



DURLSTON
PREP & SENIOR SCHOOL

EXAM CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

September 2025 - August 2026





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Centre Number: 58830
Exams Officer: Mrs Janet White

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Introduction

Durlston School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the exam and assessment process in place and are made aware of the required JCQ awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

If you have any questions or are still unsure about anything, then please come along to the Exams Office (in the Lighthouse) and ask – we are here to help you.

Coursework assessment/non-examination assessment

NEAs are assessments which take place outside of the written examination series. They include:

- Language Orals: French, Spanish
- Practical units: Art
- Performance: Music, Drama, PE
- Coursework: Drama, English Language, Music, PE

We will notify you of your examination entries and the dates and times of your examinations/assessments. You will be told if your work will be marked by your teacher or by the exam board. If your teacher has marked your work, you have the right to request a breakdown of the marks and to appeal the mark given if you feel that the specification assessment criteria have not been applied fairly.

Once your Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) has been assessed and marks have been internally standardised, you will be informed of the mark by your teacher. They will inform you of your mark and the total marks available. You will not be given a grade or information on grade boundaries.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Work that is submitted for coursework and non-examination assessments (NEAs) must be a student's own independent work. If any form of AI is used, then this must be referenced correctly. If a tool is used that provides details of the sources it has used to generate content, these sources must be verified by the student and referenced in their work. Where the tool doesn't provide this information, students must verify the AI-generated content and then reference the sources they have used.

Where AI is used, students must acknowledge its use and show clearly how they have used it.

If AI is used and not correctly acknowledged and referenced, it is MALPRACTICE and will be reported to the exam board. Coursework submitted to exam boards is put through AI content-finding software.

See Appendix 1 for more information.

Written Exams - Examination Timetable

You will be issued with a personalised GCSE exam timetable towards the end of the Spring Term. You must check this very carefully.

It is a requirement that your legal name is used. If there are any mistakes, e.g. your name or date of birth, etc., you MUST report them to the Exams Officer (Mrs White) immediately. Mistakes that are not spotted at this stage could mean that your certificate is incorrectly printed later on.

Check each exam date carefully, making note of whether they are a morning or afternoon exam. **If there is an exam on your personalised timetable that you were not expecting to take, you MUST inform the Exams Officer immediately. Similarly, inform the Exams Officer if there is an exam that you were expecting to take that does not appear.**

Summer 2026 Contingency dates

The following dates have been designated as contingency dates by the JCQ and all students sitting exams in this summer series **must** ensure they are available on these dates in the event of examinations needing to be rescheduled:

- Wednesday 24th June 2026

Examination Clashes

If you have a clash of exams, arrangements will be made for you to take these subjects one after the other. If the total time is more than three hours, the exams will be split between the morning and afternoon sessions. If this happens, an invigilator will supervise you over lunchtime (in 'quarantine'). The exams officer will have already identified that you have a clash, and you will be told in the next few weeks which exam you will be sitting first and more details about the arrangements.

Exam start times

Arrive on time

- Morning exams start at 9 am
- Afternoon exams start at 2 pm

This is the time you should be at your desk, ready to start writing. Therefore, aim to get to school at least 30 minutes before these start times.

If you are late, the exam board may not accept your work.

Arriving in plenty of time also gives you some breathing space to relax before you start the exam itself.

What to do if you are late for your exam

If you know you are going to be late, please phone into the school as soon as possible. When you arrive, you need to go to the reception to be taken into your exam. If you arrive after 10 am for a morning exam and 2.30 pm for an afternoon paper, the exam board may not accept your paper for marking, or you may not be allowed to sit the exam at all.

Exams CANNOT be rescheduled for any reason.

What to do if you are unwell

Please contact the school as soon as possible if you are too unwell to sit your exam. You will need to provide a doctor's/hospital note with the reason for absence, as there may be an opportunity to apply for special consideration to the exam board. We would always recommend you try to come in and attempt to sit the exam.

If you are unwell during the exam, you **MUST** report this fact to the Invigilator at the time AND to the Examinations Office after the exam. The Exams Officer will advise on what other action must be taken.

What you should bring with you

You must ensure that you bring all the equipment necessary for the exam.

For all exams, you should bring:

- 2 black pens (not gel pens or Frixxion style pens)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Eraser

Where required, you should bring:

- Mathematical equipment (protractor, compass, etc.)
- Scientific Calculator (see below)
- Highlighters – these can be used to highlight sections in the question papers, but NOT in your answers

All equipment should be brought in a CLEAR pencil case or a CLEAR plastic wallet

Calculators

You may use a calculator in all exams unless it specifically says you can't.

Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.

