



GCSE EXAMINATION GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND CARERS

2024/2025

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Introduction

The following information has been provided to give students guidance on what they should and should not do when taking the exams. The school appreciates that the examination season can be an anxious time for pupils, parents and carers. It is very important that the examinations run as smoothly as possible and it is hoped that by working together, adhering to the examination's rules and regulations, that the experience will be as positive and stress free as possible.

Please remember that the school is bound by the regulations set out by The Joint Council for Qualifications. Please take your time to read the various instructions and warnings.

Any concerns or queries relating to the running of the examinations should be directed to: Mr Gonzalez, Exams Officer, hgonzalez@stromeros.co.uk

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook is intended as a guide to the following:

- To support/complement candidate briefings/assemblies
- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations/assessments
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright
- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidates documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have etc.
- To inform candidates of/signpost candidates (and where relevant parents/carers) to any exams-related policies/procedures that they need to be made aware of

Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict regulations are in place. Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the regulations. Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be subject to a thorough investigation and reported to the relevant Awarding Body and may result in disqualification.

JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice:

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- Breaches of examination conditions
- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)
- Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
- Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments

Cheating of any description will be taken very seriously. Please refer to the JCQ Information for Candidates documents (including Social Media), links can be found in this document and on the school website under Exams Success and Information.

Please also familiarise yourselves with the Warning to Candidates and Unauthorised Items posters. These are included in this guide and will be displayed outside the examination rooms. They can also be found on the school website.

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.

Things not to do when completing NEA and coursework

Research and using references

Pupils are reminded that when completing NEA or coursework at home they should not be using any form of AI technology. Pupils will be required to sign a declaration form stating that all work completed is their own. If the school or Exam Boards detect the use of AI, the pupil will be subject to a malpractice investigation, which could result in the loss of the qualification.

Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference must show the name of the AI bot used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2025. You must submit a copy of the computer-generated content with your work for reference and authentication purposes.

If you copy the words, ideas or outputs of others and do not show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and trying to pass them off as your own. It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.

Once authentication declarations are signed by the pupils, the school is legally obliged to notify Exam Boards that plagiarism has been detected. This will result in a malpractice investigation and the candidate potentially losing the qualification.

The minimum penalties imposed by the Exam Boards

Electronic device:

- Device found on you and turned ON: Disqualification from the entire subject award.
- Device found on you and turned OFF: Disqualification from the paper being sat.

Cheating of any kind:

- Loss of marks for a section, component or unit.
- Disqualification from a unit, all units or whole qualifications.
- A ban from sitting exams for a set period of time.

Personal data

The Awarding Bodies collect information about exam candidates. To understand what information is collected and how it is used, you must read the JCQ Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice (this can be found on the school website under Exam Success and Information).

Copyright

The copyright of any form of work created by a pupil that is submitted to an Awarding Body for assessment (referred to as Assessment Materials) belongs to the pupil. By submitting this work, a pupil is granting the Awarding Body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials (referred to as Assessment Licence). If a pupil wishes to terminate the Awarding Body's rights for anything other than assessing their work, the Awarding Body must be notified by the centre and it is at the discretion of the Awarding Body whether or not to terminate such rights

Coursework Assessments/Non-Examination Assessments

Pupils, Parents and Carers should ensure they have familiarised themselves with the following JCQ documentation:

- JCQ Information for Candidates documents - Coursework, Non-Examination Assessments, Social Media (please see the school website – Exams Success and Information)
- The use of AI

Teachers will notify pupils of the following information as soon as necessary:

- When assessments will take place
- How pupils are informed about their assessments
- Any relevant deadlines that must be met (dependent on the assessment type)
- How work is marked and assessed
- When pupils are informed of their centre assessed marks
- Which, if any, work is externally marked or assessed

St Oscar Romero Catholic School and Sixth Form has in place a robust Internal Appeals Procedure, should a pupil wish to appeal an assessment decision. Please contact Mr Gonzalez, Exam Officer with any enquires

Written timetabled exams

A GCSE Exam Timetable can be found on the school website and is included with this document. Pupils will be issued with a Statement of Entry in March before the Summer Exam Season. Once the details of this have been checked by staff, pupils, parents and carers, official examination entries are made to the Awarding Bodies. Any irregularities should be reported to Mr Gonzalez.

