



St John Bosco
ARTS COLLEGE

GCSE Examinations: Candidate Guide

Introduction

This booklet is a reminder of the rules and regulations for students in external (GCSE) examinations. All previous internal exams (mocks) have been conducted in the same way as the GCSEs to allow students to become familiar with the exam regulations.

- Exam regulations are set by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) and all schools nationally must abide by a specific set of regulations for running exams.
- These JCQ regulations apply to all public, external exams and not following them can have serious consequences for students and for school, including disqualification from a specific paper, subject or all GCSE examinations.
- GCSE examinations will begin the week commencing **Monday, 4th May 2026**. The exams will run up to and including **Friday, 19th June**, with a contingency date of **Wednesday, 26th June**. It is crucial that your child remains available until **Wednesday, 26th June**, in case the awarding body needs to invoke its contingency plan. ***It is therefore essential that no holidays or other activities are booked until after this date.***

Help & Support – who is there to help and what do we do?

You will be issued with a personalised timetable listing the dates, times and locations for each of your exams. Please familiarise yourself with dates and times of all exams. It is your responsibility to arrive on time and in the right place! You will also be informed of the location for your exams, this will be the same seat/room for the whole exam series. Full plans will also be displayed outside the exam rooms before each exam.

People in the room during an exam are called ‘invigilators’ and are there for a number of reasons:

- To guide students through the exam and ensure everyone knows and follows the rules (this makes it fair for everyone).
- To support and respond if you are unsure of anything, feel unwell or have any questions. Raise your hand and someone will come to you. They can’t help with which questions to answer or explain anything from the exam paper but ALWAYS ask if you are unsure. Staff will help within the rules and it is better to deal with it during the exam than worry afterwards.
- To tell you exactly what to do and when to do it – including completing the front of the exam paper, when to start, how long you have and when to finish. There are digital clocks in the room and timings are written on the board at the front of the room.
- To manage the environment and make sure it is suitable for everyone to do their best. This also includes dealing with disruption within the exam room. Disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with quickly so as not to disturb other students. This may mean removal from the exam room where appropriate. In GCSE and other formal examinations, all disruption must be reported to the examining body.

Not following invigilator instructions during the exam is classed as malpractice. Students must only act as instructed by the invigilator.

Exam Conditions – what you must and must not do during an exam

Breaking exam conditions during GCSEs and formal exams can lead to disqualification from the exam, subject or all qualifications. Malpractice is taken very seriously.

- Students must attend all examinations in **correct school uniform**.
- **Blazers** will need to be worn at all times in the exam room or should be left outside before the start of the exam. They may not be taken off during the exam and put on the back of chairs. **Blazer Pockets** will need to be emptied before entering the exam room.
- **No food/sweets/chewing gum** allowed in the exam room. **Water** can be taken into the exam room in a clear bottle with any labels removed.
- **No books, bags, or coats** of any kind may be brought into the examination room.
- **Fidget Toys** will need to be approved by the Exams Department prior to the exam.
- **No mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 players, smartwatches, or any other smart or electronic devices** may be taken into the exam room. If a phone rings during the exam, even if it's not on the student, they will be subject to penalties and possible disqualification by the examination board.
- **Toilet breaks** are **not** allowed during the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of the exam. Permission to use the toilet will only be given to students who have a medical toilet pass. These must be handed to the invigilator when you enter the exam room. If a student has their blazer on, they must be removed and handed to the member of staff supervising toilet breaks.
- Equipment needed for exams is provided by school. Students are however allowed to bring their own **pens, pencils, rulers, calculators (where permitted)**, etc., but these must be in a **clear plastic pencil case**. **Calculators** must be out of the case and all pre-sets cleared.
- Students are only allowed to use **black ink** for all exams. You are not allowed **coloured pencils** etc. unless you are instructed otherwise. **Highlighters** can be used only on the question paper and not in your answers. **Pencils** can only be used for graphs and diagrams.
- Once students have been allocated their exam room and seat this **will not be allowed to be changed**, except in exceptional circumstances. Students will only be allocated a small room if they have Access Arrangements. If your child has been allocated a small room, then this will already have been discussed.
- **Watches** of any kind are not allowed to be worn or taken into the exam room. There will be a digital clock displayed in the room.
- Enter the exam room in **SILENCE** – exam conditions begin as soon as you enter the exam room.
- Only begin writing when instructed to do so by the invigilator, this includes writing your candidate details on the front of the paper. You must write on your legal surname and forename (the name that appears on your birth certificate). You must enter the school centre number (34356) and your individual candidate number. This will be on the card that will be on your exam desk.
- Stop writing immediately when asked to do so at the end of the exam.
- **DO NOT** attempt to communicate with another student in **ANY WAY** during the exam and until you are out of the exam room.

- Follow **all instructions** given in the exam room. Not following invigilator instructions is something which must be reported to exam boards during GCSE and formal exams.
- Leave the room when the invigilator dismisses your row. You are under exam conditions until you are outside the exam room.
- **Absence Due to Illness:** If you are unable to attend an exam due to illness, please inform the school as early as possible on the morning of the exam by calling **0151 330 5142** asking to speak to Miss Hinnigan (PPC Y11), the Exams Department or Mrs Sullivan (Assistant Headteacher). A **medical certificate** must be provided, and the awarding body will be notified accordingly. A decision will then be made by them around Special Consideration. Failure to follow this procedure will result in you being marked absent without probable cause, and the school may request the exam fees from parents.

A link to the [JCQ Information for Candidates for Written Examinations](#) can be found here.

Both parents/carers and students must complete the Exams Policy: Candidate Declaration' form, which can be found here:



Appendix 5

Information for candidates for written examinations – effective from 1 September 2025



 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 OCR	 Pearson	 WJEC
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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 exams.
4	You must not take into the exam room any unauthorised material, including: a) notes; b) earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), mobile phones, MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods); c) a watch. 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 sanctions and possible disqualification.
5	Do not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your answers.
6	Do not talk to or try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
7	You must not write inappropriate, obscene or offensive material.
8	If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you will not be allowed to return.
9	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 ten 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 permitted equipment needed for the exam.
5	You must write clearly and in black ink. Coloured pencils or inks may be used for only diagrams, maps, charts, etc., unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.
C Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers	
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 its memory; 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 spellchecker 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; c) you think you have not been given the expected access arrangement(s).
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. Do not open the question paper until you are told 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 not sure 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. For CCEA examinations, any loose additional sheets should be placed behind your script.
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.
This information must be made available to all candidates in advance of their examination(s) for each series. It may be provided electronically to candidates or in hard copy paper format.	