

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

Produced/reviewed by	
C Crabtree	
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Introduction

Whickham 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

- 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 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 investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies
- 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

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

For non-examination assessments and coursework:

Research and using references

...Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026.

You should also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.

You **must** retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used...

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 could also include AI-produced material. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously...**

Awarding bodies may issue a warning, loss of marks for some or all of a paper, disqualify you from some or all of your exams with them or ban you from entering exams for a set period of time, if you are found guilty of malpractice.

Personal data

- Any person involved in completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies...
- The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications.
- Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programs and data ("Student Materials"). Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use the Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms.

Copyright

- The copyright of any work created by you that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment belongs to the exam board.
- By submitting your work, you are granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use the assessment materials. If you wish to terminate the awarding body's rights for anything other than assessing your work, the awarding body must be notified by Whickham School and it is at the discretion of the awarding body whether or not to terminate such rights.
- Candidates may access Student Materials (including examination scripts) through the access to scripts arrangements set out in paragraph 5.13.

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

Assessments will take place during lessons and you will be told by the teacher when these sessions will take place. These assessments form part of your qualification and must be completed by the deadline set by the exam board.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) should not be used to complete coursework or non-examined assessments (NEA), however, when it is used, its use must be acknowledged as indicated in the Malpractice/Research and references section of this handbook.

Teachers will mark the work and you will be informed of the mark that you have been given three weeks before the exam board's deadline. This gives you time to appeal the mark you have been given, if you think it is unfair, and gives school time to arrange for the work to be reviewed by a different teacher. You must have read the JCQ documents Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments and Information for candidates documents before completing your assessment. These can be found on the school website under the Parents/Exam Information/Important Information.

You will be informed about your centre-assessed marks one week before the results are submitted to the exam board. Please see the Internal Appeals Procedure Policy.

Written timetabled exams

You will be issued with a candidate statement of entry (to check that personal details and exam entries are correct) in early February.

- Any issues must be brought to the Mrs Crabtree's attention before 13th February 2026.

- Your exam timetable which shows the date and time of all their exams/assessments and which room you will be sitting your exam in will be issued in early April.
- You must have read the JCQ information for candidates documents which are emailed to you. You must be aware of the Exam room posters which are attached to the back of this document.

Contingency session - Summer 2026

Contingency sessions of both morning and afternoon on 24th June 2026 have been set aside in case there is any major disruption to exams which means that the exams cannot go ahead as planned. **You must be available for exams up to and including 24th June 2026.**

On-screen tests

You must have read the JCQ document Information for candidates – on-screen tests

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

If you have a timetable clash we have to change the timing of one of your exams, for example from a morning to an afternoon session or vice versa. You will be notified in advance of any clash. It is important that you are aware of this as it may mean a different start time from other students.

You will have to be supervised in a separate classroom in between exams to avoid contact with other students who may already have sat the exam or are about to sit the exam. You are not allowed access to any internet enabled devices so mobile phones have to be handed in; also, access to computers and tablets is not allowed.

We also ask you to bring a packed lunch and drinks as movement to the lunch hall has to be restricted.

Where you will take your exams

Unless you are entitled to exam access arrangements, which you will already have been told about, you will sit your exams in the Sports Hall or Activity Studio A, depending on the size of the exam.

Check your exam timetable to make sure that you know where you need to be for each exam.

Replacement exam timetables are available from Mrs Crabtree or Mr Lawrence in the Exams and Data Office in the main building.

What time your exams will start and finish

You must be outside, prepared and ready to enter the exam room at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time. For exams in the Sports Hall or Activity Studio A you must line up on the Astro turf. For all other rooms wait outside the room.

- All Morning exams start at 9:00 am
- Afternoon exams will start at 1:10 pm, unless they are shorter than 1 hour when they will start at 1:30 pm.

You are expected to stay in the exam room until the exam finishes so make sure that you go to the toilet **before** the exam starts to minimise disruption. **There will be no access to the toilet unless you have a toilet pass.**

Let your parents know what time you expect the exam to finish.

- **You will not be allowed to leave the examination room early unless there is an emergency**

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of invigilators (both external and internal staff that you may know).
- Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ, awarding bodies, etc. so will not be able to help you answer questions in your exam.
- Invigilators are there to make sure that everyone has the same exam experience and to report and rectify problems if they arise.

Exam room conditions

- You will be escorted into the exam room in silence by a member of staff or an invigilator.
- You will be under exam conditions from the moment you enter the exam room until the moment you leave the exam room. This means that you must not help, talk to or attempt to communicate in any way with another candidate from the moment that you enter the exam room until the moment you leave. 7
- You must not open the question paper until the exam begins. If you do this will be reported to the awarding body as malpractice.
- You must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room.
- You must not speak, turn around in your chair or try to attract another candidate's attention during the exam.
- You will see signs with the centre number, subject title, paper number; and the actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each exam in the exam room.
- You must complete the front of your answer books in uppercase letters with your legal first name and legal surname, candidate number, only when instructed to do so by the invigilator
- If you use additional answer sheets you must make sure that you write your name, candidate number, centre number and question numbers onto the additional paper. It must be attached to your answer book with a treasury tag, which the invigilator will supply.
- You will not be allowed to leave the exam room unless you are accompanied by an invigilator. If you need to leave the exam room you must ask an invigilator before you move from your seat.
- If you need an invigilator stay seated, put your hand up and wait patiently for one to come to you.

