

**GCSE
EXAMINATION
HANDBOOK**

Summer 2019

It is most important you read these notes carefully.

YOU MUST ALSO READ CAREFULLY THE 'NOTICE TO CANDIDATES' WHICH IS ISSUED BY THE EXAM BOARDS.

EXAM TIMETABLES

Your exam timetable is an extremely important document and you should take good care of it. Your timetable will be emailed to your school account, please forward this to your parents for their information too.

You will receive a provisional timetable at the beginning of February; you must check this copy thoroughly for the following:

- are all the exams you are expecting to sit on the timetable?
- are there any exams on the timetable which you were not expecting?

If you are concerned about anything you must come to the Exams Office.

This provisional timetable has not resolved exam clashes, i.e. you may have two or more exams showing for the same date and start time. Do **not** come to the exams office to ask about exam clashes as they will be resolved on your final timetable, **unless** you scheduled for more than 3 hours of exams in any one morning or afternoon session.

You will receive your final timetable, with all clashes resolved, after Easter.

Controlled assessments (e.g. Art, DT) and MFL Speaking Assessments are not on your timetable – only written exams. You must see your teachers for dates and times of these assessments.

Make a note of each exam in your diary (date and time). Do not mistake the 'Start Time' column with the 'Duration' column.

EXAM ATTENDANCE

Attendance at every exam is compulsory. If you are absent for a paper *and do not have a valid excuse* you will be disqualified by the Awarding Body from obtaining a grade for that subject. In addition, the school will invoice you for the full cost of entering you for that subject.

ILLNESS, LATENESS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

- If you fall ill on the day of an exam, you must inform the school immediately. If your illness is serious enough for you to be absent, you **must** provide medical evidence to the Examinations Office within 3 days of the date of your exam. If you are unwell, but still attend the exam, it is in your best interest to get medical evidence; special consideration can be given for genuine illness and the Awarding Bodies are sympathetic to these cases. If you are in any doubt as to whether you are fit enough to sit an exam, you should contact the Exams Officer who will be able to advise the best course of action.
- If you are late for an exam the Awarding Body reserves the right not to accept your paper. In addition, the school reserves the right not to grant you the full time for that paper. **There are very few excuses for being late.** *It is your responsibility to choose a mode of transport that will get you into school on time.* If you know that you are going to be late you must try to contact the school immediately. If you are using public transport it would be wise to travel in at least one hour before you normally do to allow for cancellations. Please note the school *cannot* organise transport for you. If you are not seated in the exam room by 9am or 1.30pm, the school will endeavour to contact you; however, you must not rely on this as in the past it has not always been possible to contact students.
- Other emergencies – there are hardly any other circumstances which would be acceptable to the Awarding Body for non-attendance. *Here are some examples which would **NOT** be acceptable under any circumstances:*
 - Transport problems
 - Failure of an alarm call
 - Illness of a family member (except in critical cases)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control **at the time of the assessment**, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration can only seek to go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. There will be situations where candidates should not be entered for an examination.

Only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardize the standard of the examination.

There are minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence.

All examinations are measuring what a candidate knows and can do. The overall grades awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination(s). The grades awarded do not necessarily reflect the candidate's true level of ability if attainment has been considerably affected over a long period of time. Where long term circumstances have prevented the candidate from reaching the competence standards it may not be possible to make an adjustment.

If you think you might be eligible for special consideration because you are affected by illness, injury or other issues at home or school, you must come and see the exams officer within 3 days of the date of your exam. You must note that special consideration will only be granted after this time in rare and exceptional circumstances.

BEFORE THE EXAM

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHEN EACH EXAM STARTS and be at the lining up area at least 20 minutes beforehand.

Morning exams start promptly at 9am and boys are expected in school no later than 8.40am to line up. Afternoon exams start at 1.30pm and boys are expected to line up no later than 1.10pm.

The lining up area is by the STEM centre. Remember that the school gates are locked at 8.30am and you may not be allowed past the Hall if assembly is in progress.

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHERE YOU NEED TO BE IN THE LINING UP QUEUE.

So the exams can start on time, lining up in order is critical. You must *KNOW YOUR CANDIDATE NUMBER* (this is 4 digits and printed at the top of your timetable); this will help you to judge where you should be in the queue. You should line up *QUICKLY AND QUIETLY* when told to do so.