A personal examination timetable will then be available to view on Bromcom, which by the Easter break will also display seating arrangements.

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

Pupils who are identified as having a timetable clash will be notified of arrangements. Where the examinations total is less than three hours, the pupil will be permitted a twenty-minute supervised break. Examinations totalling over three hours can be sat in an earlier or later session, in discussion with the pupil. Exam clash candidates are required to stay under centre supervision at all times.

Where you will take your exams

All exams will take place in the Sports Hall and S1, unless advised otherwise.

What time your exams will start and finish

Morning exams start at 8.45am; afternoon exams at 1.15pm. Report to the netball Court/Sports Hall at least five minutes before this. It is imperative that examinations commence on time. Pupils are required to remain within the designated exam room until the official finish time.

Supervision during your exams

Exams are supervised by a team of experienced and extensively trained Invigilators. Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by the JCQ and Awarding Bodies. If you need to attract the attention of an Invigilator, please raise your hand and wait for an Invigilator to come to you.

Exam room conditions

Pupils are reminded that they are under strict examination conditions from the moment that they enter the examination room which they will be taking their examination(s) until the point at which they are permitted to leave. Candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the examination room. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.

Wrist watches, mobile phones, electronic communication or storage devices such as iPods, MP3/4 players, smart watches, earphones of any description, reading pens and any other products with text or digital facilities are not allowed in the examination room. Exam reader pens will be allocated to pupils awarded one as an Access Arrangement.

Pupils should:

- Check that they have sat in the correct seat.
- Ensure they have the correct examination paper, subject and tier of entry.
- Ensure the centre number (56665), candidate number and legal name (as per exam card on the desk), have been written clearly on the answer booklet and on any additional pages.

Do not start the examination until instructed by the Exams Officer or Invigilator. Candidates must not open the question paper until the examination begins.

If extra paper is required, pupils should raise their hand and wait for an Invigilator. Additional answer sheets must be placed securely with answer booklets; tags will be supplied, if required, by the Awarding Body.

Do not draw, graffiti or write offensive comments on examination papers, as the Awarding Body may refuse to mark your paper.

The use of tippex and correcting pens are strictly forbidden. Highlighters or gel pens must not be used in answers.

Pupils should remain seated at all times and are not permitted to leave an examination early.

Where you will sit in the exam room

Pupils are sat in candidate order within the Sport Hall and as per access arrangement requirements in S1

Seat numbers in the Gym will change for each examination. It is imperative that pupils are familiar with their seat number before each examination; these can be found on Bromcom. Seating plans will also be displayed outside of the examination room prior to each exam.

A candidate card will be placed on each examination desk.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

Pupils are responsible for bringing with them equipment and resources needed for the examination. If a pupil has any unauthorised equipment or resource in the exam room (whether or not they intend to use it), this may be considered as malpractice.

All Exams:

- Clear pencil case
- A black ballpoint pen (plus a spare if possible), ruler, rubber, pencil
- A clear plastic bottle of water, no labels. Must be stored under your desk

Subject Specific Exams (in addition to the above):

- Maths – Calculator, protractor, compass
- English – Highlighter pen
- Science – Calculator, protractor
- D & T – Colouring pencils, calculator, protractor
- Geography – Calculator

Using calculators

Pupils must be aware of JCQ Awarding Body instructions regarding the use of calculators in your exams.

Calculators must be:

- of a size suitable for use on the desk;
- either battery or solar powered;
- free of lids, cases and covers which have printed instructions or formulae.

Calculators must not:

- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:
 - language translators;
 - symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - communication with other machines or the internet;
- be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason;
- During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:
 - databanks;
 - dictionaries;
 - mathematical formulae;
 - text.

Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

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

Food and drink in exam rooms

Food is not permitted in the exam room. Pupils may bring a small bottle of water; the bottle must be clear with all labels removed.

What you should wear for your exams

Pupils are required to wear full school uniform for every examination.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

Bags, coats and any other personal items should be stored in lockers before each examination. Staff will advise pupils of alternative arrangements, should this not be possible at any point.

