to school to take your exam, letting the Examinations Officer know that you are unwell. If you attempt the paper, credit will be given for the work you do and we can apply for Special Consideration for your illness.

## Book Return

For morning exams, please return your books for that exam to the book table in the coffee bar (against the hatch) at 8.20am. For the afternoon exams please return your books for that exam at 12.35pm to the same table. Students will be contacted if they fail to return a book.

## Results

GCSE results day is on Thursday 20 August 2026.

It is your responsibility to make arrangements for receiving your results. This can be done in one of four ways:

1. You can collect your results in person from the Sports Hall between 8.30 am and 11.00am on the above date.
2. Someone can collect your results for you, but only if they bring a letter with them that is signed by you to give them permission.
3. If you will be on holiday or unable to collect your results, they can be sent by email. Before you leave school for the summer, please let us know by emailing [exams@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:exams@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk) **from the email address you would like your results sent to**, so that we can verify the address for data protection reasons before sending your results. **This should be your own personal email address.**





4. We can send results by post, in a **stamped addressed envelope** that you must hand in to the exams office **before you leave school for the summer holidays**. Results cannot be posted until 20 August, so they will not arrive until 24 August at the earliest.

**Please do not** telephone school to ask to be given your results. The staff cannot give this information over the phone.

## Reviews of Results

If you are concerned about your result talk to the Head of Subject and/or the Exams Office as soon as possible on or after results day. It may be appropriate to request a clerical check or a review of marking of the paper concerned. There are costs and deadlines associated with either option; details of which can be obtained from school should you wish to pursue a Review of Results. More information is available on the school website on the Exams page.

## NEA Components

Your subject teachers will inform you of your marks for any NEA components before submitting them to the exam boards. They will **not** be able to tell you what grade this equates to. Students should remember that NEA marks may be adjusted during the external moderation process by the examination board.

If you have reason to believe that your submitted work has not been awarded sufficient credit, there is an internal appeals process that may be followed in order for a review to be carried out. Students must request a copy of their work and relevant assessment materials to inform their decision on whether to request a review of marking, and submit their request in writing using an Internal Appeals Form from the Exams Office. Students appealing NEA marks must remember that marks may go down as well as up, if a review is carried out.



## Returning Students

For students joining the sixth form, you must confirm your subject choices on 22 August after collecting your GCSE results. There will be a table set up to do this.

## Exam Board Information & Regulations

The exam boards produce documents each year that inform candidates of exam regulations and instructions they should follow. The main ones are included within this handbook. All of this candidate information is also available on the school website under Exams – students should read this and ensure that they are familiar with what is expected of them.



AQA	City & Guilds	CCEA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC
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## Warning to Candidates

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 exam/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.



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AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

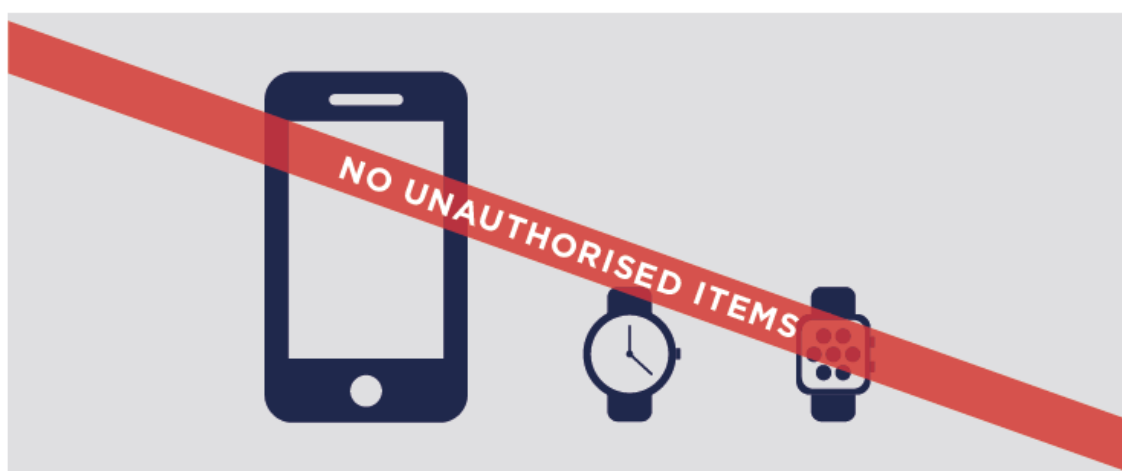
OCR

Pearson

WJEC

## NO MOBILE PHONES NO WATCHES

NO POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB  
ENABLED 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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## Joint Council for Qualifications<sup>CIC</sup>

### Information for candidates - Written examinations

With effect from 1 September 2025

**This document has been written to help you.**

**Read it carefully and follow the instructions.**

If there is anything you do not understand, especially which calculator you may use, ask your teacher.

**A. Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules**

- 1 Be on time for all your exams. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
- 2 **Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the exam.
- 3 If you try to cheat, or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your subjects.
- 4 You **must not** take into the exam room:
  - (a) notes;
  - (b) AirPods, Earphones/Earbuds, an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, a watch, smart glasses or any other smart device.

Any pencil cases taken into the exam room **must** be see-through.

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

- 5 If you have a watch, the invigilator will ask you to hand it to them.
- 6 **Do not** use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your **answers**.
- 7 **Do not** talk to or try to communicate with, or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.



- 8 You **must not** write inappropriate, obscene or offensive material.
- 9 If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you **will not** be allowed to return.
- 10 **Do not** borrow anything from another candidate during the exam.

**B. Information – Make sure you attend your exams and bring what you need**

- 1 Know the dates and times of all your exams. Arrive at least twenty minutes before the start of each exam.
- 2 If you arrive late for an exam, report to the invigilator running the exam.
- 3 If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the exam, you may not be allowed to take it.
- 4 Only take into the exam room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other equipment which you need for the exam.
- 5 You **must** write clearly and in black ink. Coloured pencils or inks may only be used for diagrams, maps, charts, etc. unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.

**C. Calculators, dictionaries and computer spell-checkers**

- 1 You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
- 2 If you use a calculator:
  - (a) make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
  - (b) clear anything stored in it;
  - (c) remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
  - (d) **do not** bring into the exam room any operating instructions or prepared programs.
- 3 **Do not** use a dictionary or computer spell checker unless you are told otherwise.

**D. Instructions during the exam**

- 1 Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
- 2 Tell the invigilator at once if:
  - (a) you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;



(b) the question paper is incomplete or badly printed.

- 3 Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.
- 4 **Do not** start writing anything until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or the answer booklet before you start the exam. **Do not** open the question paper until you are instructed that the exam has begun.
- 5 Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.
- 6 Do your rough work on the proper exam stationery. Cross it through and hand it in with your answers.

Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use, including those used for rough work.

**E. Advice and assistance**

- 1 If on the day of the exam you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.
- 2 Put up your hand during the exam if:
  - (a) you have a problem and are in doubt about what you should do;
  - (b) you do not feel well;
  - (c) you need more paper.
- 3 **You must not** ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.

**F. At the end of the exam**

- 1 If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or any supplementary answer sheets, place them in the correct order.

Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use.
- 2 **Do not** leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator.
- 3 **Do not** take any stationery from the exam room. This includes the question paper, answer booklets used or unused, rough work or any other materials provided for the exam.



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