

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK 2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Introduction

Woodlands School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment process in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

Purpose of this handbook

- To support/complement candidate briefings/assemblies
- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations/assessments
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright
- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidates' documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have etc.
- To inform candidates of/signpost candidates (and where relevant parents/carers) to any exams-related policies/procedures they need to be made aware of

Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict Regulations are in place.

- Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the Regulations
- Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies
- JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice – some examples are below:
 - ***Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room***
 - ***Breaches of examination conditions***
 - ***Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)***
 - ***Offences relating to the content of candidates' work***
 - ***Failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examination/assessment***
 - ***Allowing work to be copied***
 - ***Disruptive behaviour in the exam room or during an assessment (including the use of offensive language)***
 - ***Behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of examination***

For a full list refer to [ICE 24](#) and the *Indicative sanctions against candidates* (Appendix 6, [Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#))

Refer to relevant [Information for candidates documents](#), such as social media, as example:

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

and/or non-examination assessments and coursework, as example:

Research and using references

...Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was

generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026. You should also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You **must** retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used...

If you copy the words, ideas or outputs of others and do not show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and trying to pass them off as your own. It could also include AI-produced material. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously...**

You may also want to make reference to your centre's **Managing Behaviour Policy** (Exams) and/or **Malpractice Policy** (Exams)

Personal data

- Any person involved in completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies...
- The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications.
- Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programs and data ("Student Materials"). Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use the Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms. Candidates should be directed to the relevant awarding body's privacy notice if they require further information about how their Student Materials may be used by the awarding body.

Copyright

- Candidates may access Student Materials (including examination scripts) through the access to scripts arrangements.

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

Relevant JCQ information for candidate's documents - coursework, non-examination assessments, social media can be found on the school website

- All coursework and non-examination assessment dates will be given to students via their examination entry list
- Any non-examination assessment will take place during school time
- Candidates will be informed about non-examination assessments by subject teachers along with any relevant deadlines that must be met (dependent on the assessment type)
- Depending on the assessment some work may be assessed internally by teachers or externally by the exam board
- Candidates will be informed of marks gained for their work once marking has been completed
- Candidates have the right to appeal. Any appeals will need to follow the correct appeals procedure as detailed on page 11 of this document

...Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Tool), your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026. You **must** submit a copy of the computer-generated content with your work for reference and authentication purposes.

- Please refer to the below AI and Assessments – A quick guide for students for advice around using and not misusing AI

JCQ AI and Assessments
C.T.C. **A quick guide for students**

What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased

How can AI be misused in assessments?

AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

THIS IS CHEATING!

How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?

- 1 **Know the rules**
 - You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
 - Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
 - Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work
- 2 **Reference reference reference!**
 - If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly
 - Name the AI tool you used
 - Add the date you generated the content
 - Explain how you used it
 - Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got
- 3 **Declare it's all your own work**
 - When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references

What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

DON'T RISK IT!

REMEMBER
Misusing AI is cheating!
Know the rules
Talk to your teachers
Reference clearly

Written timetabled exams

Candidates will receive a statement of entry to check that personal details and exam entries are correct

- ▶ If this information is incorrect the exams officer should be informed at the earliest opportunity
- ▶ Candidates will receive an exam timetable to ensure they know the date and time of all their exams/assessments, where they are sitting, which exam room etc. This document should be kept safe and referred throughout the exam season
- ▶ The JCQ information for candidates' documents are available on the school website.
- ▶ Exam room posters – Warning to candidates and Mobile Phone use will be placed around the examination room, outside the examination room and can be seen below.
- ▶ Woodlands School will notify candidates, including any private candidates entered through the centre, of their examination entries and the dates and times of their examinations/assessment.



AQA City & Guilds CCEA NCFE OCR Pearson WJEC

JCQ
c16

**NO MOBILE PHONES
NO WATCHES**

**NO TECHNOLOGICAL OR WEB-ENABLED
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

NO UNAUTHORISED ITEMS

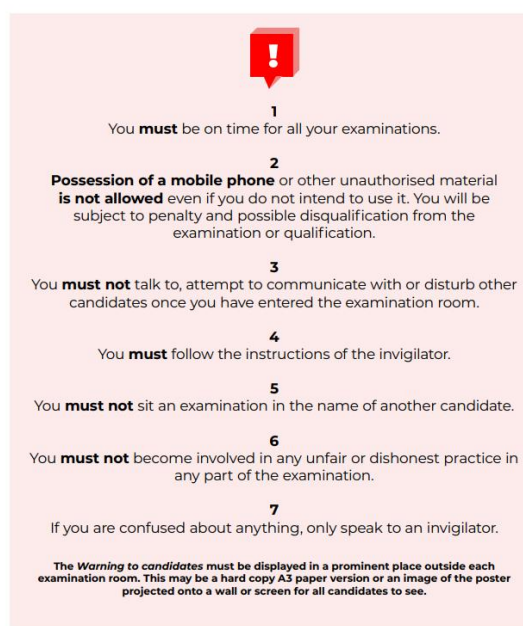
Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone or any watch, is a serious offence and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION

from your examination and your overall qualification.

