



# Alcester Academy

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TO BE THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE

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## EXAMINATION HANDBOOK FOR CANDIDATES

Summer 2026

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# AIM AND INTRODUCTION

## Aims of This Handbook

This handbook is designed to give you the key information you need to prepare for your examinations and assessments.

It will:

- Explain what to expect before, during, and after your exams
- Outline the rules you must follow, including malpractice
- Provide important guidance from JCQ
- Share key information about procedures, policies, and your responsibilities
- Answer common questions and help you feel confident and prepared

## Introduction

This handbook will help you through the exam period by clearly explaining procedures and answering common questions. It also includes important official information that must be shared with all candidates.

The academy will do everything possible to ensure you are well prepared, that exams run smoothly, and that you can perform at your best.

You should already be familiar with exam processes from mock exams. This guide brings everything together in one place—make sure you read it and refer back to it if needed.

If you're unsure about anything, speak to the exams officer or a member of staff.

Mrs C Parr, Exams Officer

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# BEFORE THE EXAM

## CHECKING ENTRIES AND EXAM TIMETABLE

Please check your **Individual Candidate Timetable** carefully:

- **Personal details:** Make sure your **name and date of birth** are correct. These will appear on your certificates and must match your **passport or birth certificate**. Report any errors to the **Exams Manager** immediately.
- **Subjects and tiers:** Confirm you are entered for the correct **subject and tier** (e.g., Foundation or Higher). If anything looks wrong, speak to your **subject teacher**, who will notify the Exams Manager if a change is needed.
- **Exam dates and times:** Check each exam's **date and start time**, and share your timetable with your parents. Timetables are also available on **MCAS (My Child at School)** and the **Student Portal**.

## GETTING EQUIPPED

Make sure you bring all the necessary equipment to each exam especially maths, science, geography and DT. Check with your subject teacher what equipment is necessary for each exam and that your calculator is not programmable.



**You must write in BLACK pen only – this is because exam scripts are scanned into a computer before being sent off for marking.** Pencils and crayons may be used for diagrams etc. You must not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, gel pens or highlighter pens in your answers. However, you may use highlighter pens to highlight questions, words or phrases within the question paper or question/answer booklet. Your equipment should be in a clear plastic bag or see through pencil case. Remember to pack some spares!

**You must not arrive at an exam with any writing/drawing on your hands/arms.**

# DURING THE EXAM PERIOD

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school until they have completed their final exam. You will receive a **Year 11 Alternative Timetable** for the exam period, showing all lessons and revision sessions you should attend.

## EXAM TIMINGS

- **Morning exams:** Report to the gym at **8:50am**
- **Afternoon exams:** Report at **1:20pm**
- Arrive fully equipped for the subject you are taking (pens, calculators, etc.)

## MOBILE PHONES

- Phones must be **switched off**
- Leave your phone in the **secure area at the back of the hall**, or hand it to an **invigilator** if in a smaller exam room

## CHECK YOUR TIMETABLE

- Some exams, especially longer ones, may start early in the afternoon
- If your exam finishes **after the school bell (3:25pm)**, make arrangements for collection
- This is particularly important if you **receive extra time**

# EXAM RULES, MALPRACTICE & SOCIAL MEDIA

**Follow the rules** - Exams follow strict regulations set by exam boards to make sure everything is fair.

**Malpractice = breaking the rules** (even by accident)

## DO NOT:

- Open the question paper before you are told
- Talk to or communicate with other candidates
- Bring unauthorised items (phones, notes, smart devices)
- Share or try to get exam information
- Copy someone else's work

## IMPORTANT

- No talking = **no communication at all**
- This includes **eye contact, gestures, or signalling**
- Even smiling or grinning at another candidate can be seen as communication

## WARNING SYSTEM

A warning system will operate in exams to minimise disruption to other candidates:



1. **Verbal warning:** at the first instance of poor behaviour an invigilator will ask you to stop
2. **Yellow card:** If you continue to exhibit poor behaviours a yellow card will be placed on your desk
3. **Red card:** If your behaviour continues a red card will be placed on your desk and the Exams Manager, invigilator or a senior member of staff will remove you from the exam. **This may result in you being disqualified from the subject.**