Make sure you go to the toilet before you line up. Toilet breaks will be not be permitted in the first or last ten minutes of the exam.

You will enter the exam room in single file and be shown to your desk. You may leave your coats and bags outside the exam room. **Note; do *not* bring valuables into school; there are NO secure areas to leave valuables. The school cannot accept any responsibility for valuable items left in bags or coat pockets.**

You must attend your exams in full school uniform. For candidates in Year 11 the following list is deemed to be uniform: **white shirt; black trousers; black shoes (NO trainers or boots); dark socks; school blazer; school tie; NO jewellery.** Blazer and tie must be worn and you will be advised if summer uniform is announced during the exam period.

DURING THE EXAM

EXAM CONDITIONS are extremely strict and are laid down by the Awarding Bodies. Failure to adhere to the rules could mean disqualification. They apply from the moment you enter the exam room to the moment you leave it. We are obliged to inform the Awarding Bodies of any irregularity, however small. In particular you must not:

- **Communicate** – this includes talking, grunting, mouthing, waving, smiling, nodding, grimacing. *If you turn around in your seat you will be deemed to have communicated.*
- **Irritate other candidates** – The list is endless, here are a few examples of extremely irritating behaviour (remember if you are persistently annoying we will have to file a report to the Awarding Body): resting your feet on the chair in front; tapping your pencil; clicking your knuckles; groaning; tapping your feet; allowing an alarm on your watch to go off; sniffing (if you have a cold or suffer from hay-fever then bring a handkerchief or two – there are tissues in every exam room).
- **Cheat** – Everyone knows about copying but, in addition, you must not leave your paper in such a position that they can be easily seen by other candidates. **You must not bring any unauthorised material into the exam room** (see below for further details).
- **Leave your seat** – Raise your hand if you need anything. Please go to the lavatory before you line up for the exam.
- **Do not write on your hands during the exam** – the assumption will be that you went into the exam with writing on and this will be reported to the exam board.
- **You must follow the instructions of the invigilator** – failure to do so will be deemed as malpractice and reported to the exam board

MALPRACTICE

Awarding bodies may impose the following sanctions against candidates.

- 1 Warning
- 2 Loss of marks for a section
- 3 Loss of marks for a component
- 4 Loss of all marks for a unit
- 5 Disqualification from a unit
- 6 Disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications
- 7 Disqualification from a whole qualification
- 8 Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series
- 9 Candidate debarred

Appendix 1 at the end of this booklet shows examples of malpractice and the accompanying sanctions.

INVIGILATORS

The invigilators job is to ensure the smooth running of your exams and that the regulations laid down by the Awarding bodies are followed. If they ask you to do something, then you must treat that request in the same way as if it had come from any other member of staff.

Invigilators are not allowed to help you with the questions or read anything for you, nor will they have enough spare equipment for everyone who needs it, so please don't ask.

EQUIPMENT

You are responsible for providing all your own equipment and borrowing from other candidates is not allowed.

It is your responsibility to produce writing which is legible.

Black ink; black biro or black rollerball pens must be used for written scripts (please bring at least one spare pen).

Gel pens or blue ink are not acceptable. Most exam scripts are now scanned and only pick up black ink. If you use blue ink or gel pens they will not scan correctly and your scripts will look like you have not written any answers.

Don't forget to bring a ruler. Compasses and a protractor may also be needed for certain exams. You must write your full name (as written on your timetable) and candidate number on your answer sheets or booklet and, if you have used additional sheets of paper (put your hand up if you need extra paper), write your name and candidate number on each sheet.

Scrap or rough paper will not be given – you will do all your working out on the answer sheets and clearly cross out anything you don't wish to be marked or taken into account.

You will lose marks if your answers include any inappropriate language and/or pictures.

We do not check your completed scripts. It is your responsibility to ensure you have handed in the correct papers in the right order.

MOBILE TELEPHONES AND ‘SMART’ WATCHES (including ‘fit bits’), music players and headphones, USB pens and other data transfer units, in fact, any type of electronic communication or storage device **are not allowed in the exam room and there is no facility to store them securely (either inside or outside the exam room)**. If you have to bring your mobile phone into school it must be left outside the exam room. If you leave it outside the exam room it must be switched off.

