



EXAM HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Information for Students and Parents

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually.

Produced/reviewed by	
Examinations Officer	
Date of next review	March 2027

Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this handbook	3
Malpractice.....	3
Where and when your exams will take place	4
What uniform you should wear	4
Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam	4
What equipment you need to bring to your exams.....	4
Supervision during your exams	4
Exam room conditions.....	5
Using calculators.....	5
Food and drink in exam rooms.....	5
Toilet Pass	5
What happens in the event of an emergency in the exam room.....	5
Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments.....	5
Examination Results.....	6
Appendix 1.....	7
JCQ Unauthorised Items poster.....	7
Appendix 2.....	8
JCQ Warning to Candidates poster	8
Appendix 3.....	9
JCQ Social Media Infographic.....	9
Appendix 4.....	10
JCQ AI and Assessments	10
Appendix 5.....	11
JCQ Information for candidates – written exams.....	11
Appendix 6.....	13
JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests.....	13
Appendix 7.....	15
JCQ Information for candidates.....	15

Introduction

The Blue Coat 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

This handbook is designed to:

- inform you about malpractice
- prepare you for your BTEC Tech Awards/GCSEs in May/June
- answer any queries you may have about the examinations

It is your responsibility to read this handbook carefully and to follow the rules and regulations. Failure to do so will result in Malpractice!

Malpractice

Malpractice involves cheating or some form of wrongdoing. Examples include:

- sharing answers
- leaking exam papers or other assessment materials or using leaked materials
- swapping scripts
- inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI)
- smuggling information into the exam room
- taking mobile phones and communication devices into the exam room
- communicating with others during the exam
- disruptive behaviour in the exam room
- failing to stop writing when asked to by the invigilator
- writing on your hands

You **MUST NOT** be in possession of a MOBILE PHONE, IPOD, AIRPODS/EARBUDS, GLASSES CASE or any kind of WATCH when you enter the exam room.

If you cheat or commit malpractice you will face serious consequences, including being disqualified from your qualifications.

Where and when your exams will take place

Most exams will take place in the Sports Hall or DW1.

In the canteen, there will be a seating plan to show you where your seat will be in the exam room.

Please report promptly to the Canteen at **8.40am** for morning examinations and **1.15pm** for afternoon examinations. Further information will be given relating to the organisation and location of individual examinations.

You will then be asked to line up on the Bolton Playground before going to your Exam room.

Don't be late! There are strict rules that we need to follow regarding lateness and depending on the examination you may not be allowed entry into the examination hall.

What uniform you should wear

Full school uniform should be worn to all examinations. You are not permitted to wear coats or hoodies in the exam rooms.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

Your personal belongings (bags) will be stored securely in Street Vibes. This includes mobile phones, calculator lids and glasses cases.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations. Please bring with you:

- **at least two BLACK pens**
- **pencils**
- **eraser**
- **ruler**
- **pencil sharpener**

For some exams, coloured pencils/highlighters, a protractor or a compass may also be required.

You may take a bottle of water into the exam, but it must be in a transparent bottle and have any labels removed.

Equipment should be in a transparent pencil case or a small transparent plastic bag.

Supervision during your exams

There is a team of The Blue Coat School invigilators.

It is important you listen carefully to their instructions.

If you have any queries or problems, put your hand up and they will come to you.

Exam room conditions

Do sit down when you enter the exam room and put your equipment on the desk.

Do not start filling in your details – this would be **malpractice!**

The invigilator will tell you when to record the centre number, your candidate number and the paper number. All the details are either displayed at the front of the room or on your desk.

The invigilator will tell you when you may open your exam paper.

Using calculators

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 it
 - c) remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers
 - d) do not bring into the exam room any operating instructions or prepared programs

Food and drink in exam rooms

Only water is allowed in the exam room in a transparent, colourless bottle.

Ensure all labels are removed.

Toilet Pass

Only pupils with a Toilet Pass will be allowed to go to the toilet during an exam. Please make sure you visit the toilets before lining up in the playground.

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

In the event of the fire bell sounding, continue working.

If the exam room requires an evacuation, you should follow the invigilator's instructions:

- close your script
- leave everything on your desk
- exit the room calmly and in **SILENCE**

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

Please see Miss Alm if you are unsure of your Access Arrangements for the exams.

Examination Results

Results release day is **THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2026**. Results will be available for collection at **10.00am**. The Gazette will be in attendance on this day to report on your success. Any uncollected results will be sent via first class post at 2.00pm on that day.

If you wish somebody else to collect your results on your behalf:

- please email enquiries@tbc.sfet.org.uk requesting this
- or provide a written note and pass to Ms Wilding.

These are your results and we will only release to parents, or anybody else, with your permission. Anybody collecting results on your behalf will be asked for ID.

Please take time to look at the following Appendices – there is important information.