## UNAUTHORISED ITEMS



- Do **not** bring mobile phones, watches, or any web-enabled devices into the exam.
- **Exam hall:** Leave devices switched off in your bag in the secure area at the back.
- **Small rooms:** Switch off devices and hand them to the invigilator; they will be kept securely and returned after the exam.
- **Important:** Any phone in the exam room will be reported to the exam board and may result in **loss of all marks** for that paper, even if switched off.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### **Think before you post**

*Sharing your exam experience can lead to problems if you are not careful.*

#### **DO NOT:**

- *Share or describe exam questions*
- *Ask for answers online*
- *Post your work or compare answers*
- *Spread rumours about exam content*

#### **BE AWARE**

- *Exam boards monitor social media and websites*
- *Your posts can be used as evidence*
- *Even jokes or indirect comments can lead to an investigation*

#### **CONSEQUENCES**

*If you break the rules:*

- *It will be reported to the exam board*
- *You could lose marks*
- *You could be disqualified*
- *You could be banned from future exams*

# THE EXAM ROOM(S)

## SEATING & ATTENDANCE

- Sit in your **assigned seat** in the **correct room**.
- Seating plans will be **clearly displayed** on the walls of the gym.

## FORMAN EXAMINATION CONDITIONS

- From the moment you enter the exam room until you are allowed to leave, you are under **formal examination conditions**.
- **Formal examination conditions** mean you must:
  - Follow all exam rules
  - Work independently
  - **Not communicate** with other candidates (talking, gestures, eye contact, or signalling)

## DRINKS

- You may bring a **transparent water bottle** with a **sports cap**. **Labels must be removed**.
- No other drinks or food unless **medically necessary**.

## INVIGILATORS

- Invigilators supervise exams—be **polite and cooperative** at all times.
- They will:
  - Distribute and collect exam papers
  - Tell you when to start and finish
  - Help with procedural queries
- They **cannot explain questions**.
- You may see invigilators using **mobile phones**—this is for **emergency communication only**.

## GRAFFITI & DAMAGE

- **Do not write or draw** on exam desks. This is **vandalism**, and you may be asked to **pay for any damage**.
- **Do not write offensive comments** on exam papers. exam boards may **refuse to accept your paper**.

# THE EXAM

## BEFORE THE EXAM

- You must not write on your exam paper until the invigilator tells you to do so. This includes writing your name and exam details.
- Listen carefully to the instructions given at the start of the exam.
- Check that you have the right paper for your tier and subject.
- Take a little time to read the question thoroughly before you start answering.
- If you need anything raise your arm to attract an invigilator's attention.
- If you do any rough work put a line neatly through it – don't obscure it completely as you may be awarded marks for your calculations/writing.
- Finish times will be displayed on a board at the front of the exam room. You will be given a 5-minute warning before the end.



## STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE EXAM ROOM BEFORE THE SCHEDULED FINISH TIME

## AFTER THE EXAM

- You must stop writing when you are told to do so.
- Ensure your name, exam number and any other requested details are completed on the front of your answer booklet and any additional answer sheets you have used.
- Stay silent while the exam papers are collected by the invigilators.
- Remain silent until you leave the exam room, there may be other exams still in progress.

# AFTER THE EXAM PERIOD

## RETURNING BOOKS/EQUIPMENT

On the day of your last exam please returned all books to the academy.



### CONTINGENCY DAY - WEDNESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

This is the awarding bodies contingency day. You must be available on this date in case an external exam needs to be re-scheduled due to national or significant local disruptions.



### RESULTS DAY

GCSE Results Day is **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2026**. Further details of how we will publish results will follow nearer the time.

**Year 11 Certificates** will be available from November 2026. Further details of how we will distribute these will be published later this year.



### POST RESULTS SERVICE (Review of Results - ROR)

- If you have concerns about your results, speak to your **subject teacher** on results day.
- RORs can be requested if there is a **reasonable belief of an error** or if you are **close to the next grade boundary**.
- The **exams officer, teaching staff, and head of centre** will check if a re-mark is appropriate.
- If the centre does **not support** your request, you may still apply, but **you will be charged**.
- You must give **written consent** before any ROR is requested.
- You can request:
  - A **clerical check** of marks
  - A **review of marking** for the whole paper
  - A **copy of the exam paper**
- **Important:** Your grade **could go up or down** after a re-mark.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **WHAT IF THERE IS A CLASH ON MY TIMETABLE?**

You will sit the papers one after the other in the same session, with a supervised rest break in between. During the break you will not be allowed to communicate with anyone else nor have access to your mobile phone. The Exams Manager will explain the arrangements to you in more detail if you have a clash.

