



**Shirebrook**  
ACADEMY

# A GUIDE TO GCSE & BTEC EXAMS

The rules and regulations of GCSE  
examinations for parents and students

This booklet is designed to offer you help and advice in preparation for these Exams. This booklet also states the rules and regulations of the exam boards that you must adhere to. Please read through this booklet to ensure that you are familiar with what is expected of you. Do your best! Good Luck.

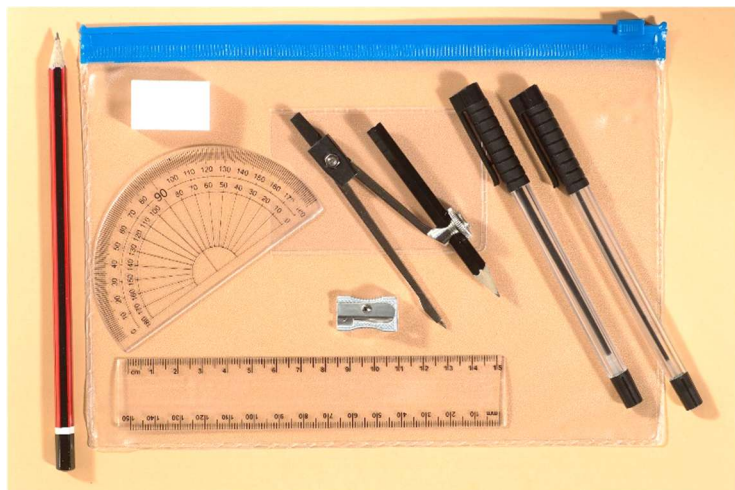
Mr O'Reilly  
Vice Principal

# BE PREPARED FOR YOUR EXAMS

Subject teachers are available to assist in the preparation for your examinations, ask about what topics are needed for each paper.

- Extra lessons may be available during lunch time, at the beginning or end of the day. Find out about these and attend them.
- Your final examination timetable will give you all the details you will need: dates, starting and finishing times etc. It is your responsibility to look after this timetable. Make sure you keep it somewhere safe!
- When you are given your exam timetable check it carefully. Make sure you have been entered for the right exams at the right level. Make sure your personal details are correct.
- Remember to use your legal name in all examinations and controlled assessments and not the name that you are known by in school.
- Take the timetable home, pin it up where you will see it every day. Take a photo on your phone and/or photocopy it if you can.
- Equipment will be provided for your exams, although you may wish to bring your own. All this equipment must be stored in a clear case.
- For certain exams you may require a calculator. Check in which exams you can use them with your teacher.
- No other material must be taken into the hall and must be left in your bag.

**If there is anything you are unsure about, ask.**



## ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM

- Have something to eat and drink before the examination; you will not do your best if you are hungry.
- Make sure you know where you are sitting for each exam as you will not be in the same seat each time. If you are not sure, there will be a seating plan for the current day on display on the Science Bridge, outside the main Sports Hall and any additional rooms.

### **IMPORTANT**

**DO NOT write your seat number on your hand or arm.**

- Visit the toilet before entering the examination room; you will only be allowed out of the venue in a real emergency and will need to be escorted by an invigilator.
- Arrive at your assembly area at least 10 minutes before the start of the exam.



## DURING THE EXAMINATION

- Read the instructions on the front of the question and answer papers carefully so you understand what you need to do.
- Fill in any information on the front only when told to do so.
- Do not open the question paper until told to do so.
- Work carefully and write clearly.
- Don't rush. Pace yourself – if you have two hours to answer four questions, for example, make sure you spend half an hour on each. Exam questions are carefully designed and tested – they should take the estimated length of time to complete.
- Show all your working/rough work. Cross it through when you've finished with it. Hand it in with the rest of your answers.
- Leave yourself 5-10 minutes at the end to read through and check all your answers. Boring though this may seem, it is vitally important; you can often find mistakes/omissions and put them right. It could mean the difference between a Grade 6 and a Grade 7.

### **During the exam, put your hand up if:**

- You need more paper.
- You feel ill.
- You have a particular problem and don't know what to do. You must not ask for (and you will not be given) any explanation of the questions – this is part of the exam.

### **At the end of the exam stop writing when you are told to.**

Make sure your name and exam number are on all separate pieces of paper you hand in. If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or loose sheets of paper, you must put them inside the question paper.

### **Exam conditions DO NOT end until you have left the room.**

Don't be tempted to talk/turn around/communicate in any way with other people. Your paper could still be cancelled!

### **You must not leave the exam room until you are told to do so.**

## YOU MUST NOT:

**1. Become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the exam.**

If you are, this will be reported to the exam board. It may mean being disqualified from all of your exams – not just the one you were caught in.

