



CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK 2026/2027

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JCQ is the Joint Council for Qualifications: this is the official body that represents the awarding bodies (exam boards) and oversees the conduct of examinations in centres (schools and colleges)

Introduction

St Mary's is committed to ensuring that you are fully briefed on the exam 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 the exam handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure you are properly prepared in the best mental and physical condition and with the correct exam paper in front of you and to answer any questions you may have.

Written exams

You will be issued with a candidate statement of entry prior to the Easter break. Please check that **all** personal details and exam entries are correct - you must inform the exams officer if any details are incorrect. Personal exam timetables will then be issued to you which you must check to ensure you have been entered for all the exams you should be doing – if you are unsure, ask your teacher.

JCQ information for candidates are on display on the school website (under the parent portal/examination information) and on the wall in the covered way in school.

Coursework/controlled assessment/non-examination assessment

JCQ notices to candidates are on display on the school website (under the parent portal/examination information) and on display in school and you have also had this information e mailed to you at the beginning of the year.

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

If you are taking two or more exams which are timetabled in the same session and the total time is more than 3 hours, one of the exams may be moved to a later or earlier session. You will be notified by the Exams Officer and you will need to bring your lunch on the day of the clash and be supervised in between your examinations. Overnight supervision may be arranged if you are entered for multiple examinations (3 or more) in the same day and the total duration is more than: 6 hours for GCE exams and more than 5½ hours for GCSE exams. You are not allowed to take examinations on an earlier day than that scheduled on the timetable.

Where you will take your examinations

The majority of your exams will be held in the Sports Hall (H1). However, on occasions, alternative rooms may be used and these will be shown on your timetable.

What time your examinations will start and finish

The morning exams start at 09:00 and the afternoon exams at 13:00. You will be asked to make your way silently to your desk by 08:50 for the morning session and 12:50 for the afternoon session. If you have an exam that lasts for less than one hour, you will remain supervised until the published finishing time of the exam. For examinations that last one hour or more, you must stay under supervision until 10.00am for a morning exam and 2.30pm for an afternoon exam.

***Please note that you will not be allowed to leave early so you may need to make alternative travel arrangements to get home.**

Supervision during your exams

Exams are supervised by a team of external invigilators. Exam invigilators are trained to follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies.

Exam conditions

You are under exam conditions from the moment you enter the exam room until you are given permission to leave by the invigilator and have left the exam room; you must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room; you must not communicate with any other candidate at any time in the exam room.

Where you will sit in the exam room

You will be seated in a snake-like fashion according to your candidate number. You will likely be in a different seat for every exam, but your seat number will be listed on your personal timetable.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

Clear pencil case or plastic bag which should contain: at least 2 black pens, HB pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener, mathematical instruments, ruler and a calculator.

Using calculators

You must be aware of JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators (shown on the school website) in your exams which state: "Candidates may use a calculator in an examination unless prohibited by the awarding body's specification. Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations". These are also on the school website under the parent portal/examinations information.

What you should not bring into the exam room

Only authorised equipment may be brought into the exam room. Bags, mobile phones, watches, air pods and electronic devices **must not be brought to the exam room** – secure storage during the exam will be made available. If you bring any such items, you will be asked to hand them in to the invigilator and they will be taken to the secure storage. We cannot guarantee their safe storage. To ensure you do not accidentally have any unauthorised items on your person, mobile scanners will be used for random checks.

Food and drink in exam rooms

The centre's policy is that no food is allowed in the exam room (exceptions for medical purposes) . A bottle of water in a clear plastic bottle with the label removed and no markings on is allowed. (chilly bottles are not allowed)

What you should wear for your exams

Full correct school uniform or sixth form dress code is required to be worn by all students for all exams. Failure to do so may result in you being removed from the exam room.

What to do if you arrive late for an examination

Report to Pupil Services or the 6th form office whichever is applicable and you will be briefed and escorted to the examination room. If you are very late, you will be advised that the awarding body may not accept your work.

What to do if you are ill on the day of the examination

If you are too ill to attend, then your parent/carer must contact school as soon as possible and ask for a message to be given to the Exams Officer. If you are ill but think you can manage to sit the exam, please make sure the Exams Officer/invigilator is notified. Evidence may be required to support a request for special consideration.

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from an exam

You will be charged the exam entry fee for unauthorised absences.

What will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room (e.g. a fire alarm)

You will follow instructions from the invigilator. The exam will be stopped, you will be asked to close your answer booklet and you will make your way in silence to line up on the tennis courts for the majority of exams or the ATP if the exam is in M1.

Suspected malpractice

'Malpractice', which includes maladministration and non-compliance, means any act, default or practice which is a breach of the regulations or which:

- Compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- Damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre.

Any suspected malpractice will be investigated and reported to the Awarding Body.

Candidates with access arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, other require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

Access arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'. You will be notified by the SEN team of any access arrangements in place.

JCQ Information for Candidates

Further information on the following will be found on the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk under the Exams Office tab or on the school website under the parent/student portal:

- Information for candidates – coursework assessments effective from 1/9/26
- Information for candidates – non-examination assessments effective from 1/9/26
- Information for candidates – written exams effective from 1/9/26
- Information for candidates – Social Media

Contingency dates

JCQ have set the date of 23 June 2027 as a contingency day which is designed to be used in the event of national or significant disruption to examinations. **All students should remain available on this day.**

Results

Y13 & Y12 results will be issued on the **12 August 2027**

Y11 results will be issued on the **19 August 2027**

Any other results will be issued in tutor/lesson time on the first week back in September.

Please note that results will not be issued to any other person unless you make prior arrangements with the Exams Officer before the summer holidays.

Results will not be given over the telephone

Post Results Services - GCSE & GCE

Clerical Checks; Mark Reviews; Moderation Reviews and Access to Scripts

Deadline: Priority review of marking (e.g. a university place is pending) **19 August 2027**

Deadline: Priority copy of marked script (GCE) to decide next steps **26 August 2027**

Deadline: Priority copy of marked paper (GCSE) **2 September 2027**

Deadline: Non-priority review of marking 12 noon **24 September 2027**

Certificates

The centre will receive these in November. If you have left school and moved onto further education elsewhere, **you must arrange to collect your certificates** or notify the exams officer if you wish to authorise someone to collect them on your behalf.

It is your responsibility to collect your certificates.

Certificates are only held at the centre for 1 year