Where you will sit in the exam room

- The exam room is laid out in columns and rows. The columns are indicated by letters A to S and rows are indicated by numbers (1 to 14 in the Sports Hall).
- Your seat will be indicated on your timetable, e.g., D4 is the desk that is in column D and 4th from the front of the Sports Hall.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

A member of Senior Leadership will be in the exam room to check that you are the person who should be sitting in that seat. The invigilators will also check during the exam.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- You must bring at least two black pens (not gel pens or erasable pens), a pencil, ruler and eraser in a clear pencil case to your exams. You may also need to bring a calculator and mathematical instruments if you are doing Maths or Science exams.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COME TO THE EXAM FULLY PREPARED.

- Any equipment we have is only available if your equipment fails to work properly.

Using calculators

You should provide your own calculator for each exam where you are allowed to use a calculator
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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 formulas.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

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

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;
- Have retrievable information stored in them this includes:
 - Databanks;
 - Dictionaries;
 - Mathematical formulae
 - text

If you use a graphical calculator, you must be able to put it into exam mode before the exam begins. If you cannot show the calculator is in exam mode, you will not be allowed to use that calculator and will be given a scientific calculator instead for the exam.

What you must not bring into the exam room

You should not bring the following into the exam room:

- Mobile phone(s)
- Watch(es)
- ipods,
- AirPods,
- earphones/earbuds
- Mp3 players
- any technological or web-enabled sources of information
- Pieces of paper, including timetables, revision cards and post it notes
- Bottles/mugs/cups with labels or writing on.
- Tippex,/corrective fluid
- Food and drinks, apart from water in a clear bottle
- Other unauthorised materials

If you are found with any unauthorised items in your possession in the exam room the exam board will have to be notified and they will decide which penalty will be applied to the incident.

Food and drink in exam rooms

- No food or drinks are allowed, unless a prior arrangement has been made with Mrs Crabtree (on medical grounds).
- Water is allowed in a clear bottle with no writing or label on. The label must be removed before entering the exam hall.

What you should wear for your exams

Full school uniform should be worn for all of your exams.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

All bags coats and unauthorised items should be stored in lockers in the main building or in the designated areas of the atrium in the main building.

No bags, coats or unauthorised items will be allowed in the exam room.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

If you know that you are going to be late for an exam you must let school know as soon as possible.

When you arrive at school you must report to reception who will arrange for someone to come and escort you to the exam room.

If you arrive more than **1 hour after the scheduled start** of the exam (10:00 am for morning exams and 2:30 pm for afternoon exams) you will be classed as being **very late**. You will be allowed to sit the exam but we will have to notify the exam board who may decide that the mark for your paper cannot be included in the final mark as you may have had contact with someone who has seen the exam paper.

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

- If you are ill and have an exam in the near future, and you think that you may be absent or affected by your illness in the exam, let us know well before the exam. We will explore whether any support or special arrangements can be made.
- Should a serious injury have occurred, please notify Mrs Crabtree, Mr Lawrence or your Head of Year as soon as possible in order for alternative arrangements to be made.
- Come in for all exams unless it is absolutely impossible – we will make special arrangements for you on the day.
- If you are suddenly ill on the day of the exam, your parent/guardian should telephone the school on 0191 4960026 after 8.00am and tell the receptionist that you are due to sit an exam but are too unwell to attend. You will need to complete an Exam Self Certification form, available on the school website, to say why you missed the exam as soon as possible after the exam.
- Obtain a doctor's note so that we have medical evidence – we can then apply for Special Consideration.
- If you sit an exam but are ill during the exam, you must let Mrs Crabtree or Mr Lawrence, in the Exams and Data office, know as soon as possible so that they can inform the exam board that you were unwell during the exam.

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

If you are absent from an exam you must tell Your Head of Year, Mrs Crabtree or Mr Lawrence why you were absent as soon as possible. If it's a valid reason we may be able to apply for special consideration so that your qualification grade is not affected.

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

If the fire alarm sounds or another emergency occurs during the examination you will be instructed to put your pen down by the invigilator or member of Senior Leadership. They will then give you further instructions.

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- If you have an exam access arrangement you will have been told by Mr Purvis, Mrs Carr or Miss Ford what exam access arrangement you are entitled to.

- The rooms you will sit your exams in will be on your exam timetable. Make sure you know where you need to be for each exam and the time that your exam starts and finishes.

Results

Results

Summer exam results will be available for students on:

13th August 2026 for A and AS Level from 8:00 am,

20th August 2026 for GCSE from 9:00 am.

School will be open to issue results and offer guidance.