What to do if you arrive late for an exam

In the event of a pupil being delayed, the school must be notified immediately. It may still then be possible for the examination to be sat. Pupils should report to the Attendance Officer and make their way to the exam room. The exam room must not be entered without permission after the exam has begun. Pupils should wait outside to be escorted in by the Exams Officer or an Invigilator. It may not be possible to allow the full time for the examination. Pupils arriving very late to an examination will be subject to an investigation. Awarding Bodies may then refuse to accept the examination paper.

What to do if you are unwell on the day of an exam

In the event of a pupil missing an exam due to illness, the school should be notified as soon as possible. It is advisable to obtain a doctor's certificate as evidence and to aid in any special consideration applications.

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

If the fire alarm sounds during the examination pupils should remain seated and await instructions from the Invigilators. The Emergency Evacuation procedure will be actioned. All exam papers should be left on desks. Pupils must remain silent and under exam conditions.

Results

GCSE: Thursday, 21st August, 9.00am – 11.30am

Senior members of staff will be on hand to answer any queries or concerns. Staff can also be contacted via email.

Post-results services

Awarding Bodies offer a post results service. This includes:

- Service 1: Clerical Check
- Service 2: Review of Marking

Pupils are advised to discuss concerns with a member of staff, preferably the Subject Leader, before pursuing a Review of Marking. All requests must be made through the school. Mr Gonzalez, Exams Officer will provide further information and consent forms.

Pupils will be made aware of dates, fees and deadlines for post results services, once they have been made available by the Awarding Bodies and before the start of the GCSE Summer Exam Season.

Certificates

Certificates are distributed to pupils at the Certificate and Prize Giving ceremony in November. Pupils will be notified of the date and arrangements nearer the time. Uncollected certificates will be retained in the school. The school is permitted to keep certificates for a relatively short time period, after which it is a legal requirement that they are destroyed. Exam Boards will not replace certificates, they will only reproduce a certified statement of results, which incurs a cost. Pupils are encouraged to collect their certificates at their earliest convenience. If nominating a third party to collect on their behalf, written confirmation will be required. This can either be via email or in the form of a written and signed note.

Internal appeals procedures

A copy of St Oscar Romero's Internal Appeals Procedure for Examinations can be found on the school website. Please direct any appeal enquiries to Mrs Fletcher, who will facilitate any appeal request and be able to give further information regarding procedures and timescales.

Complaints Policy

A copy of St Oscar Romero Catholic School and Sixth Form Complaints Policy can be found on the school website. Please contact Mr Gonzalez with any initial enquiries.

JCQ Information for candidates – written exams

You **must** read this information before you take any externally assessed timetabled written exams.