**2. Talk to, attempt to communicate, or disturb other people in any way once you have entered the exam room.**

If you do so, the same will happen as in **No 1**.

**3. Take to your desk any unauthorised equipment - for example:**

- Bags, coats etc
- Ordinary pencil cases, notes etc.
- Calculator cases & instruction leaflets
- Mobile telephones, any kind of watch, MP3 players, iPods, AirPods, earphones/earbuds, smart glasses or any other smart devices

**Candidates have been disqualified from their exams in previous years due to their behaviour and mobile phones going off.**

**4. Impersonate another candidate**

This is a criminal offence and is dealt with by the police. You may be prosecuted in a court of law.

**YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ILL ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM

If you are ill and unable to attend an exam it is vital you phone the school first thing in the morning to inform us.

**Please telephone 01623 742722**

You must also obtain a note from your doctor detailing the reason for non-attendance. There is the possibility of submitting this note to the Examinations Board to ask for special consideration. The board looks at this in conjunction with other exam marks from the student in that particular subject, coursework marks and mock exam marks. This will then sometimes enable them to adjust the mark and grade accordingly.

If you are feeling unwell, but still able to travel, we suggest you come to the exam and we can assess the situation then. In most cases it is better to take the exam if you can.

If in doubt – **PHONE THE SCHOOL**

If you do not attend an exam without a valid reason, it is possible that you will be charged for that exam.



## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

### Reader, scribe and extra time.

Some students are tested to see if they are eligible for extra support in their exams. This can include having a reader, a scribe (someone to write your answers down) or being given extra time to complete the exam.

If you are allocated one or more of these support mechanisms, it is important you know what to expect and what help you are allowed without breaking the rules.

If you have a reader	If you have a scribe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can read all questions to you and any support materials except anything that assesses reading ability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they will write down exactly what you say, word for word.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They may decode symbols and unit abbreviations in maths and science exams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can change what they have written as many times as you wish.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they must not give any hints and must not re-read anything that they aren't asked to by the candidate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they won't change any word you say even if it is the wrong word or term.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tell your reader when you want them to move on to the next question or if you want them to repeat anything (they can repeat it as often as you need it repeating).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can do drawings/diagrams but you may lose some of the marks for it.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicate to your scribe if you wish to dictate punctuation. If you don't dictate punctuation, you won't get the marks for it.</li> </ul>

# EXAM CHECK LIST



Aim to arrive at school 15 minutes prior to the start of an exam **AT THE LATEST**. It is much better to leave yourself plenty of time in case of problems with the journey.

- **Morning exams usually start at 9am\***
- **Afternoon exams usually start at 1.30pm\***

\*Unless stated otherwise on your timetable



When taking exams, your bags and coats should be left in the designated areas. Because of this, it is recommended that you do not bring valuables with you to the exam.



The examination boards have strict regulations regarding **electronic equipment** which we must follow at all times.

- Mobile phones, any kind of watch, MP3 players, iPods, AirPods, earphones/earbuds, smart glasses or any other smart devices are banned from exam venues. If you are found in possession of any of these or we find one left in your bag during an examination, you are breaking JCQ regulations, and a malpractice report will be sent to the exam board. This could result in you being disqualified from that examination and possibly any subsequent examinations with that exam board.
- You will be given an opportunity before every exam starts to hand in any electronic equipment.
- The school takes no responsibility for equipment brought on site.

## EXAM CHECK LIST



In an exam where you have the use of a calculator, you should not have a calculator cover on your desk. It is also important that before you use a calculator you ensure the memory has been cleared.



There is absolutely no talking or communication between students once you enter the exam hall. If you have any questions, you should raise your hand once seated and an invigilator will come to you.



You should wear your **full uniform** for all your exams.



**No food is allowed in the exam hall.** If you have a special requirement, please see the Examination Officer before the exams.



**Water bottles only** are allowed in the exam room. These should be clear bottles with a spill-proof cap and the label removed.



Guidelines state that **all watches must not be on your person** while completing an exam.

