

Candidate Exam Handbook

2025/26

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Essential reading for candidates can be found on pages 10 and 11.

Introduction

Poole High School is committed to ensuring that candidates 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 this handbook

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

You should be aware that the following constitutes as malpractice:

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
- Breaches of examination conditions
- Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments
- Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
- copying or allowing work to be copied – e.g. posting written work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
- collusion: allowing others to help produce your work or helping others with theirs;
- asking others about what questions your exam will include (even if no one tells you);
- having or sharing details about exam questions before the exam - whether you think these are real or fake; or
- not telling exam boards or your school/college about exam information being shared.

Copyright

The copyright of any work created by a candidate that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment (referred to as Assessment Materials) belongs to the candidate.

By submitting this work, a candidate is granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials (referred to as Assessment Licence).

If a candidate wishes to terminate the awarding body's rights for anything other than assessing his/her 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

Non-examination assessments measure subject-specific knowledge and skills that cannot be tested by timed written papers.

Candidates will be notified of their examination entries and dates and time of their examinations/assessments. The subject teacher will discuss the assessment process with the candidate.

Please refer to Information for candidates – non examination assessments and coursework assessments

[Coursework ICC 25-26 FINAL.pdf](#)

[Non-Examination Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Written timetabled exams

Prior to the examination period all students will receive a default entry statement. This must be checked carefully and any problems brought to the attention of the Examinations Officer immediately. Examples include an incorrect entry, tier or personal details. The entry statement is followed up with a green individual timetable in April giving the room, start time, seat number and any tier change.

You must arrive for your exams with all the necessary equipment.

Please make yourself acquainted with the following 'information for candidates' documents.

- Information for candidates – Coursework assessments
[Coursework ICC 25-26 FINAL.pdf](#)
- Information for candidates- Non-examination assessments
[Non-Examination Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)
- Information for candidates - For written examinations
- [IFC-Written Examinations 2025 FINAL.pdf](#)
- Information for candidates - Using social media and examinations/assessments
[JCQ Social Media Infographic v4](#)
- Warning to Candidates poster
[JCQ-ICE-Warning-to-candidates-2025.pdf](#)
- Unauthorised items poster
[2025 Unauthorised-Items-poster](#)
- Instructions for Candidates – Produced by The Exams Office organisation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSu9cKXlwHk>
- Preparing to sit exams
[JCQ-Preparing-to-sit-your-exams -2025 2026.pdf](#)
- AI and Assessments-A quick guide for students
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/JCQ-AI-poster-for-students-2.pdf>

The Summer 2026 examination series will take place from 1 May to 23 June with the contingency day set for the 24 June.

Contingency day - Summer 2026

All Summer 2025 GCSE and A Level exams will finish by 23 June 2025. The contingency day is set by JCQ in the event of a national or significant local disruption to examinations in the UK. Please do not make any arrangements for **24 June 2026** in case exams need to take place on this day. JCQ have set another contingency session which is due to take place on **9 June** in the afternoon.

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

If candidates are taking two or more examinations in a session and the total time is three hours or less, we may decide the order within the timetabled session in which to conduct the examinations. Candidates may also be given a supervised break of no more than twenty minutes between papers within a session. This must be conducted within the examination room, under formal examination conditions at all times. This means that candidates cannot use this time to revise.

If candidates are taking two or more examinations timetabled for the same session and the total time is more than three hours including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks, the centre may conduct one examination in a later or earlier session within the same day. The candidate will be supervised at all times.

Where you will take your exams

Exams are held in several locations at Poole High School.

These include:

Sports Hall

M&M Hall

Theatre

Shaftesbury Centre

Computer rooms

Or a classroom/office if a smaller room is required.

Please wait quietly outside your exam room until a member of staff allows you in. Once inside the room, Awarding Body regulations state that you **MUST** be silent as you are under exam conditions.

What time your exams will start and finish

The awarding bodies' published starting time for all morning examinations is 9.00am and 1.30pm for all afternoon examinations. These are known as the morning and afternoon sessions. The JCQ awarding bodies allows centres to start examinations up to 30 minutes earlier than, or later than, the published starting time for the session. Therefore, most of our afternoon sessions commence at 1pm.

Supervision during your exams

Our exams are supervised by a team of experienced external invigilators. They will supervise the exams in full accordance with JCQ requirements. All instructions issued by the invigilators must be followed.