## **WHAT IF I'M ILL ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM?**

If you are not well enough to attend an exam your parent/carer must telephone the school office on 01789 762285 and leave a message for the Exams Officer. You will not have the opportunity to sit the exam at another time. Your parent/carer will be asked to fill in a self-certification form which will be submitted to the exam board. It is their decision whether to apply special consideration for the missed paper.

## **WHAT IS I'M LATE FOR AN EXAM?**

Phone the academy office if you know you are going to be late. This will save the Exams Manager time trying to get in touch with you. You will be allowed to sit the exam but must be aware that the exam board may not accept your paper, depending on how late you are.

## **WHAT IF I'M ENTITLED TO EXTRA TIME, A READER, A SCRIBE, SUPERVISED REST BREAKS OR ANY OTHER ACCESS ARRANGEMENT?**

If you are entitled to any access arrangements, you must report to the gym for each exam to find out where you will be sitting. Where possible you will be seated together to minimise disturbance from other candidates who finish earlier.

**Please check your timetable carefully to see if you need to organise a lift home following an afternoon exam where you qualify for extra time.**

### **WHAT IF I FEEL ILL DURING AN EXAM?**

Raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to come to you. You can leave the exam room under supervision and return to the room when you have recovered. You will be allowed to make up for any time you have missed. You may be entitled to special consideration from the exam board.

### **WHAT IF THE FIRE ALARM GOES OFF DURING ONE OF MY EXAMS?**

Don't panic – the Exams Manager or an Invigilator will tell you exactly what to do. If you have to evacuate the room, you will be asked to leave in silence and in the order in which you are sitting. You will be escorted to a designated assembly point on the playground. Leave everything on your desk and ***do not attempt to communicate with anyone else*** during the evacuation. You are still under exam conditions and any breach of the regulations could mean disqualification from your exam. When you return to the exam room do not start writing until the invigilator tells you to. You will be allowed the full working time for the exam and a report will be sent to the exam board.

### **WHAT IF I NEED TO GO TO THE TOILET DURING AN EXAM?**

Remember that going to the toilet not only disturbs other people in the room, it also breaks your concentration. Try to go before the exam and if you have to go during an exam, put your hand up and an invigilator will escort you.

### **WHAT IF I DONT TURN UP FOR AN EXAM?**

The Exams Manager or Attendance Officer will try and contact you if you do not turn up for an exam to give you the opportunity to get to the academy as soon as possible.

**YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SIT THE EXAM AT ANY OTHER TIME.**

**You must read the following JCQ information before you take any external exams:**

- [JCQ Information for candidates](#)
- [JCQ Information for candidates - Written exams 2025-2026](#)
- [JCQ Information for candidates – On-screen tests](#)
- [JCQ Information for candidates - AI](#)
- [JCQ Information for candidates – Coursework assessments](#)
- [JCQ Information for candidates – Non-examination assessments](#)

Please find following the JCQ information sheets which you should read before you take any external exams:




## On your exam day

This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams so that you can focus on doing your best on the day.

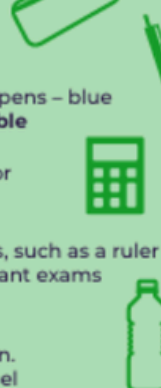
### Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.
- who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam.

### What you cannot take into your exams:

- any type of phone
  - revision notes
  - any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)
  - smart devices (e.g. Airbuds, smart glasses or tablets)
- 

### What you will need:

- a clear pencil case
  - at least two black ink pens – blue pens are **not acceptable**
  - an approved calculator for relevant exams
  - appropriate apparatus, such as a ruler or protractor, for relevant exams
  - a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in. It **must not** have a label
- 

### Other important information:

- Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions, which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to respond.
- Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- If you need an additional answer sheet, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to provide one. Remember to add your details to this sheet.
- If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to escort you from the exam room.
- Remember to stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

### Contingency sessions:

- There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2026 exam timetable on the morning and afternoon of 24 June 2026. Make sure you are available on 24 June 2026.

If you have any questions about your exams, please ask your teacher or exams officer.



You can also find useful information about preparing for exams at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents)



# Information for candidates

## AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments)

### What is AI?

AI stands for artificial intelligence and can be used to create text, images, videos, music and artwork based on instructions given to an AI tool.



### What is an AI tool?

AI tools are applications, such as ChatGPT, Snapchat My AI, Google and Google translate. There are many more!