# EXAM ROOM POSTERS



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

NCFE

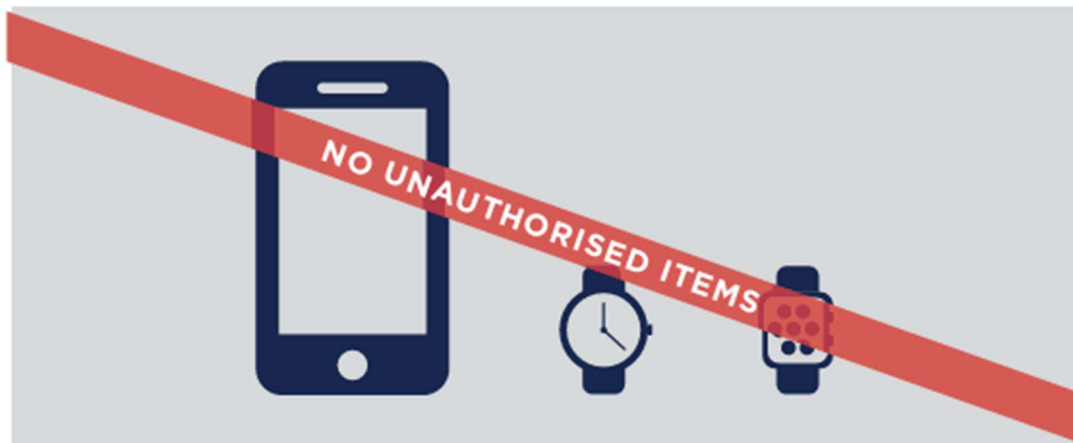
OCR

Pearson

WJEC

## NO MOBILE PHONES NO WATCHES

NO TECHNOLOGICAL OR WEB-ENABLED  
POTENTIAL 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.

# EXAM ROOM POSTERS

## Warning to candidates



 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 OCR	 Pearson	 WJEC
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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.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q. What do I do if I lose my exam timetable?

When you are given your exam timetable, we suggest that you photocopy it or take a photo of it on your mobile phone, you can then keep a copy at home. If you lose your timetable completely you can get a replacement copy from Student Reception.

### Q. What do I do if there is a clash on my timetable?

It will be indicated on the timetable if there is a clash of exams, with details of which exam to sit first and the start time of the following exam. If you have any questions, then consult the Exams Officer immediately.

### Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?

Invigilators will ask you to check before the exam starts. If you think something is wrong, put your hand up and tell an Invigilator immediately as mistakes cannot be rectified after the exam.

### Q. If I'm late can I still sit the exam?

Provided you are not more than 1 hour late, for an exam that lasts **1 hour or more**, it may be possible for you to still sit the exam. You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to Reception. A member of staff will escort you to the exam room. You **must not enter** the exam room without permission once an exam has started. You should also be aware that for exams lasting **less than 1 hour**, if you start an exam after the published finishing time, the school must inform the exam board, and it is possible that they may not accept your work.

### Q. If I miss the examination can I take it another day?

No. Timetables are regulated by the exam boards, and you must attend on the given dates and times.

### Q. I am not sure whether I need a calculator or not?

Check with subject staff in advance. They should know whether a calculator is permitted or not. Calculators will be on desks waiting for you if they are permitted.

### Q. The person sitting next to me is distracting me!

Put up your hand and tell the invigilator. They will deal with it for you. Do not be tempted to speak to the candidate yourself as it will jeopardise your papers.

### Q. What about Centre Assessed Marks?

Candidates work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, who have been trained in this activity. Each subject will apply these requirements in the most practical way. Should you wish to review your centre assessed marks for NEA and project-based subjects, please speak to your subject teachers before the published deadline. The deadline for Construction and Hospitality and Catering is Monday 20th April 2026. The deadline for Art and Photography is Monday 18th May 2026.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. Why do I need a black pen?**

Many of the papers are now sent electronically to the markers and black ink gives the clearest copies for this process. You need your work to be as easy to read as possible.

### **Q. How do I know what to do in the examination?**

The instructions will be on the front of the paper, and you will be given time at the start of the examination to read these. Make sure you know how many questions to do. If the paper is in different sections make sure you know how many questions from each section and the time recommendations. If there are specific instructions, such as the correcting of answers, make sure you know the level of accuracy required. You will have done practice papers with your teachers so should be familiar with what is required.

### **Q. What happens if I feel unwell before or in an examination?**

Tell the invigilator. It may be possible to move you to a seat near a door if you are likely to need to go out. If you do have to go out an invigilator will need to accompany you. It may be necessary for you to obtain a medical certificate so that special considerations can be applied for. The examination officer will advise you on this.

### **Q. I have overslept and will be late for my exam – should I stay at home?**

NO! Call the School immediately and you will be given advice. You do need to get in as quickly as possible.

### **Q. I have finished my exam early; can I leave and go home?**

NO! The school does not allow students to leave the examination room early. The amount of time allocated to each examination is the amount of time it should take to complete it. If you finish, check through your answers, read the instructions again on the front of the paper and make sure you have answered the correct number of questions from the right sections.

### **Q. What should I do if the emergency alarm is sounded during an exam?**

It is really important that you remain calm and quiet – it is still exam conditions. The invigilator will give clear instructions which will include all students leaving through the closest emergency exit and grouping on the MUGA. You will be supervised by invigilators and senior staff to ensure you remain silent and don't communicate with other students. When safe to do so, you will return to your exam and added time will be allocated. You must leave all bags, coats, equipment and exam papers when you leave. We will ensure they stay safe and untouched.