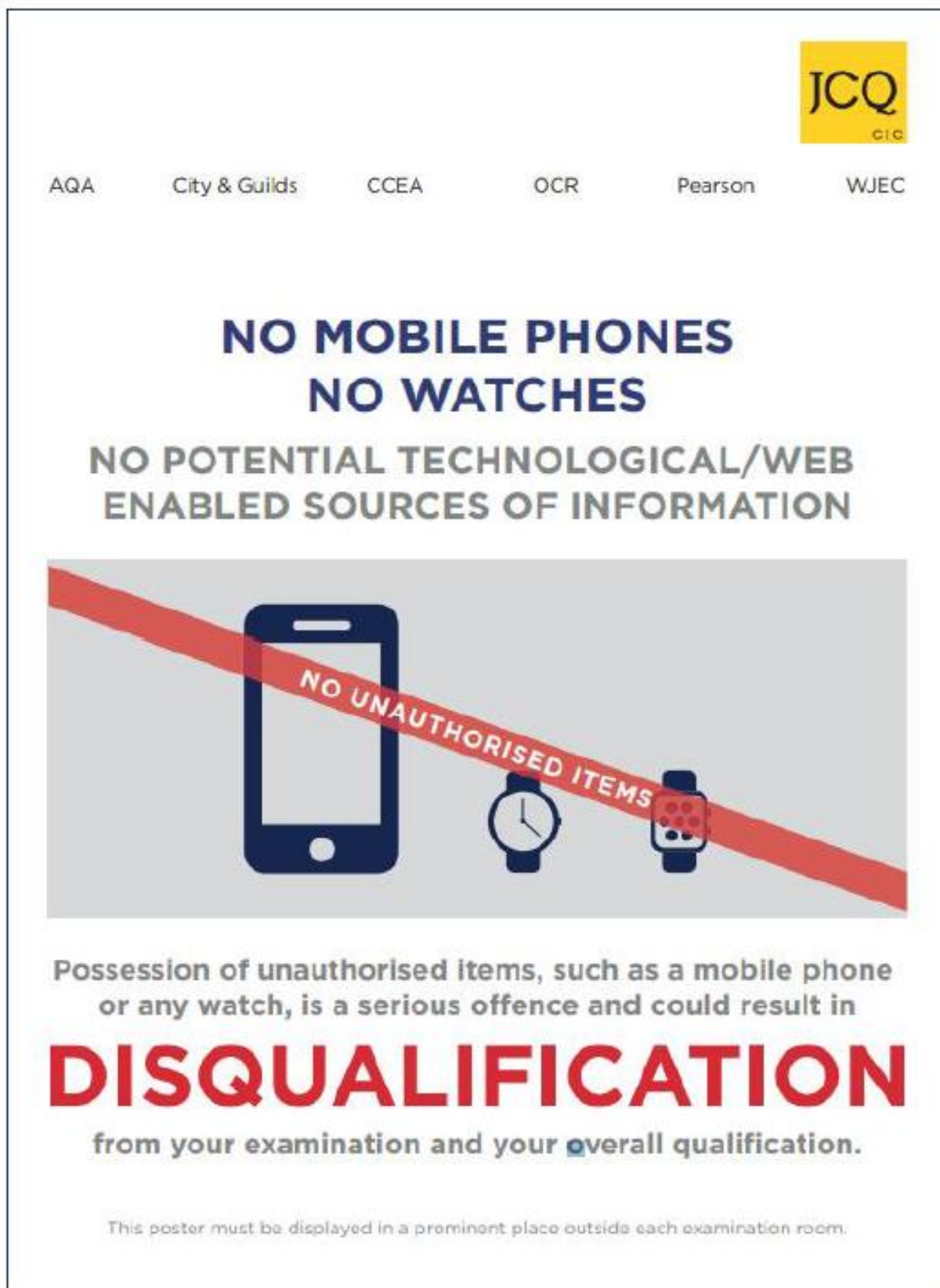
Pupils, parents and carers must read the following JCQ information:

These documents can be found on the school website under 'Exam Success and Information' - <https://stromeros.co.uk/our-school/exam-results-and-information/>

- JCQ Information for candidates – coursework – 2024/2025
- JCQ Information for candidates – non-examination assessments – 2024/2025
- JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests – 2024/2025
- JCQ Information for candidates – written exams – 2024/2025
- JCQ Information for candidates – Privacy Notice
- JCQ Information for candidates – social media

JCQ *Unauthorised items* poster

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note that *"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."*



JCQ *Warning to candidates* poster

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note all the warnings.

Warning to candidates

 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 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 exam/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.



**GCSE Examination Timetable
Thursday 8th May to Wednesday 18th June 2025**

Art Exam: TBA
 Food Preparation and Nutrition Practical Exam: TBA
 MFL Speaking and Listening: 1st April – 14th May

Thursday 8th May 2025 – Friday 9th May 2025									
AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
8	Thurs	Drama	AQA 8261	Understanding Drama	1hr 45m				
9	Fri								

Monday 12th May 2025 – Friday 16th May 2025									
AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
12	Mon	English Literature	AQA 8702	Shakespeare & 19 th Century Novel	1hr 45m	Computer Science	Pearson 1CP2	Principles of Computer Science	1hr 30m
13	Tues	RE	Pearson 1RA0 1A	Catholic Cristianity	1hr 45m	Biology	AQA 8461	Paper 1	1hr 45m
						Combined Science - Biology	AQA 8464	Paper 1	1h 15 m
14	Wed	Geography	AQA 8035	Living with the Physical Environment	1hr 30m	Sport Studies	Cam Nat R184	Issues in Sport	1hr 15m
15	Thur	Maths	Pearson 1MA1 F/H	Paper 1 Non-Calculator	1hr 30m				
16	Fri	History	Pearson 1HI0	Crime and punishment	1hr 20m				