<p>Calculators must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Calculators must not: be able to offer any of these facilities: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language translators; • symbolic algebra manipulation; • symbolic differentiation or integration; • communication with other machines or the internet;
<p>The candidate is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the calculator's power supply; • the calculator's working condition • clearing anything stored in the calculator 	<p>During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • databanks; • dictionaries; • mathematical formulas; • text. <p>A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.</p> <p>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</p>

Food and Drink

No food is allowed in any of the exam venues (unless you have a medical condition which the school is aware of). However, you may bring in a **clear (not coloured)** bottle of water, provided that the **labels have been removed** and there is **no writing on the bottle**. It should have a sports-type lid to prevent spillages.

If your bottle does not comply with the above, it will be confiscated.

What you must NOT bring into an exam

Mobile phones, watches, music players, headphones, earphones, AirPods or any type of electronic/smart communication or storage device are not allowed in the exam room. You are strongly advised not to bring any such devices with you to school when you have an exam.

If a mobile phone, pager or other electronic communication device is found in your possession during an exam or quarantine, **EVEN IF IT IS TURNED OFF**, the device will be taken from you and a report made to the appropriate exam board. No exceptions will be made.

You must not have on you any other unauthorised material such as notes, books, dictionaries, writing on hands or arms (this includes Henna).

MINIMUM penalties imposed by the exam boards are as follows (without exception):

- Device found on you and turned ON: disqualification from the entire subject award
- Device found on you and turned OFF: disqualification from that component

The Rules

- School uniform MUST be worn at all times.
- If you have long hair, this must be tied back. If your ears are not visible, you will be asked to show that you do not have any electronic devices in them.
- You MUST bring all of your own equipment.
- All unauthorised equipment MUST be either left in your bag or handed to an invigilator for the duration of the exam.
- You are under exam conditions as soon as you enter the exam room.
- Durlston School MUST report to the exam board any communication (verbal or non-verbal) by any candidate from the moment they enter the exam room.
- Remember, no talking, even when waiting for everyone to be seated. Talking to or disturbing other candidates is misconduct and will be reported to the exam board. Disturbing others could be talking, non-verbal communication, etc.
- You MUST NOT write anything on the question or answer book before being told to by the invigilator. This includes writing your name, etc.
- Listen carefully to the invigilator's announcement and instructions. There could be notices from the exam board concerning the paper. If you are unsure about anything, put your hand up and ask.
- You MUST put your hand up if you have any issues, questions, etc., and an invigilator will come to you.
- If you begin to feel ill or need to use the toilet during the exam, put your hand up and speak quietly to an invigilator. Nobody will be allowed to go to the toilet in the first hour or the last 15 minutes of the examination, unless you have a toilet pass. No extra time will be given for toilet breaks, but it may be given if you have to attend the medical room.
- You must not ask for any explanation of the questions; invigilators will not be able to help.
- You will not be allowed to leave the exam before the finish time stated on the board. Once you have left, you will not be able to return if you remember something that you should have written.
- You MUST inform the school on the day of the exam if you are too ill to attend. You will need written confirmation that you were ill, and, where possible, obtain a doctor's letter.
- You MUST attend all exams that appear on your timetable. Misreading the timetable will not be accepted as a satisfactory reason for your absence.

Emergency Evacuation

If the fire alarm should go off during your exam

- You will be asked to stop writing.
- A record of the time will be taken by an invigilator.
- You **MUST NOT** talk to or communicate with anybody during this time – you must remain under exam conditions.
- If you are evacuated from the room, you must close your booklets and leave them on your desk.
- You will then be taken to an evacuation point where you must remain with the invigilators under exam conditions.
- When instructed, you will return to the exam venue in silence.
- The time will be noted, and you will be allowed to continue to work with the full time of the exam allowed.
- The Exam Officer will then make a report to the exam board as appropriate.

IMPORTANT: During the whole evacuation, you **MUST** remain under exam conditions. Any candidate found communicating or trying to communicate with others will be reported to the exam board for malpractice.

Malpractice

Examination malpractice is any form of deliberate cheating in examinations which provides one or more candidates with an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

Some examples:

- Any action that can be seen as trying to communicate with another candidate during the exam.
- Possession of any unauthorised materials/devices is malpractice, even if you do intend to use them.
- Writing inappropriate or offensive material on an exam paper.
- Disruptive behaviour.
- Plagiarism – copying other people’s work for non-examined assessments. • AI – using computer-generated content (such as ChatGPT) without referencing the AI bot used. The reference should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2024. You should retain a copy of the computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes. *See Appendix 1*
- Having or sharing details about exam questions before the exam – whether you think these are real or fake.
- Not telling exam boards or your school about exam information being shared.

Things not to share 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

JCQ Information for students - [Using social media and examinations/assessments](#)

What are the consequences if you are involved in any malpractice? There are penalties to pay. These include (but are not limited to):

- A warning
- Loss of marks for a unit/component
- Disqualification from a unit/component or whole qualification
- A ban from sitting exams for a set period of time.