Exam room conditions

Candidates are under formal examination conditions from the moment they enter the room in which they will be taking their examination 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.

Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room.

The following information will be displayed at the front of the exam room.

- The centre number

- subject title
- paper number
- start and finish times
- date

All mobile phones and any other unauthorised items must be handed in before entering the exam room.

Where you will sit in the exam room

Prior to the examination period, you will be given a timetable and a seat number for each exam. Upon entering the exam room, an invigilator will help direct you to your seat.

Candidates are seated in rows, all seats face the front and candidates must ensure they remain facing forward throughout.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

KS4 candidates are identified by SLT and HODs prior to going into an exam. In the exam rooms invigilators have a folder of photographs if in doubt of the candidate's ID. Students with access arrangements are identified by LSAs.

KS5 candidates have photo ID, which must be worn at all times whilst on school premises. These ID badges are to be placed on the desk for identification purposes. Students not wearing them for exams have to provide photo ID e.g. driving licence.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

Only take into the exam room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other equipment which you need for the exam. **You must write clearly and in black ink.**

Coloured pencils or inks may only be used for diagrams, maps, charts, etc. unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.

Use of calculators

Candidates may use a calculator in an examination unless this is prohibited by the awarding body's specification. The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates. Poole High School is able to provide calculators for our students however, if the candidates bring their own they need to be made aware of the following:

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;

Calculators must not give access to pre-stored information

This includes:

- databanks;
- dictionaries; repo
- mathematical formulae;
- text.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

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

[FAQs---Using-Calculators FINAL.pdf](#)

What you should not bring into the exam room

No mobile phones, watches, MP3/4 players or smart glasses (No potential technological/web enabled sources of information).

POSSESSION OF UNAUTHORISED ITEMS, SUCH AS A MOBILE PHONE, IS A SERIOUS OFFENCE AND COULD RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM YOUR EXAMINATION AND OVERALL QUALIFICATION.

[JCQ-ICE-Warning-to-candidates-2025.pdf](#)

[2025 Unauthorised-Items-poster](#)

Food and drink in exam rooms

Drinks may be brought into the exam room in a clear, plain bottle without any designs or packaging. Food is not allowed in the exam room. An exception may be made if access to food is a medical requirement and should be kept in a clear box and placed under the desk. Please make the Exams Officer aware of any such conditions before the exam season.

What you should wear for your exams

Full uniform must be worn. Sixth Form must wear smart and appropriate clothing.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

Mobile phones and watches are to be placed in your bag and left in the designated secure room if your exam is taking place in the Sports Hall. For all other venues, mobile phones and watches are to be collected by the Exam team and stored in the secure storage room by the Examinations Office. Once the exam is finished you may collect your possessions.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

It is very important that you arrive on time to sit your exam. If you arrive late, you may still be able to sit your exam. If this is the case then you will be allowed the full amount of time to complete the exam. However, please note that if you are very late for your exam then the exam board may not accept your completed script.

A candidate will be considered very late if he/she arrives:

- a) more than one hour after the awarding body's published starting time for an examination which lasts one hour or more, i.e. after 10.00am for a morning examination or after 2.30pm for an afternoon examination;
- b) after the awarding body's published finishing time for an examination that lasts less than one hour.

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

- If you feel unwell on the day of your exam and are unable to attend, then you must contact the appropriate attendance office using the 'Report an absence' link on the school website.
- Email exams@poolehigh.poole.sch.uk informing us of the situation as special consideration may apply. Complete a JCQ Form 14 upon your return to school if required.
- If you feel unwell on the day of your exam but are still able to attend, please make the exams office aware of this as you could be eligible for a special consideration request.
- If you feel unwell during the exam please raise your hand to attract the invigilator, they will then inform a member of the examinations staff.

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

Any unauthorised absence from an exam will result in a charge for the cost of the exam, this can include any exam which forms part of an overall award.

Any unauthorised missed exams will result in a zero mark.

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

If the fire bell sounds during an exam, the invigilator will advise candidates to leave their scripts, question papers bags and in the room. You will then be asked to evacuate quietly and in a calm manner. The invigilator will then direct you to the designated evacuation meeting point which is the tennis courts between the Music building and the Art block. You must remain silent throughout and not discuss any aspects of the exam as you are still under examination conditions.

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

All access arrangements and adjustments are co ordinated by the SENCO/AEN department.

They will carry out the relevant testing (in line with JCQ requirements) to be able to organise the appropriate access arrangements.