- If you are unable to collect your results in person you can request that your results are emailed to you by emailing examsoffice@whickhamschool.org
- If you cannot collect them yourself, you can ask someone you trust to collect them on your behalf but we must have your permission in writing, naming them as being the person you give permission to collect your results, before we can release your certificates. Remind them to bring ID so that we can make sure we are giving your results to the right person.
- If you do not collect your results by 2:30 pm they will be posted out to the address that we hold for you at 3:15 pm.

Post-results services

Full information about the post results services available to you will be included in the envelope your results are issued in. These services include

- priority review of marking for certain subjects,
- review of marking,
- priority access to scripts
- access to scripts.

There is a fee for review of marking services. The fee information will be in your results envelope on results day.

Certificates

Certificates will be available for collection from 26th November 2026.

- These are important documents, which you will need for your future career.
- If lost, they are expensive to replace, so make sure you file them away safely for future reference.
- They must be collected and signed for in person from the Main Reception, by yourself or a family member. If you are not collecting them, the person collecting them on your behalf must have your permission in writing and bring their ID. Remember to bring your ID when you come to collect your certificates so that we can verify that we are giving the certificates to the correct person.

Internal appeals procedure

Whickham School is committed to ensuring that whenever staff assess student's work for external qualification, it is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with exam board requirements.

Staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity should conduct assessments. Where the coursework/controlled assessment is assessed by a number of staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation. One teacher will have been designated as responsible for internal standardisation where there is more than one teacher involved in an assessment.

If a student feels that the above procedures have not been applied to his/her work, he or she may make use of the following appeals procedure.

NB appeals may only be made against the assessment and moderation process and not against the mark or grade.

1. Appeals should be made as soon as possible and must be made at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed examination (usually mid-June).
2. Appeals should be made in writing to the Examinations Officer, Mrs Crabtree, who will investigate the appeal. If the Exams Officer is directly involved in the assessment in question, then the Data Manager will be appointed to conduct this investigation. Appeals will be considered by at least three people.
3. The Exams Officer will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA.
4. Students will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any correspondence with the board, any changes made to the assessment of work and any changes made to improve procedures in the future.
5. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.
6. Enquiries of Results (EARs) are processed in consultation and agreement with subject staff and we must have the written permission of the individual student. It is made clear that marks can go down as well as up after any enquiry. All EARs are processed by the Examinations Officer.

Complaints policy

This can be found on the school website under Parents/Exam Information/Exam Policies.

APPENDIX 1

JCQ Information for candidates - coursework

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain elements of coursework assessment.

The JCQ document [Information for candidates - Coursework 2025-2026](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link

APPENDIX 2

JCQ Information for candidates – non-examination assessments

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain components of non-examination assessment.

The JCQ document [Information for Candidates - Non-examination assessments](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link

APPENDIX 3

JCQ Information for candidates – on-screen tests

You **must** read this information if you will be taking any externally assessed on-screen tests as part of your qualification(s).

The JCQ document [Information for candidates – On-screen tests](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

APPENDIX 4

JCQ Information for candidates – written exams

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

The JCQ document [Information for candidates – written exams 2025-2026](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

APPENDIX 5

JCQ Information for candidates – social media

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using social media.

The JCQ document [Information for candidates – Social Media 2024](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

JCQ Information for candidates - AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using artificial intelligence. This information explains: What is AI? What is an AI tool? When can I use AI? When can I not use an AI tool? If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules? How to make sure you don't misuse AI.

The JCQ document [Information for candidates - AI \(Artificial Intelligence and assessments\)](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

APPENDIX 7

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."*

The JCQ document [Unauthorised items poster](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

APPENDIX 8

JCQ *Warning to candidates* poster

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

The JCQ document [Warning to candidates](#) can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

APPENDIX 9

JCQ AI poster for students

This poster is a quick guide to help you to better understand the rules for use of AI in assessments.

The JCQ document [AI and Assessments: A quick guide for students](#) poster can be accessed by pressing ctrl and clicking on the link.

CANDIDATE CONFIRMATION

To confirm you have received, read and understood the contents of this handbook, please sign and date the tear-off slip below and return to Mrs Crabtree or Mr Lawrence by 1st May 2026

If there is anything you do not understand, you should ask Mrs Crabtree or Mr Lawrence for clarification.



CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

NAME: Overwrite your name here

Date I received the handbook: DD / MM / YYYY

I have read the contents

I understand (Tick all of the boxes that apply)

- ☐ What constitutes malpractice (and what AI misuse is) in examinations/assessments and the consequences of committing malpractice
- ☐ What my personal data is used for by awarding bodies
- ☐ Copyright

I have read and understand the current JCQ information for candidates documents as they relate to the qualifications I am taking (Tick all of the boxes that apply)

- ☐ Coursework
- ☐ Non-examination assessments
- ☐ On-screen tests
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Written exams

By signing here, I am confirming all of the above

Candidate Signature: Overwrite your signature here

Date of signature: DD / MM / YYYY