

Simon Balle All-through School

Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today



EXAM GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

2024/25

CENTRE NUMBER: 17241

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INTRODUCTION

It is the aim of Simon Balle School to make the examination experience as stress free and successful as possible for all candidates.

This booklet will provide information and helpful advice for you and your parents and will make you aware of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) rules and regulations. Please read it carefully and show it to your parents so that they are also aware of the examination regulations and the procedures to follow in the event of any problems occurring.

The awarding bodies and the JCQ set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of examinations and we are required to follow them precisely. Some of the questions you may have are answered at the back of this booklet.

If there is anything you do not understand or any question that has not been addressed, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK.

If you or your parents have any queries or need help or advice at any time before, during or after the examinations please contact:

Debbie Fitzgerald – Exams Officer – **01992 410400 x251**

Miles Carr – Exams Assistant - **01992 410400 x252**

exams@simonballe.herts.sch.uk

Remember – we are here to help.

GOOD LUCK!

BEFORE THE EXAMINATIONS

STATEMENTS OF ENTRY

- All Candidates will be emailed a 'statement of entry' from the Exams Office indicating the subjects they are being entered for and the levels of entry (where applicable). Please check that these are correct. Some subjects only have one tier of entry, some have Foundation or Higher tiers.
- You must check everything on your statements of entry very carefully. Particularly check that all personal details (date of birth, spelling of names) are accurate as these will appear on your exam certificates and it is more difficult to change them once certificates are awarded.

EXAMINATION BOARDS

- The School uses the following Examination Boards: AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC.

CANDIDATE NAME

- Candidates are entered under the name format of First Name + One middle initial + (Legal) Surname, e.g. Adam J. Smith.

CANDIDATE NUMBER

- Each candidate has a four-digit candidate number. This is the number you will enter on examination papers. It will appear next to your name on seating plans and examination registers. **Please learn it.**

UNIQUE CANDIDATE IDENTIFIER (UCI)

- In addition to a candidate number, each candidate will have a Unique Candidate Identifier (12 numbers and 1 letter) which is shown on the top of statements of entry. This number will usually begin with the school exams centre number (17241) unless you have transferred from another school that had already issued your UCI. Your UCI is used for administration purposes and it is **not** necessary for you to remember it.

EXAM TIMETABLES

- You will be emailed an individual exam timetable showing your own specific examinations with details of date, time, room and duration of exam. Check it carefully. If you think something is wrong please come to the exams office immediately.

EXAM CLASHES

- If you have a clash where two or more subjects are timetabled at the same time the exams office will contact you to make special timetable arrangements for you. You must check your individual timetable and see the exams office if you are unsure what to do. If you think there is a clash on your timetable that has not been resolved, please come to the exams office immediately.

EXAM EQUIPMENT

- Make sure you have all the correct equipment before your examinations. Check the regulations in the JCQ 'Information for Candidates' and the information on the following pages.

DURING THE EXAMINATIONS

EXAMINATION REGULATIONS

- A copy of the JCQ “Information for Candidates”, which is issued jointly by all the Examining Boards is displayed on the exams notice board as well as the school website. All candidates must read this carefully and note that to break any of the examination rules or regulations could lead to disqualification from all subjects. The school must report any breach of regulations to the Awarding Body.

ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATIONS

- Morning exams start at 9.00am and afternoon exams start at 1.30pm. The school lunch period is brought forward during the exam season to accommodate the exam start times. Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetable and arriving at school on the correct day and time, properly dressed and equipped. Candidates must arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time of their examination. Please wait quietly outside your exam room until you are invited to enter by the examination invigilators.
- Seating plans for all Year 11 exams are displayed on the examinations notice board (in the corridor near the science staff room) and the hall seating plans are also on the noticeboard in the playground. Seating plans for all Year 13 exams are displayed in the windows of the upper 6th form. Please check where you are sitting before you go into the exam. The venues for all exams are also shown on the seating plans.
- Candidates who arrive after the start of the examination may be allowed to enter the examination room and sit the examination. This is entirely at the discretion of the school. If special consideration applies then you must speak to the Examinations Officer (see ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS below).
- Full school uniform must be worn by all students attending school for examinations.
- All items of equipment, pens, pencils, mathematical instruments, etc. should be visible to the invigilators at all times. You must either use a transparent pencil case or clear plastic bag.
- You must always write in **BLACK INK**. No erasers or correction pens are allowed.
- For Mathematics and Science exams, students should make sure their calculators conform to the examination regulations. If in doubt, check with your teacher. Remove any covers or instructions and make sure batteries are new.
- Do not attempt to communicate with or distract other candidates.
- Examination regulations are very strict regarding items that may be taken into the examination room (see FAQs at the end of this booklet). If you break these rules you may be disqualified from the examination.
- Mobile telephones **MUST BE SWITCHED OFF** and all watches **MUST BE REMOVED before the start of an exam. These must be left in your bag in the bag drop off room before you go into your exam. Please note that if your mobile phone has an alarm set, this may activate even if the phone is switched off.** If a mobile phone, watch (or any other type of electronic communication or storage device) is found in your possession during an examination (even if it is turned off) it will be taken from you and a report made to the appropriate exam board. No exceptions can be made.
- No food is allowed in the examination rooms and only water in a clear plastic bottle may be brought in.

- Please do not write on examination desks. This is regarded as vandalism and you will be asked to pay for any damage.
- Do not draw graffiti or write offensive comments on examination papers – if you do the examination board may refuse to accept your paper.
- Listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators – there may be amendments to the exam paper that you need to know about.
- Check you have the correct question paper – check the subject, paper and tier of entry.
- Read all instructions carefully and number your answers clearly.
- Candidates must stay in the examination room for the full duration of the exam. You will not be allowed to leave an examination room early. If you have finished the paper use any time remaining to check over your answers and that you have completed your details correctly.
- At the end of the examination all work must be handed in – remember to cross out any rough work. If you have used more than one answer book or loose sheets of paper place them inside your answer booklet/exam paper in the correct order and make sure that your name and candidate number is written clearly on all pages.
- Invigilators will collect your exam papers before you leave the room. Absolute silence must be maintained during this time. Remember you are still under examination conditions until you have left the room.
- Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper must **NOT** be taken from the exam room.
- Remain seated in silence until told to leave the examination room. Please leave the room in silence and show consideration for other candidates who may still be working.
- If the **fire alarm** sounds during an examination the examination invigilators will tell you what to do. Do not panic. If you have to evacuate the room you will be asked to leave **in silence** and in the order in which you are sitting. You will be escorted to a designated assembly point. Leave everything on your desk. You must not attempt to communicate with anyone else during the evacuation. When you return to the exam room do not start writing until the invigilator tells you to. You will be allowed the full working time for the examination and a report will be sent to the awarding body detailing the incident.

EXAM INVIGILATORS

- The school employs external exam invigilators to conduct the examinations. Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards all invigilators and follow their instructions at all times.
- Invigilators are in the examination rooms to supervise the conduct of the examination. They will distribute and collect the examination papers, tell candidates when to start and finish the examination, hand out extra writing paper if required and deal with any problems that occur during the examination, for example if a candidate is feeling unwell.
- Please note that invigilators cannot discuss the examination paper with you or explain the questions.
- Pupils who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the examination room by invigilators and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATIONS

- If you experience difficulties during the examination period (e.g. illness, injury, personal problems) please inform school at the earliest possible point so we can help or advise you.
- Only in 'exceptional circumstances' are candidates allowed special consideration for absence from any part of an examination. It is essential that medical or other appropriate evidence is obtained on the day by the candidate/parent and given to the Examinations Officer without delay in all cases where an application is to be made for special consideration.
- Parents and candidates are reminded that the school will require payment of entry fees should a candidate fail to attend an examination without good reason and without informing the school. Failure to pay may result in your examination results being withheld.
- Please note that misreading the timetable will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of absence.

AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- Results will be available for collection from 8.30am from school on 14th August 2025 for A Levels and 21st August 2025 for GCSE's for the main summer exams.
- Candidates can have their results emailed to their school email address as long as the request is sent to the exams office prior to the summer break. No other email addresses will be used to send out candidates results.
- If requests are not received prior to the school summer break they may not be dealt with until school returns in September.
- **No results will be given out by telephone under any circumstances.**

POST RESULTS SERVICES

- If your child thinks their exam grading is incorrect, there are some options and on the results day staff will be available to give advice on whether a 'review of marking' would possibly be advantageous and the costs associated with this.
- Details of the school's procedures on 'post results services' will be emailed out to parents/carers and will be available on the school website before the end of the summer term.

COLLECTION OF CERTIFICATES

- Students will be able to collect their certificates from the school reception from 1st December. Certificates will not be given to anyone other than the candidate without the candidate's written authorisation and they will not be posted to any candidates as they have to be signed for.
- The school is only obliged to keep certificates for a period of **ONE YEAR** after issue. If candidates do not collect their certificates within this time (or if they lose their certificates) they can only be replaced by direct application to the appropriate examination boards. This will require proof of identity (such as a birth certificate) and a substantial fee per examination board. You are therefore urged to collect your certificates as soon as possible and to store them safely.

SHARING OF EXAMS RELATED INFORMATION

There is a requirement for the exams office(r) to hold exams-related information on candidates taking external examinations. This data may relate to exam entries, access arrangements, the conduct of exams and non-examination assessments, special consideration requests and exam results/post-results/certificate information.

Further details on this can be found in the Data Protection Policy (Exams). For a copy of this please contact exams@simonballe.herts.sch.uk.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What do I do if there's an exam clash on my timetable?

- The school will re-schedule papers internally where there is a clash of subjects. Candidates will normally sit one paper then have a break during which they will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. They will then sit the second subject paper. If the clash means that when candidates are entered for multiple examinations (3 or more) the total of all of the exams being sat in a day exceeds 5.5 hours for GCSE's and 6 hours for A levels candidates may, at the schools discretion, make the decision to sit an exam the following day. Correct times should be on your individual candidate timetable. It may be necessary for you to bring a packed lunch if you have exams in the morning and afternoon as you will have to remain in isolation until both examinations are completed. If in doubt consult the Examinations Officer.

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 the invigilator immediately.

Q. What do I do if I forget my Candidate Number?

- Candidate Numbers are printed on seating plans, which are displayed in the exam rooms, and on attendance registers. Invigilators will be able to help you find your number. Alternatively, you can check with the Exams Office before going into the exam room.

Q. What do I do if I forget the school Centre Number?

- The Centre Number is **17241**. It will be clearly displayed in the examination rooms.

Q. What do I do if I have an accident or am ill before the exam?

- Inform school at the earliest possible point so we can help or advise you. In the case of an accident that means you are unable to write it may be possible to provide you with a scribe to write your answers or a laptop but we will need as much prior notice as possible. You will need to obtain medical evidence (from your GP or hospital) if you wish the school to make an appeal for Special Consideration on your behalf (see below).

Q. What is an Appeal for Special Consideration?

- Special Consideration is an adjustment to the marks or grades of a candidate who is eligible for consideration. The allowance for Special Consideration is from 0% (consideration given but addition of marks considered inappropriate) to 5% (reserved for exceptional cases). Parents should be aware that any adjustment is likely to be small and no feedback is ever provided. Candidates will only be eligible for Special Consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but performance in the examination or in the production of coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. Examples of such circumstances may be illness, accident or injury, bereavement, domestic crisis. The Examination Officer must be informed immediately, so that the necessary paperwork can be completed (within 7 days of the last exam session for each subject) and the candidate will be required to provide evidence to support such an application.