\*The list of certain suppliers of AI-related products is for information purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by JCQ and awarding bodies. It is each centre's responsibility to investigate and verify any suppliers they use, including any terms and conditions which govern the sale or use of the supplier's products. The list provided is not exhaustive.

### When can I use AI?

- Your teachers may use it in class when teaching the course, but remember teaching in the classroom is not an exam!
- There are some assessments where you can use AI – your teachers will tell you if you can or cannot use an AI tool.
- Remember, the rules are different for different assessments and subjects, so always check with your teachers first!
- When an AI tool is allowed, **you must acknowledge\*\*** the AI tools and the material produced by the AI tool that you have used in your work. If you do not acknowledge AI use, it will be **considered as cheating**.



### When can I not use an AI tool?

- AI tools cannot be used in an exam or any other assessment where exam rules apply.
- This is what exam boards call **AI misuse and is a form of cheating**.



\*\*Acknowledgment – When producing a piece of work, if you use the same wording as a published source, you must place quotation marks around the passage and state where it came from. This is known as referencing. You must make sure that you give detailed references for everything in your work which is not in your own words, for example, *ChatGPT 3.5* (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2025.

**IF YOU USE AN AI TOOL, YOU CANNOT GET MARKS FOR WHAT THE AI TOOL HAS PRODUCED, AS IT IS NOT YOUR OWN WORK**

### If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules?

- AI misuse is when you use an AI tool in an exam or assessment where you are not allowed to; and/or
- Where you use an AI tool to create work and then say it's your own.



### How to make sure you don't misuse AI

#### DECLARE

- Remember to sign your declaration form when handing in your work for final assessment.
- Your signature on the declaration form tells your teacher and the exam board that you are saying all the work you're handing in is your own.
- If you have used an AI tool, **you must declare\*\*\*** that you have used it before signing the declaration form!

\*\*\***Declare** – this means that when you submit your work for marking, the awarding body will normally require you to sign an authentication statement confirming that you have read and followed the regulations.

#### ACKNOWLEDGE

If you are allowed to use an AI tool in your assessment (remember to check!), you must do the following:

- reference the AI tool you have used
- give the date of when the AI tool generated the content
- give details of how you used it.
- save screenshots of what you have asked or instructed the AI tool to do and what answer the AI gave you, and include this with the work submitted.

LAST CHECKS



Know the rules



Check with your teachers



ACKNOWLEDGE and DECLARE



While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers



**Things to do on social media:**

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher

**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

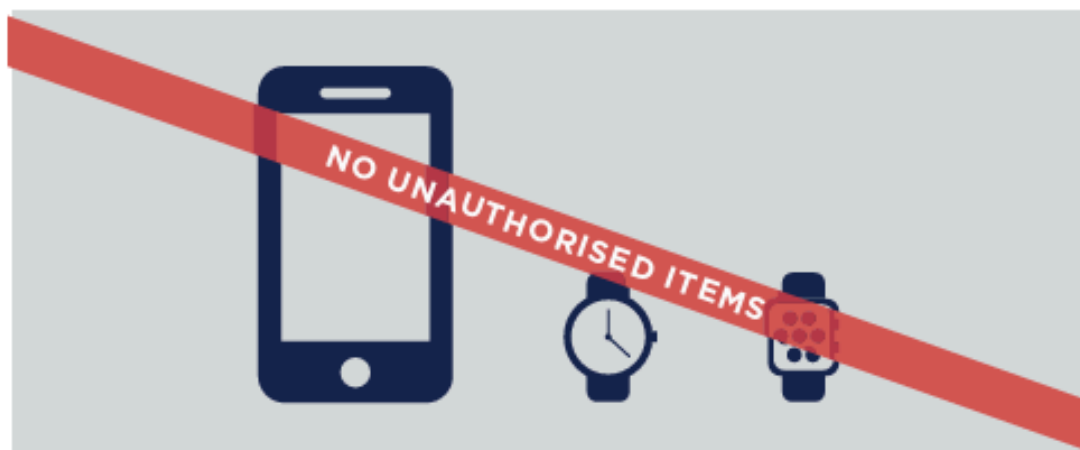
**If you do any of the above activities, you may:**

- ! Receive a written warning
- ! Lose marks
- ! Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- ! Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:  
[jqc.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents](http://jqc.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents)

## **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.

## Warning to candidates



 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 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.**