JCQ Unauthorised Items poster



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

NCFE

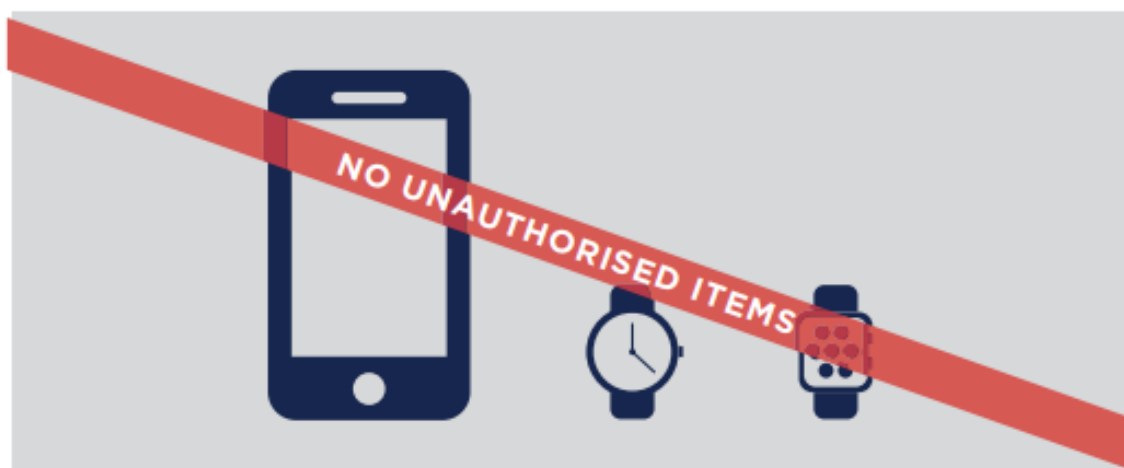
OCR

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.

JCQ Warning to Candidates poster

Warning to candidates



 <small>QUESTIONS FIRST</small> AQA	 City & Guilds	 <small>Assessing Learning</small> CCEA	 NCFE	 <small>Official Cambridge and RSA</small> OCR	 Pearson	 <small>wjec cbac</small> WJEC
---	---	---	--	--	---	--



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.

JCQ Social Media Infographic

Information for candidates Using social media and examinations/assessments



While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers



The infographic is presented as a social media post on a purple background. It features a central white box with a blue exclamation mark icon. To the right, there is a yellow speech bubble containing a URL. Below the main text, there are three white boxes with red exclamation mark icons, each containing a list of rules or consequences. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on clear communication of important information.

Things to do on social media:

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher

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

If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- Receive a written warning
- Lose marks
- Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:
jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

JCQ AI and Assessments



AI and Assessments

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

JCQ Information for candidates – written exams

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:
 - notes;
 - earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), mobile phones, MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods);
 - 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:
 - make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
 - clear anything stored in its memory;
 - remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
 - 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:
 - you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper;
 - the question paper is incomplete or badly printed;
 - 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.
7. 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.

JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests

This document has been written to help you. Read it carefully and follow the instructions. If there is anything you do not understand, ask your teacher.

A Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules

1. Be on time for your on-screen test(s). If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
2. **Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the on-screen test.
3. If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from all your exams.
4. Only take into the exam room the materials and equipment which are allowed for that exam.
5. 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.
 Unless you are told otherwise, you **must not** have access to:
 - d) AI tools, email, graphics packages or computer aided design software, portable storage media, e.g. floppy disks, CDs, memory sticks, social media sites, spreadsheets or the internet;
 - e) prepared templates.

Bringing unauthorised material into the exam room is breaking the rules, whether you intend to use it or not. You will be subject to sanctions and possible disqualification.

6. **Do not** talk to, try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
7. If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the on-screen test has finished, you **will not** be allowed to return.
8. **Do not** borrow anything from another candidate during the on-screen test.

B Information – Make sure you attend your on-screen test and bring what you need

1. Know the date and time of your on-screen test(s). Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of your on-screen test.
2. If you arrive late for an on-screen test, report to the invigilator running the test.
3. If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the on-screen test, you may not be allowed to take it.
4. Your centre will inform you of any equipment which you may need for the on-screen test.

C Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers

1. You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
2. If you use a calculator:
 - make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly;
 - clear anything stored in its memory;
 - remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae;
 - **do not** bring into the examination 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 on-screen test

1. Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
2. Tell the invigilator at once if:
 - you have been entered for the wrong on-screen test;
 - the on-screen test is in another candidate's name;
 - you experience system delays or any other IT issues;
 - your access to the on-screen test has not been set up correctly;
 - adjustments to the on-screen test have not been made for you, e.g. additional time has not been added, computer reading software or speech recognition software has not been uploaded.
3. **3** You may be given a question paper or the instructions may be on-screen. In either case, read carefully and follow the instructions. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.

E Advice and assistance

If, on the day of the on-screen test, you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.

1. Put up your hand during the on-screen test if:
 - a) you have a problem with your computer and are not sure what you should do;
 - b) you do not feel well.
2. You **must not** ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.

F At the end of the on-screen test

1. Ensure that the software closes at the end of the on-screen test.
2. If you are required to print off work outside the time allowed for the on-screen test, ensure that you collect your own work.
You **must not** share your work with other candidates. Make sure that another candidate does not collect your printout(s).
3. **Do not** leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator.
4. **Do not** take any stationery from the exam room.
This includes rough work, printouts or any other materials provided for the on-screen test.

JCQ Information for candidates

- **non-examination assessments**

[Non-examination assessments.pdf](#)

- **coursework**

[Coursework Assessments.pdf](#)