Q. What do I do if I feel ill during the exam?

- Put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. You should inform an invigilator if you feel ill before or during an exam and you feel this may have affected your performance.

Q. If I am late can I still sit the examination?

- Provided you are not more than 1 hour late, it may still be possible for you to sit the examination. 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 an examination room without permission after an examination has begun. It may not be possible to allow you any extra time if you start the examination late.

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

- No. Timetables are regulated by the exam boards and you must attend on the given date and time.

Q. Do I have to wear school uniform?

- Yes. Normal school regulations apply to uniform, hair, jewellery, make-up, etc.

Q. What equipment should I bring for my exams?

- For most exams you should bring at least 2 pens (black ink only).
- For Science and Maths where you need to draw diagrams or graphs you need 2 pencils.
- For some exams you will need a calculator (Maths/Science), a 30cm ruler (marked with cm and mm), pencil sharpener and eraser, compasses, protractor, coloured pencils (not gel pens).
- You are responsible for providing your own equipment for examinations. You must not attempt to borrow equipment from another candidate during the examination.

Q. What items are not allowed into the examination room?

- Only material that is listed on question papers is permitted in the examination room and students who are found to have any material with them that is not allowed will be reported to the appropriate examinations board. In such circumstances, a student would normally be disqualified from the paper or the subject concerned.
- Bags and coats and any other items not permitted under examination regulations must be left in the designated bag drop off room. Do not bring any valuables into school with you when you attend for an examination.
- No food is allowed in the exam room.

Q. Why can't I bring my mobile telephone into the exam room?

- Being in possession of a mobile 'phone (or any other electronic communication device, e.g. iPod, smart watch) is regarded as cheating and is subject to severe penalty from the awarding bodies:

The minimum penalties are as follows:

Device found on you and turned **ON** - **disqualification for the entire subject award.**

Device found on you and turned **OFF** – **disqualification from the specific paper** you are sitting at the time.

Phone rings during the exam **wherever it is in the room** the exam board must be informed and you may be **disqualified from all papers for the subject (including any already taken).**

Q. How do I know how long the exam is?

- The length of the examination is shown in minutes on your individual timetable under the heading 'duration'. Invigilators will tell you when to start and finish the exam. The start and finish time and duration of the exam will be displayed digitally or on a flip chart or board at the front of the exam room. There will be a clock visible in all examination rooms.

Q. Can I leave the exam early?

- It is a requirement of the exam boards that you must stay in the examination room for at least one hour after the published start time of the exam (or for the duration of the exam if it is less than one hour). It is not the school's policy to allow candidates to leave the exam room early, as this is disruptive to other candidates. A candidate may not leave the examination room without the permission of the invigilators.

Q. What do I do if the fire alarm goes?

- The examination invigilators will tell you what to do. If you have to evacuate the room leave everything on your desk and leave the room in silence. You must not attempt to communicate with any other candidates during the evacuation.

Q. Can I go to the toilet during the exam?

- If it is absolutely necessary. You will be escorted by an invigilator and will not be allowed any extra time.

Q. If I have more than one exam on a day can I get lunch at school?

- Pupils who have examinations in both morning and afternoon sessions may obtain lunch from the dining hall in the usual way or bring a packed lunch.

Q. Why do I need to check the details on the Statement of Entry?

- The details on your Statement of Entry will be used when certificates are printed. If the name or date of birth on your certificates does not match your birth certificate it could cause you problems if you are asked to show your certificates to a potential employer for college/university at some time in the future. You should also check that the subjects and tiers of entry you are entered for are correct and that no subjects are missing.

Q. I am entitled to extra time – how will this affect the way I take my exams?

- Some students receive an allowance of up to 25% extra time. Where possible such candidates will be seated together to minimise disturbance from other candidates who finish earlier. The invigilators will include the additional time when they display the finishing time of your exam on the board.