Principal **Nick Martin**
BSc, MA, PGCE, NPQH

GCSE EXAM INFORMATION BOOKLET 2026/27

BEST
BEDFORDSHIRE
SCHOOLS TRUST

Dear Student,

This booklet has been put together to help you through the exam season. It includes advice and guidance on issues such as what to do if you are late for an exam, to what equipment you can take into the exam hall. The rules are set by the exam boards, which are very specific. It is important that you familiarise yourself with everything that you can and cannot do, so you don't inadvertently break a rule and put yourself at a disadvantage. As an Academy, we have high expectations about how students conduct themselves in their exams to ensure you all have the opportunity to perform at your best, so please also familiarise yourself with our expectations for behaviour during the exams.

Everybody feels a little bit anxious during their exams and it's absolutely normal to feel that way. The sense of anticipation shows that you are taking the exams seriously and shows how much they mean to you. There is advice in this booklet on what to do the night before your exam, such as getting a good night's sleep and eating a proper breakfast in the morning.

This is an important time for you, and whether you are planning to study in the sixth form, take up an apprenticeship or study at another college, we wish you all the best for the weeks ahead. We are always here to help and support you, whatever your concerns, so please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions, no matter how small.

Best wishes,

N. J. Martin

Nick Martin
Principal

This booklet has been written to help you prepare for your Exams.
Please read the booklet carefully, along with the statutory notices at the end. You must read and understand the notices so that you are fully aware of the rules and regulations well in advance.

If you have any questions, please ask your subject teacher in the first instance, and if they cannot help you, then please ask staff in the Exams and Data Office.

Exam Timetable

You will be able to view your **personal exam timetable** through MCAS. Write down your exam dates in several places and keep checking them. It is often a good idea to take a picture of it on your phone. Please check your timetable carefully and if you have any queries about which papers you are taking, or the tier of entry, please see your subject teacher.
There may be days when you have to sit more than one exam, sometimes with only a 10-minute break between them. Make sure you are prepared for this. Some of you will soon receive a "clash" email, please read it carefully and ensure that you are prepared to be isolated between the morning and afternoon sessions.

Routines

- Check your **exam timetable** for your exam, **room** and **seat number**.
- Morning exams start at **8:45AM** and afternoon exams start at **12:55PM**. The school day may change to a 3:2 split when there are exams in the afternoon.
- You need to make your way to your exam room at least **10 minutes** prior to the start time of your exam as shown on your timetable.
- If your exam is in room 136 (Sports Hall), then you need to congregate outside by the benches.
- If your exam is in room 509 (Main Hall) or 511 (Theatre), then you need to congregate in the street.
- If you are in a small room (911, 916, 914 or LS etc.), then please make your way to the correct room and wait outside. If you are unsure where any of your rooms are, then please ask your teacher for help.
- Students **must** stay for the duration of the exam and you are not allowed to leave the exam until you are dismissed by the invigilator. **The earliest time that a student can leave in the morning is 10AM, even if the exam finishes earlier. This also applies to afternoon exams when the start time is 12:55PM and the earliest time a student can leave is 2:30PM.**

Rules and regulations

- The rules regarding the wearing of a wrist watch have changed and **all** watches are now banned from exam rooms. Please ensure that you store this safely before going to the exam room.
- Mobile phones, i-pods, smart glasses, watches, headphones, vapes or any technological/web enabled devices or similar (such as a Fitbit or MP3/4) etc. are **not** allowed in the exam hall.
- If you find that you have forgotten to put these away safely before entering your exam room, do not remain silent and keep them in your pocket. There will be an opportunity for you to hand anything un-authorised to the invigilators before the exam starts. A pre-labelled bag will be provided on your exam desk for such items. **Please ensure all electronic devices are switched off completely before handing them in.**
- Bags are not permitted in **any** exam room – Please ensure that all bags are placed in a locker before you go into your exam.