Monday 19th May 2025 – Friday 23th May 2025									
AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
19	Mon	Chemistry	AQA 8462	Paper 1	1hr 45m	PE	Pearson 1PE0	Fitness and Body fitness	1hr 30m
		Combined Science - Chemistry	AQA 8464	Paper 1	1h 15 m				
20	Tues	English Literature	AQA 8702	Modern Text and Poetry	2hr 15 mi	Computer Science	Pearson 1CP2	Computational Thinking, Algorithms & Programming	2hr
						Child Develop.	R057	Health and well-being for	1hr 15m

								child development: Written Paper	
21	Wed	French	AQA 8658	Listening F/H	35m 45m	RE	Pearson 1RA0 2C	Islam	50 m
				Reading F/H	45m 1hr				
22	Thurs	Physics	AQA 8463	Paper 1	1hr 45m				
		Combined Science - Physics	AQA 8464	Paper 1	1hr 15m				
23	Fri	English Language	AQA 8700	Explorati ons in Creative Reading and Writing	1hr 45m				

HALF-TERM

Monday 2nd June 2025 – Friday 6th June 2025

Monday 2 nd June 2025 – Friday 6 th June 2025									
AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
2	Mon	Statistics	Edexcel 1ST0			Dance	AQA 8236	Written Paper	1h 30m
3	Tues	Polish Russian	AQA 8688	Listening F/H	35m/45m				
			Edexcel 1R0	Reading F/H	45m/1h				
4	Wed	Maths	Pearson 1MA1	Paper 2 Calculator	1hr 30m	RE	Pearson 1RA0	Philosophy and Ethics	50 m
5	Thurs	History	Pearson 1H10	British depth Study	1hr 50m	French	AQA 8658	Writing F/H	1h 15m
6	Fri	English Language	AQA 8700	Paper 2	1hr 45m	Geography	AQA 8035	Paper 2	1hr 30m

Monday 9th June 2025 – Friday 13th June 2025

Monday 9 th June 2025 – Friday 13 th June 2025									
AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
9	Mon	Biology	AQA 8461	Paper 2	1hr 45m	PE	Pearson 1PE0	Health and Performan ce	1h 15m
		Combined Science - Biology	AQA 8464	Paper 2 Biology	1h 15m				
10	Tues	Spanish	AQA 8698	Listening F/H	35m 45m	History	Pearson 1HI0	Paper 3: Modern Depth Study	1hr 20m
				Reading F/H	1h 1h 30m				
11	Wed	Maths	Pearson 1MA F/H	Paper 3 - Calculator	1hr 30				
12	Thurs	Geography	AQA 8035	Paper 3	1hr 30m	Further Maths	AQA 8365	Paper 1	1hr 45m

						Hospitality & Catering	WJEC	The Hospitality and Catering Industry	1hr 20m
						Russian	Edexcel	Writing	1hr 25m
13	Fri	Chemistry	AQA 8462	Paper 2	1hr 45m	Polish	AQA 8688	Writing	1hr 15m
		Combined Science - Chemistry	AQA 8464	Paper 2	1hr 15m	Statistics	Pearson 1ST0	Paper 2	1hr 30m

Monday 16th June 2025 – Friday 20th June 2025

AM (8:45)						PM (13:00)			
Date	Day	Subject	Board	Paper	Time	Subject	Board	Paper	Time
16	Mon	Physics	AQA 8463	Paper 2	1hr 45	Music	Eduqas C660U301	Component 3	1hr 15m
		Combined Science - Physics	AQA 8464	Paper 2	1hr 15m				
17	Tues	Spanish	AQA 8698	Writing F/H	1hr 1hr 15m				
18	Wed	Design Technology	Eduqas C600U10	Component 1	2 hr	Further Maths	AQA 8365	Paper 2	1hr 45m

Wednesday 25th June 2025 Contingency Day

The designation of a 'Contingency Day' within the common examination timetable is to allow leeway in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations in the United Kingdom. It is part of the Awarding Bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations. Pupils must remain available until this date.

GCSE Results Day: Thursday 21st August 2025 (9.00 - 11.30am)