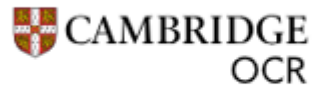




Saffron Walden
County High School

Examinations Handbook 2025-2026



Centre Number: 16525

This handbook will help you understand how examinations are held at SWCHS and the rules and regulations you need to adhere to during the exam periods.

Please read this document carefully and retain it for future reference.

If you have any questions or are unclear of the process, please speak to the Examinations Officer, Miss Price.

Tel: 01799 513030

Email: aprice@swchs.net

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Introduction

It is the aim of SWCHS to make the examination experience as stress-free and successful as possible for all candidates.

This booklet will prove informative and helpful for you and your parents. Please read it carefully and share with your parents/carers. Many questions you may have will be covered in this booklet. Please save this document, along with your timetable so that you can easily refer to it, should it be needed.

The Awarding Bodies set down strict criteria that must be followed for the conduct of examinations and SWCHS is required to follow them precisely. You should therefore, read all the **JCQ INFORMATION DOCUMENTS** that are attached at the end of this booklet. The JCQ governs how Awarding Bodies and schools run the examination process and their website (www.jcq.org.uk) has lots of useful information.

Help & advice

If you are unsure or don't understand anything that has been taught, you must speak to your **subject teacher**.

If you are unsure about the exams process, or something is affecting you at the time of the exams, you must speak to the **Exams Officer** or the **Year Office** straightaway.

Follow the rules within this booklet and the Exam Essentials sheet that you will get with the final version of your exam timetable.

Remember we are here to help. If you are unsure of anything, or have a problem, **say something at the time**. We can often solve an issue, but only if you tell us about it.

GOOD LUCK!

Before the examinations

Non-examination assessments and coursework assessments

Some of your subjects require you to complete assessments in school, under varying levels of security and supervision. You will follow the rules & regulations for non-examination assessments (please see candidate information – non- examination assessments at the back of this booklet).

You will also be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that the work is your own. Please also check the social media document at the back of this booklet which clearly states the rules regarding sharing information online.

When you have completed your internal assessment/s your **mark will be shown on Go4Schools** by the dates listed below. **All marks are provisional until results day** as they will be moderated by the exam board and the moderator may decide to change the centre's marks. You will not be given a grade as grade boundaries change for each exam season and are not released until results day.

If you are not happy with the **process** by which the marks have been awarded (not the actual mark itself), there is an appeals procedure you can follow. Speak to the exams officer immediately.

All requests for a review of centre marks must be submitted to the exams officer by the date shown in the table below. No late requests will be accepted. There is a £30 fee payable to SWCHS to cover the costs of the review. If the review is upheld, the fee will be refunded. The review will take place before the deadline to submit marks to the awarding body and you will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing. The mark may move up or down or remain the same. Even if your mark is changed as a consequence of a review of centre marks, it will still need to go through the external moderation process so **can still be changed by the awarding body.**

Type of exam/subject	Informed of NEA mark by the end of	Request a review of marking by 8am on	Informed of the outcome of the review by:
GCSE Drama (Comp 1)	6 th March	13 th March	20 st March
GCSE Music	24 th March	14 th April	21 st April
AQA GCSE Subjects	27 th April	1 st May	5 th May
All other NEA (except Art qualifications, inc. Graphics & Textiles, and PE)	27 th April	7 th May	14 th May
Art qualifications (including 3D Design and Textiles) and PE	15 th May	20 th May	22 nd May

Vocational Qualifications – please see your tracking sheet and/or speak to your teacher.

Individual timetables

You will receive the first draft of the **Timetable** after the entries have been made. This version will not show any extra time as this can only be added when the rooms and seats are allocated.

Please check your timetable carefully. Remember it is your responsibility to make sure all the information is accurate on both. Make sure you check all the following details:

- The subject and the tier of entry – for example higher or foundation if applicable.

(There will be time before Easter to change your tier of entry if you and subject teacher decide to do so)

- Your personal details (date of birth, correct spelling of your name).

Certificates are printed your name as they appear on your statement of entry. We must submit your legal name. We are not allowed to submit preferred names or nicknames. If errors are not spotted prior to the certificates being printed, there will be a charge by the exam boards to change this information and receive a new certificate. **Please inform the exams officer immediately of any incorrect details.**

You will receive a final version of the timetable in late April which will include the exam room and your seat number for each exam. This version will also show any extra time and resolved exam clashes.

Make sure you know the dates and times of your examinations. Check your timetable prior to the exam starting. You should not be entering the exam room unaware of your seat number. Seat lists posted outside Saffron Hall and Q6 for each exam.