- Water bottles are permitted in the exam room, but **all** labels are to be removed and any sports type drinking bottle must be clear.
- Bring your **black ink** pens,(GEL pens are not permitted), pencils, ruler and rubber to the examination in a clear plastic bag or clear pencil case. No other kind of pencil case is allowed. Make sure that you have everything you need for that particular examination paper, especially Maths – calculator, ruler, protractor, compasses. Pencil should **only** be used for drawing – remember to return to using a pen after finishing a drawing. It is your responsibility to come with the correct equipment. Calculator lids are also a prohibited item, please do not bring this to the exam room.
- Correction fluid of any kind e.g. Tippex, is not allowed
- You must not bring any unauthorised material into the examination room – please refer to the unathorised items poster at the end of this booklet.
- Toilet breaks- In-line with current school practices, students will not be able to access the toilet within the first hour or last 15 minutes of their exam. However, this does not apply to students with medical conditions or emergencies.
- School uniform or appropriate 6th form dress must be worn at all times. Hoodies are not permitted in the exam room, and headwear (unless it is for religious purposes) is also not allowed as invigilators have to be able to see that headphones are **not** in use.

Behaviour in exam hall/room

- You are solely responsible for your behaviour choices during an exam.
- You must enter the exam room in silence.
- You must not talk, or try to communicate with other students before, during or after the exam whilst in the exam room.
- Communication includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. This can include trying to get another students' attention, turning around, waving etc. Sanctions will be issued for any disruptions to exams.
- Listen to, and follow all instructions given by the invigilators.

Before the examination

To be at your best for the examination.....

- Try to get a good night's sleep throughout the examination period. Make sure you have eaten well and had enough to drink.
- Try to get plenty of exercise throughout the examination period – it may help relieve stress and help you to concentrate.
- Get all of your things ready the night before.
- Please dress appropriately, even on warm days; it can be cool in the halls, and very warm in smaller rooms.
- Don't try to cram revision at the last minute - it rarely helps.
- Try to relax in the morning if you have an examination in the afternoon.
- Be determined - willpower counts!
- Don't be put off by what other students say they have done. Think positively and don't underestimate yourself.

During the examination

- Make sure you read all the instructions on the **front** of the question paper so that you know which parts of the paper you should answer and whether you need anything with you (e.g. calculators in a Maths

and Science exam).
- Don't forget to fill in your **legal** name and candidate number at the top of each exam paper **and** sign it.
- The exam is **not** finished **until you have left the exam room**. You must remain silent throughout.

Time Management

- Make full use of all the exam time; try not to finish too early
- Allow enough time for each question
- Use the clock in the exam room to avoid a last-minute rush
- Answer the correct number of questions. Attempt **all** the questions you **are required** to answer
- Read through and check all your answers at the end

Planning the answers

- Check carefully what the question asks for and check for any command words.
  What *knowledge* and *facts* does it need?
  Is it testing a skill e.g. *comprehension*?
  Is it asking you to make *comparisons* and highlight *differences*?
- Could you improve your answer by using diagrams or sketches?
- For longer answer questions, start your answer only when you are sure of your plan
- Don't worry if you see others starting to write, concentrate on your planning

After the exam

- Look forward positively to the next examination. What have you learnt from this one that will help you for the next examination? Try to identify those things that you did well and those you need to improve the next time.
- Do not waste time worrying about the examination you have just done - you cannot do anything about it so focus on the next exam.

Good luck!

FAQ's - What to do if...

You are unwell & unable to sit the exam
Telephone the Exams Office to let us know why you are absent (01462 229037). Depending on circumstances, we may need evidence of why.

You are delayed
Telephone the Exams Office (01462 229037) and then come to school as quickly as possible and report to Reception without speaking to other students. You **may** still be able to go into the exam.

You are unwell in the exam room
Let the invigilator know.

You are disturbed by something in the exam room
Let the invigilator know.

We strongly advise all students familiarise themselves with the following documents as well as all other candidate documents for exams, coursework and non-examination assessments. These can be accessed on the JCQ website: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents/

JCQ CIC

AQA Questions matter | CAMBRIDGE OCR | City & Guilds | cea Rewarding Learning | NCFE | Pearson | wjec cbac

NO MOBILE PHONES
NO SMART GLASSES
NO WATCHES

NO STORAGE OR WEB-ENABLED DEVICES



Possession of unauthorised items
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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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 during your examination, raise your hand to speak to an invigilator.
Do not speak to or disturb anyone else.

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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