The school does not impose these penalties; they are issued by the exam boards.

In the Summer 2024 exam series, 5230 penalties were issued to exam candidates, 1850 were given a warning, 2350 received a loss of marks, and 1030 received a disqualification from a subject.

Results

Exam results are issued in August. These results are 'provisional' and are not your official certificates.

If you know you will not be available to collect your own statement of results, then please provide either:

- A stamped address envelope – A5 size. Your results will be posted on the official results day.
- A written letter of consent detailing who will collect your results on your behalf. The person collecting may be required to show their ID and a copy of the consent letter.

Post results services

Details of post results services will be available with your results, which includes access to scripts, reviews of results and appeals procedures. Here you will be informed about the deadlines, fees, and charges for the services. Outcomes of the post-results services will be emailed to the designated parent, so it is essential that a correct forwarding email is provided.

Certificates

GCSE certificate collection dates will be communicated once they are received from the exam boards. This is typically from late-November but is subject to receipt from the relevant exam boards.

Certificates are not released prior to the pre-arranged dates.

Certificates not collected are retained for 12 months and can be collected by candidates or their pre-authorized representative. In order to authorise someone to collect on your behalf, please make sure you provide them with a signed letter of approval stating your name and candidate number, and their full name. Candidates or their representative will need to provide photo ID to collect their certificate.

We reserve the right not to retain your certificate beyond 12 months. If you need your certificate after this, please contact the Exams Officer, who will notify you whether it is still available or whether you will need to contact the awarding body to purchase a replacement; this will be at your own expense, and it can cost around £100 per certificate if they need replacing.

If you need certificates posted to you, please contact the Exams Officer with the postal details, and you will be advised of the current charge applicable. This fee will need to be settled prior to posting.

JCQ Information for candidates

You **must** read the following information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain:

- elements of coursework assessment
- components of non-examination assessment
- any externally assessed on-screen tests

OR

- before you take any externally assessed timetabled written exams

Coursework assessments	Non-examination assessments	On-screen test
 SCAN ME	 SCAN ME	 SCAN ME

Written examinations	On your exam day	Using social media and examinations/ assessments
 SCAN ME	 SCAN ME	 SCAN ME

Appendix 1 – AI and Assessments



AI and Assessments

A quick guide for students



What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased



How can AI be misused in assessments?

AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

THIS IS CHEATING!

How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?



1 Know the rules

- You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
- Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
- Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work

2 Reference reference reference!

- If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly
- Name the AI tool you used
- Add the date you generated the content
- Explain how you used it
- Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got

3 Declare it's all your own work

- When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references



What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

DON'T RISK IT!



REMEMBER
Misusing AI is cheating!

Know the rules
Talk to your teachers
Reference clearly

Appendix 2 – Unauthorised item poster



AQA

City & Guilds

CCEA

NCFE

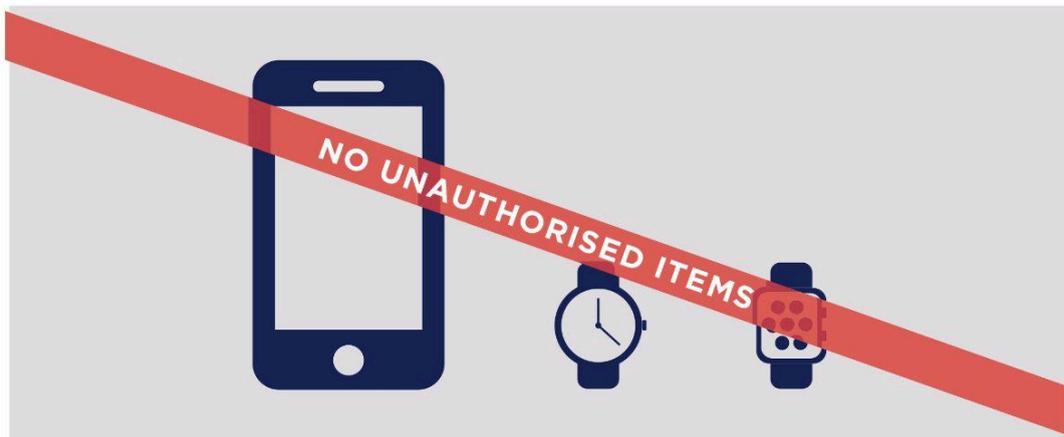
OCR

Pearson

WJEC

NO MOBILE PHONES NO WATCHES

NO TECHNOLOGICAL OR WEB-ENABLED
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION



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.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

Appendix 3 – Warning to candidates poster

Warning to candidates



 Questions matter AQA	 City & Guilds	 Rewarding Learning CCEA	 NCFE	 Oxford Cambridge and RSA 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 examination or 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.