Examination Clashes

A few candidates may have a clash where two (or more) subjects are timetabled at the same time. The school will make special timetable arrangements for these candidates only. There are strict rules which apply in these circumstances, and you will be informed of the procedure if you have a clash on your timetable.

Candidate number

You will be allocated a four-digit candidate number. You will write this number on all your examination papers & any internal units throughout the course. Your candidate number will be on the ID card that is put on your desk for each exam.

BTEC has a separate Learner Registration Number which you will be given when required.

UCI/ULN number

All candidates must have a Unique Candidate Identifier (UCI) and a Unique Learner Number (ULN) that is shown on your timetable. Your UCI/ULN is used for administration purposes, and it is not necessary for you to remember it for exams. However, if you go to a new sixth form or college after Year 11, they will ask for your UCI and ULN number for examination entries.

Attendance at examinations

Unless otherwise stated on your timetable:

- Morning examinations start at **8.45am**
- Afternoon examinations start at **1.30pm**

If you miss a public examination, **you cannot take that paper at another time.**

Candidates are responsible for checking their own timetable and arriving at school on the correct day and time. Candidates should arrive at the examination room **10 minutes before** the published start time. (If you are the only student missing at the start, we may begin a couple of minutes early, as it is unfair to make the rest of the cohort wait.)

Do not enter the exam room until told to do so by the invigilators.

You are under examination conditions as soon as you enter the exam room.

Students will need to be prepared to make alternative arrangements to get home. Students are not permitted to leave a public examination before the end of the exam. All the exam papers and any other secure material must be collected before students are dismissed. For any afternoon exam that is 1h 45m or longer, students will not be out of the exam room in time to catch the buses. For exams up to 1h 30m there may be some instances where a delayed start to the exam also means that they are not out in time for the bus. **Students will not be permitted to leave the exam room early to catch a bus.**

Lateness to examinations

Awarding bodies have strict rules with lateness to exams. There is a very short window of opportunity allowed to sit an exam if you are late. Candidates who do arrive late for an examination may still be allowed to enter the examination room and sit the examination. This is entirely at the discretion of the Centre. The full time for the examination would be allowed if we are able to allow you to start the exam. Remember it is the Awarding Bodies decision to accept your paper and, if you are classed as Very Late by the exam board, they may not mark your paper.

If you know that you are going to be late contact the school immediately and inform reception why you are going to be late, how long you will be and confirm that you will have no contact with anyone other than your parent/carer. Do not access the internet or use your mobile phone at any time during this period.

Please note that these excuses will not be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of lateness or absence:

- misreading the timetable
- going to bed late the night before (unless due to exceptional circumstances)
- forgetting the date and time of an exam

These are just some examples, but it is not an exhaustive list, and each case will be considered individually.

During the examinations

Examination Regulations

A copy of the **JCQ INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**, which is issued jointly by all the Awarding Bodies, is attached. All candidates must read this carefully and note that to break any of the examination rules or regulations could lead to disqualification from all subjects. The school must report any breach of regulations to the awarding body. **As soon as you enter the examination room there must be complete silence; you must not speak, distract, or communicate with other candidates in any way. You must always face the front.**

What you must/must not do

You must not have any writing or drawings on your hands or forearms when you enter the exam room. Henna is also prohibited. Please do not write anything on your hands/arms during the exam. Any writing/symbols etc seen during an exam will have to be investigated as potential malpractice and may be reported to the exam board.

Do not draw graffiti or write offensive comments on examination papers – if you do, the awarding body may refuse to accept your paper.

Do not write on examination desks or equipment. This is regarded as vandalism, and you may be asked to pay for any damage. Desks are checked at the end of every exam.

Please listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators – there may be amendments to the paper that you need to know about. Inform the invigilator immediately if you think you have the wrong paper or you think there is an error on the paper.

Check you have the correct question paper – check the subject, paper, and tier of entry.

Read all instructions carefully and make sure you write clearly throughout the exam.

Remember you **MUST** put your legal forename (first name), legal surname (last name) and signature on every exam paper, coursework or any additional sheets used.

You must put the correct question number in the margins/boxes provided when using a separate answer book or additional answer sheets. Leave two lines between each answer.

You will not be allowed to leave an examination room early. If you have finished the paper, use any time remaining to check your answers and that you have completed your details correctly.

Remember to put a line through any rough work which you do not want marking. If you have used more than one answer book or loose sheets remember you **MUST** put your name, candidate no etc on or they could get misplaced. Remember to insert additional sheets/booklets into your original answer booklet. Invigilators will collect your completed papers before you leave the room.