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

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 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.

Contingency sessions - Summer 2026

The contingency session for Summer 2026 is:

Wednesday 24th June 2026 – All day

This date must be kept free as you may be required to sit an exam

On-screen tests

On-screen tests will be completed in a suitable room. Candidates will be under the same exam conditions as those for a written examination

- ▶ Candidates will be given an ID and password and must ensure the name of the test and their details are correct
- ▶ If the information is incorrect candidates must notify the invigilator and cancel out of the examination before starting

For full instructions please refer to [Information for candidates – on-screen tests](#) this can also be found on the school website.

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

- ▶ A timetable clash is determined by having two or more examinations scheduled to be taken within the same session
- ▶ In the case of a timetable clash with 2 papers totaling 3 hours or less one paper will be sat, a maximum 20 minute supervised break under formal examinations conditions can be taken before the next paper is started in the same session
- ▶ Supervised breaks must be conducted in formal examination conditions
- ▶ In the case of a timetable clash with 2 or more papers totaling more than 3 hours in the same session we may move 1 paper to a different session in the same day. Pupils will complete 1 or 2 papers as above and will then remain under centre supervision until the next session where they will take the remaining paper.
 - Formal examination conditions means that pupils will remain in silence under full examinations conditions and cannot use the break to revise.
 - Centre Supervision means that a member of centre staff, or an invigilator, will always be in the same room as the candidate(s). The invigilator **must not** be the subject teacher for the rescheduled examination. Candidates may revise using their own resources whilst under centre supervision but must not:
 - a. Be in possession of an electronic communication device or storage device or have access to the internet;
 - b. Have contact with any candidate who has sat the examination;
 - c. Be coached by a member of centre staff.
- ▶ Candidates may refer to the overnight supervision information in the Exams Policy for details of overnight supervision.

Where you will take your exams

- The majority of examinations will be held in the Sports Hall.
- Exams can also take place in the Activity Studios, Drama rooms, the Performance Hall or any other suitable room within Woodlands school

What time your exams will start and finish

Question papers scheduled for a morning session will begin no earlier than 8:30am and no later than 9:30am

- Question papers scheduled for an afternoon session will begin no earlier than 1:00pm and no later than 2:00pm
- Exact times for each paper will be noted on the candidate's examination timetable.
- This will only vary if there is a clash of exams due to be taken
- Candidates will remain in the exam room under exam conditions until the published finish time of the exam

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of invigilators. Most invigilators will be external but can also include internal Woodlands school staff. Anyone invigilating will have received formal invigilation training
- Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies etc.

Exam room conditions

- ▶ Candidates should enter the exam room in silence and head straight to their seat.
- ▶ Candidates are under formal exam conditions from the moment they leave the bag room, throughout the whole exam and until they have re-entered the bag room once the exam has finished and they have been given permission to leave the exam room by the invigilator.
- ▶ Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room. Official rules and regulations will be read to candidates prior to each exam commencing.
- ▶ Candidates must complete the front of their answer booklets with their legal name, candidate number and centre number. Some exam papers will also require a signature. Candidates must only do this when the invigilators announcement instructs them to and not beforehand.
- ▶ Candidates must not open question papers until told the examination has begun. If they do, they must be reported to the relevant awarding body.
- ▶ Candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the examination room. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.
- ▶ JCQ warning to candidates and unauthorised items posters will be on display around the exam room. The centre number, subject title, paper number, date, paper length and actual start and finish times will also be displayed at the front of the room.

- ▶ Additional paper and spare equipment is available at the front of all exam rooms; candidates just need to raise their hand and request these if needed.
- ▶ Candidates must leave the exam room in single file and in silence. Candidates must not wait for each other in the corridor and should proceed in silence straight to the bag room.