Any watch brought into the exam room must be removed from your wrist and placed on your desk in view of the invigilator.

REVISION MATERIAL is not allowed in the exam room. Neither is your own blank paper.

COATS AND BAGS are not allowed in the exam room. Do not pack any valuables in your bags as the school cannot accept any responsibility for valuable items left in bags or coat pockets. Coats and bags can be left outside the exam room.

PENCIL CASES must be of the see-through variety. If you do not have one, a freezer bag is a good substitute.

TIPPEX AND OTHER CORRECTION DEVICES are not allowed in the exam room. This is to protect YOUR exam; if correction devices were allowed, your paper could be tampered with and the Awarding Body has no way of knowing who has used it. Highlighters can be used to highlight key words on the question paper only, they are not allowed to be used on your answer sheet.

TISSUES are available in every exam room. You are not allowed to bring your own tissues into the exam room.

FOOD & WATER is allowed in the exam room; however, fizzy drinks, chewing gum and sweets in cellophane wrappers are **banned** from exam rooms. Any food brought into the exam room must be in **clear packaging** and all labels must be removed from water containers. **Only clear water bottles will be permitted into the exam room** (see Appendix 2 for examples).

CALCULATORS are allowed in exam rooms, and used if the paper permits. The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are not allowed or if they are expected to be used in the examination. If the instructions do not include either of these statements, calculators are treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.

You must bring your **own** calculator and you cannot borrow one from another candidate.

Calculator lids are **not** allowed in the exam room and must be left outside.

You are responsible for the calculator's power supply, its working condition and ensuring that your calculator meets the awarding bodies' regulations. You are also responsible for ensuring it is cleared of anything stored in the memory.

Calculators must be:

- of a size suitable for use on an exam desk;
- either battery or solar powered;
- free of lids, cases or covers (these must be left outside the exam room)

Calculators must not:

- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
 - o language translators;
 - o symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - o symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - o communication with other machines or the internet.
- be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason (an invigilator may give a candidate a replacement calculator)
- have retrievable information stored in them - this includes:
 - o databanks;
 - o dictionaries;
 - o mathematical formulas;
 - o text.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

- the calculator's power supply;
- the calculator's working condition
- **clearing anything stored in the calculator**

Where access is permitted to a calculator for part of an examination, it will normally be 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 exam.

Remember it is your responsibility to ensure that you clear anything stored in your calculator. We will be asking you to confirm that your calculator is cleared at the beginning of each exam.

If you bring a calculator into the exam which is against the regulations you run the risk of it being reported to the awarding body for malpractice. Please note the school does not hold any spare calculators in the event of your calculator failing.

AFTER THE EXAM

There will be no verbal warnings (e.g. you have five minutes remaining) towards the end of the exam. Candidates will be advised when to stop writing and must do so as soon as this instruction is given. Failure to stop writing when instructed is malpractice and will be reported to the exam board.

Toilet breaks will not be permitted in the first or last ten minutes of the exam.

YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE EXAM ROOM UNTIL THE END OF THE EXAM

If you finish early, use the time to check your work thoroughly.

BE AWARE that other students may still be sitting exams, either in the room you are in or other rooms around the school. Please show consideration for them and exit silently and leave post-exam discussions until you have left the building.

RESULTS

GCSE results will be available for collection from school at 9am, Thursday 22nd August 2019.

This is also when the school will hold the results surgery and Heads of Department will be available to advise on Lower Sixth options.

If boys wish to enter Lower Sixth at Watford Boys and they have not met the minimum requirements for entry to the school or any of the courses they have applied to do, they must attend the results surgery.

Whilst attendance on this day is not compulsory, the school advises you to attend as Lower Sixth places cannot be held for you due to non-attendance.

Results cannot be posted, emailed or sent as texts from the school. If students are not available on results day they can nominate someone to collect their results for them and advise the Examinations Officer of this in writing. This must be done before the end of the summer term. Uncollected results will be held in school for collection in the new term.

CERTIFICATES

Students who stay on for 6th form will have certificates handed out in registration during November/December.

For students who leave the school certificates will be available for collection from the School, from 2nd December 2019. Collection time is weekdays between 9am and 3pm, during term time only.

Certificates are held in school for one year and if you have not collected them by February 2021, or you misplace or destroy your certificates, you will need to apply, at a cost to yourself, to the Awarding Body for a replacement certificate (please note that not all Awarding Bodies will issue replacement certificates, instead you will receive a statement of your results).