The exams office will then organise the seating for all exams to ensure that the needs of the candidate are met.

Results

A Level Results day- 13 August 2026

GCSE Results day - 20 August 2026

Candidates should attend in person to collect their results. If for any reason this is not possible then the candidate should email exams@poolehigh.poole.sch.uk to nominate a third party to collect or to request for them to be posted home.

Post-results services

See below the links to the relevant exam boards providing guidance and support post-results.

[AQA](#) | [Exams admin](#) | [After results](#) | [Post-results services](#)

[Post-results \(ocr.org.uk\)](http://ocr.org.uk)

[Post-results services | Pearson qualifications](#)

[Student Support: Post-Results GCSE \(wjec.co.uk\)](http://wjec.co.uk)

[Student Support: Post Results for A Levels \(wjec.co.uk\)](http://wjec.co.uk)

If you would like to request the **Access to Scripts, Clerical Re-Check or Review of Marking** service you will need to complete the consent forms and return it to the Exams Office as soon as possible after your results have been published. The forms can be found on Page 18 and 19 (see link below).

[Post-Results-Service 25 FINAL.pdf](#)

By signing the Review of Marking form you consent to us submitting a review of those papers you have identified on the form. In giving consent you have understood that the final subject grade and/or mark awarded to you following a clerical re-check or review of marking, and any subsequent appeal, maybe lower than, higher than, or the same as the result which was originally awarded for this subject. No submission will be made until the consent form has been signed and a payment made through Wisepay. If you are a leaver then our bank details will be supplied at the time.

If the grade changes then you will receive a refund.

Certificates

GCSE and A Level certificates will usually be ready for collection late November. Those students who still attend Poole High School will be passed their certificates via their tutor. For students who no longer attend Poole High School, these should be collected from the main school reception. Certificates should be collected by the candidate. However, where that is not possible you may email exams@poolehigh.poole.sch.uk to nominate a third party to collect these on your behalf. Email requests from candidates must come from their school email address, or the email address of a parent which we hold on record so we can verify authenticity.

Certificates will be kept in secure storage for one year; if you do not collect them, they will be disposed of. After this date, candidates will need to contact the relevant exam boards for copies, however there will be a cost.

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/contact-us/certificate-services/past-results-and-lost-certificates>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/certificate-services.html>

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/students/replacement-certificates/>

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/replacement-exam-certificates/>

Appeals procedure

Poole High School's appeals procedure can be found on the 'Examination information' section of the school website - <https://poolehigh.co.uk/school-information/information/examination-information>

Exam Boards used at Poole High School

AQA

- Art and Design
- Science
- French
- Geography
- History
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Physical Education
- Drama
- Religious Studies
- English Language (GCSE)
- English Literature (GCSE)
- EPQ
- Mathematical Studies
- Food Technology
- Psychology

Pearson Edexcel

- BTEC TA IT
- BTEC TA T&T
- BTEC TA Sport
- BTEC Business
- BTEC HSC
- BTEC Sport
- Business Studies
- Design and Technology
- English Literature (A Level)
- English Language (A Level)
- Mathematics
- Politics

OCR

- Child Development (CamNat)
- Enterprise (CamNat)
- IT (CamTech)
- Data Analytics (CamNat)
- Music
- Further Mathematics
- Religious Studies (A Level)

WJEC

- Media Studies
- Engineering
- Criminology (App Dip)
- Food Science (App Dip)

JCQ Information for candidates - coursework

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

Information for candidates - Coursework 2025-2026

[Coursework ICC 25-26 FINAL.pdf](#)

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.

Information for candidates – non-examination assessments 2025-26

[Non-Examination Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Appendix 3

JCQ Information for candidates – written exams

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

Information for candidates – written exams 2025-26

[IFC-Written Examinations 2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

Appendix 4

JCQ Information for candidates – social media

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

Information for candidates – social media

[JCQ Social Media Infographic v4](#)

Appendix 5

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, is a serious offence and could result in **DISQUALIFICATION** from your examination and your overall qualification.*”

Unauthorised items poster

[2025 Unauthorised-Items-poster](#)

Appendix 6

JCQ Warning to candidates poster

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

Warning to candidates

[JCQ-ICE-Warning-to-candidates-2025.pdf](#)

Appendix 7

JCQ AI and Assessments-A quick guide for students

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations regarding use of AI.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/JCQ-AI-poster-for-students-2.pdf>