Where you will sit in the exam room

Desks will be set out in the exam room A-Z and numbered 1-12. Row 1 will be at the front of the exam room

- You should be seated in the same seat for all exams
- Listening exams for languages and exams which are to be completed on-screen may be held in different rooms to your other exams
- Your Exam timetable will show the room and seat number for each exam
- An enlarged seating plan will be placed outside the Sports Hall. Candidates will be able to go and look at this seating plan to check where they are sitting
- If you are unable to find your seat on entering the exam room you may request help from an invigilator or any member of staff in the exams team but not from another candidate

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

- ▶ A register will be taken inside the examination room
- ▶ Identity cards with photographs are placed on each desk for each exam. This will enable external invigilators to take a register
- ▶ A private/external candidate or a transferred candidate who is not known to the school must show photographic documentary evidence to prove that he/she is the same person who is entered/registered for the examination/assessment, e.g. passport or photographic driving licence
- ▶ Where it is impossible to identify a candidate due to the wearing of religious clothing, such as a veil, the candidate will be approached by a member of staff of the same gender and taken to a private room where they should be politely asked to remove the religious clothing for identification purposes. Once identification has been established, the candidate should replace, for example, their veil and proceed as normal to sit the examination

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- All stationary brought into the exam room should be in a clear pencil case with no labels, symbols or writing.
- Woodlands School will provide a basic stationary pack for each pupil in the exams room
- Calculators will need to conform to strict instructions provided by JCQ. You will be required to remove any covers from calculators you wish to bring into the exams room.
- If any equipment is dropped during the exam candidates should raise their hand to ask an invigilator to retrieve it for them.
- Only items required for the exam should be taken into the exam room, all other items should be left in the bag room (inclusive of make-up, body sprays and hair items).

Using calculators

- You must be aware of JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in your exams
- 10. USING CALCULATORS
- 10.1 In this chapter a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations.
- 10.2 This is the published guidance on calculators, unless specifically varied by an awarding body within their relevant qualification specification.
- 10.3 The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.
- 10.4 Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.
- 10.5 Candidates must be told these regulations beforehand and be familiar with the Information for candidates documents.
- 10.6 During an examination, a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities: a. language translation; b. symbolic algebra manipulation; c. symbolic differentiation or integration; d. communication with other machines or the internet.
- 10.7 During an examination, a calculator must not give access to any information stored prior to that examination. This includes: a. databanks, such as the periodic table (with the exception of scientific constants); b. dictionaries; c. mathematical formulae; d. text.
- 10.8 A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.
- 10.9 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.
- 10.10 An invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator.
- 10.11 Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an examination, it is acceptable for candidates to place their calculators on the floor under their desks in sight of the invigilator(s) for the non-calculator portion of the examination.

(Captured from [JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026](#), section 10)

What you must not bring into the exam room

You **must not** take into the exam room:

- Notes
- Potential technological/web enabled sources of information such as an ipod, a mobile phone, MP3/4 player, airpods, wristwatches, smartwatches or any other devices which could be linked to the internet.
- All pencil cases and water bottles which are not clear or have writing, logos or pictures - these will not be permitted into the exam room.
- Any item not required for the exam should be left in the beg room, this includes unauthorised jewellery, hairbrushes, make-up items and perfumes.
- **Remember: Possession of unauthorised materials/items is breaking the rules and classed as a form of malpractice, even if you do not intend to use it, you will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification.**

Food and drink in exam rooms

- Water is permitted in clear plastic bottles. All labels must be removed and no decals/writing are permitted on reusable bottles
- Water is the only drink permitted in the exam room
- Chewing gum is not permitted in the exam room

Unless pre-arranged for a medical condition no food is permitted in the exam room. Where this is permitted, the food packaging must be removed and the food item must be placed into a clear plastic container/bag

What you should wear for your exams

- Full school uniform must be worn for all examinations
- No unauthorised jewellery will be permitted in the exam room –only 1 pair of small studs are permitted to be worn

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

- All bags, coats, unauthorised materials including switched off mobile phones and other belongings will be stored in DR3 which will be kept locked at all times
- Any jewellery handed to exams staff will be passed to the Head of Year and can be collected at the end of the school day
- Any items handed in once in the exam room will be stored in the secure exam room and handed back at the end of the exam

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- ▶ Candidates who arrive after the start time of the examination are considered late
- ▶ Late candidates must report to reception to meet the Head of Centre/Exams Officer to discuss and ascertain reason for lateness
- ▶ It is at the head of centres discretion to decide whether it would be appropriate and fair for the candidate to enter the exam room

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

- If the candidate is unwell and unable to attend an exam the centre must be informed. Where possible, a medical certificate or doctors note should be provided
- If a candidate is unwell but manages to attend the exam, provisions (where possible) will be put in place at the centre to cater for any needs arising from the illness
- If a candidate feels unwell during the exam, they must inform the invigilator
- Special consideration can be applied for if a student is unwell as long as 50% or more of the course has been completed