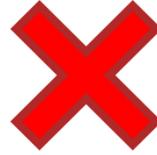
May I take this opportunity to stress the importance of keeping these certificates safe. They are a document you may need in years to come and trying to track lost or destroyed certificates is costly and time-consuming.

Appendix 1 – Examples of Malpractice and Consequences (this list is not exhaustive)

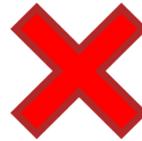
Type of offence	Warning	Loss of marks (Aggregation Still Permitted)	Loss of aggregation or certification opportunity
Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room, for example:			
Own blank paper	used for rough work	used for final answers	
Bringing into the exam room notes in the wrong format or prohibited annotations	notes/annotations go beyond what is permitted but do not give an advantage	notes/annotations are relevant and give an unfair advantage	notes / annotations introduced in a deliberate attempt to gain an advantage
Notes, study guides and personal organisers	notes irrelevant to subject	notes relevant to subject	notes relevant to subject and evidence of use
Mobile phone or other similar electronic devices		in the candidate's possession but no evidence of being used by the candidate	in the candidate's possession and evidence of it being used by the candidate
Breaches of examination conditions			
A breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor	minor non-compliance; e.g. sitting in a non-designated seat; continuing to write for a short period after being told to stop	major non-compliance; e.g. refusing to move to designated seat; significant amount of writing after being told to stop	repeated non-compliance
Disruptive behaviour in the examination room or assessment session (including the use of offensive language)	minor disruption lasting short time; calling out, causing noise, turning around	repeated or prolonged disruption; unacceptably rude remarks; being removed from the room; taking another's possessions	warnings ignored; provocative or aggravated behaviour; repeated or loud offensive comments; physical assault
Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to):			
talking	isolated incidents of talking before start of exam or after papers had been collected	talking during exam about matters not related to exam; accepting exam related information	talking about exam related matters during the exam; whispering answers to questions
written communication	passing written communications (notes) which clearly have no bearing on the examination	accepting exam-related information	passing exam related notes to other candidates; helping one another; swapping scripts
Offences relating to the content of candidates' work			
The inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material	isolated words or drawings, mildly offensive, inappropriate approaches or responses	frequent mild obscenities or drawings; isolated strong obscenity; isolated mild obscenities or mildly offensive comments aimed at the examiner or member of staff	offensive comments or obscenities aimed at a member of staff, examiner or religious group; racist or lewd remarks or drawings
Collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates beyond what is permitted	collaborative work is apparent in a few areas, but possibly due to teacher advice; candidate unaware of the regulations	collaborative work begins to affect the examiner's ability to award a fair mark to an individual candidate	candidates' work reflects extensive similarities and identical passages, possibly due to a deliberate attempt to share work
Plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from published sources		plagiarism from published work listed in the bibliography or minor amount of plagiarism from a source not listed in the bibliography	plagiarism from published work not listed in the bibliography or plagiarised text consists of the substance of the work submitted and the source is listed in the bibliography
Copying from another candidate	lending coursework, not knowing it would be copied	permitting examination script / coursework to be copied; showing other candidates the answers	copying from another candidate's script / coursework
Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments			

The deliberate destruction of work		defacing scripts; destruction of candidate's own work	significant destruction of another candidate's work
The alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates			falsification / forgery
Misuse of, or attempted misuse of, examination material and resources			misuse of examination material or exam related information, including attempting to gain or gaining prior knowledge of examination information;
Theft (where the candidate's work is removed or stolen)			taking somebody else's work (project / coursework) to pass it off as one's own
Behaving in a way as to undermine the integrity of the examination/ assessment			for example, attempting to obtain certificates fraudulently; attempted bribery; attempting to obtain or supply exam materials fraudulently

Appendix 2 – Water bottles



THESE WATER BOTTLES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE EXAM ROOM



THIS WATER BOTTLE IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE EXAM ROOM BECAUSE IT HAS A LABEL ON



THIS WATER BOTTLE IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE EXAM ROOM BECAUSE IT HAS A LABEL ON WHICH CANNOT BE REMOVED



THESE WATER BOTTLES ARE ALLOWED IN THE EXAM ROOM