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

In the case of unauthorised absence from official exams the cost of entry will be passed onto the parent / carer of the candidate

What happens in the event of an emergency in the exam room

- ▶ In cases of emergency the invigilators will stop the exam
 - ▶ All candidates will be escorted from the room as per the evacuation procedures
 - ▶ All candidates must remain under exam conditions and must not take anything out of the exam room with them
 - ▶ For minor or major disruptions, special consideration will be applied for, for the cohort
- On returning to the exam room, candidates will still be allowed the full allocation of time to complete the exam

Please refer to the emergency evacuation policy for further information

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- Access arrangements are agreed before an examination/assessment
 - Candidates and/or parents/carers will be involved in any decisions/discussion regarding applying for any appropriate arrangements
 - Candidates will be informed of the approved arrangements that are in place for them and any instances when these arrangements may not apply
 - Exams will take place in locations suited to the arrangements agreed
 - Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments need to reflect a candidate's normal way of working
- Further information can be found in the access arrangement policy

Results

- ▶ Provisional statements of results will be issued/distributed on Thursday 20th August 2026 – pupils must come into school to collect their results.
- ▶ Senior members of centre staff will be available immediately after the publication of results
- ▶ Senior members of centre staff will be available to support with post result services
- ▶ If the candidate is unable to attend the centre to collect results, they are able to have them collected on their behalf. They must be collected by an adult who is in receipt of a signed

letter from the candidate giving permission for them to collect the results as well as a form of photographic ID.

Post-results services

Available post results services are:

- ▶ Clerical Checks (a check of all clerical procedures leading to the issue of a result)
- ▶ Review of Results (a post results review of the original marking to ensure that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly. It is not a re-marking of the candidate's script)
- ▶ Reviews of moderation (a review of the original moderation to ensure that the assessment criteria have been fairly, reliably and consistently applied)
- ▶ Access to scripts
- ▶ Requests for post-results services must be made through Woodlands school
- ▶ Candidates are informed about the deadlines for post-result services by letter with their provisional results

The SLT Exam lead will send all pupils and parents/carers a letter outlining all post results services available and associated costs outlined by the exam boards. Alternatively candidates can look this information up on each exam board website.

Heads of department and the Senior Leadership team will be available on results day and via email after results day for support with post result service requests. The Exam team will be on site on results day.

Any post-result service request must be requested by the candidate and made to the Head of Centre or Exams Officer. Candidates must sign a consent form for any of the above services. Further information on this can be found in the exams policy on the school website.

Certificates

- ▶ Certificates are typically available around late Autumn/early winter and candidates/parents/carers will be informed as soon as they are received from the exam board and a certificate collection date has been arranged.
- ▶ Certificates should be collected in person by the candidate and must be signed for.
- ▶ If a candidate is unable to attend the centre, certificates can be collected on his/her behalf by an adult who is in receipt of a signed letter from the candidate giving permission for them to collect the certificates as well as a form of ID.

Unclaimed certificates will be held by the centre for 1 year, after this period, they may be destroyed. Certificates are irreplaceable. If after 1 year, they have not been collected or have been lost by the candidate, a certified statement of results can be obtained from the exam board at a cost to the candidate. A trail of destroyed certificates will be maintained by the centre for 5 years from issue date.

Internal appeals procedure

Internal appeals will need to be raised with Miss Jordan. Alternatively, these can also be raised with Mr Wright.

For full details on the correct process to follow if you would like to appeal a decision made, please refer to the internal appeals procedure policy which can be found on the school website.

Complaints policy

Complaints and appeals will need to be raised with Miss Jordan. Alternatively, these can also be raised with Mr Wright.

Full details on the correct process to follow if you would like to appeal a decision made, please refer to the complaints and appeals procedure policy which can be found on the school website.

You must spend some time reading the below documents where relevant to you and the suite of qualifications you are taking.

All documents are available on the school website under Key Information – Exam Information – Information for Candidates.

Alternatively, please follow the below link:

[Information for Candidates](#)

- **JCQ Information for candidates – coursework Assessments**

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain components of non-examination assessment

- **JCQ Information for candidates – non-examination assessments**
- **JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests**
- **JCQ Information for candidates – written exams**
- **JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice**
- **JCQ Information for candidates – social media**
- **JCQ Unauthorised items poster**
- **JCQ Warning to candidates poster**
- **JCQ AI poster for students**