ABSOLUTE SILENCE must be maintained during this time. Remember you are still under examination conditions until you have left the room.

Question papers, answer booklets, inserts and additional paper **must NOT be taken from the room**. All rough work must be crossed through with a single line and put inside your answer book to be submitted to the exam board.

Remain seated in silence until told to leave the examination room. Please leave the room in silence as directed by the exams officer or invigilator and show consideration for other candidates who may still be working.

Toilet protocols

If, **due to a medical situation**, a student needs to leave the hall for an emergency toilet break, they will be allowed to leave, accompanied to the outside of the toilet by an invigilator. If they are not well enough to continue the exam, the exam officer will explain how the special considerations process will be applied. If they do return and if it was due to a medical situation, the stoppage time will be added.

If a student needs to leave the hall for a toilet break that is **not a medical situation**, they will be allowed to leave, accompanied to the outside of the toilet by an invigilator, but they may need to wait until there is an invigilator who is available to take them. In these instances, unless it is a medical situation, no additional time would be added.

Equipment

You are responsible for providing your own equipment. You must use either a transparent pencil case or clear plastic bag.

Pens should be BLACK BALLPOINT/INK ONLY (not gel etc), your paper is scanned and may not be marked if you use anything else. Correction pens/fluids are NOT allowed. Highlighters **MUST NOT** be used in your answers but may be used on question/resources sheets.

If you need any equipment during the exam you must only ask an invigilator. DO NOT attempt to borrow from another candidate during the exam. This may result in disqualification from the exam.

For mathematics and science examinations, you should make sure that your calculator conforms to the examination regulations. If in doubt, check with your teacher well in advance of the examination date. Remove any covers (which **MUST NOT** be brought into the examination room) and make sure batteries are new. Calculators with a memory function should be cleared before entering the examination room. This also puts your calculator into the correct mode for Maths.

Electronic devices

Examination regulations are extremely strict regarding items that may be taken into the examination room. Please check the unauthorised items at the back of this booklet. Mobile phones, mp3/4 players, all watches, fitness trackers, smart glasses and any communication or storage devices are **not permitted** in the exam room. You must switch all devices off and place them in your bag/locker or designated area. **They must not be kept on your person even if they are turned off.** If you accidentally take an unauthorised item into the exam room, **immediately** put your hand up and the invigilator will keep it safe until after the exam. **BE HONEST – it really is not worth taking the risk.**

Please be aware that, in the event of there being a suspicion of a mobile phone being present in the exam room, SLT may have to carry out checks (e.g. using a handheld metal detector) as students leave the room.

Other items which are not allowed in the exam room are:

- Revision material, school planner, anything with writing on and blank pieces of paper.
- Coloured pencil cases or Maths tins (clear pencil cases only)
- Bags, coats, hats, gloves, scarves
- Tissues (we will provide you with tissues in the exam room if you need them)
- Food, cans, coloured bottles. However, a water bottle is allowed if necessary. **This MUST be a clear bottle without a label on it.** Any non-see-through bottles will be removed from you. Clear water only.

Check all your pockets before entering the exam room. Remove anything which is unauthorised. Your yellow timetable must not be out on your desk or in your pencil case.

If you are found with any unauthorised items once the examination has started, the awarding body will be informed, and you could face disqualification from this and potential future examinations.

Invigilators

Invigilators conduct the examinations. Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards all invigilators and always follow their instructions.

Invigilators are in the examination rooms to supervise the conduct of the examination. They will distribute and collect the examination papers, tell candidates when to start and finish the examination, hand out extra writing paper if required and deal with any problems that occur during the examination, for example if a candidate is feeling ill.

Please note that invigilators cannot discuss the exam paper with you or explain the questions.

Pupils who are disruptive or behave in an unacceptable manner will be removed from the examination room by members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Fire alarm during examinations

If the FIRE ALARM sounds during an examination, close your paper, and wait for instructions from the invigilator and the exams officer. If you must evacuate the room, you **MUST** leave in silence and in the order in which you are sitting. You will be escorted to a designated assembly point. Leave everything on your desk. You must not attempt to communicate with anyone else during the evacuation. When you return to the examination room, do not start writing until the invigilator tells you to do so. You will be allowed the full working time for the examination, and a report will be sent to the awarding body detailing the incident.

Absence from examinations

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

There is no substitute for completing the examination papers, but if you are too ill to attend school on the day of an examination, you must contact school as early as possible on the morning of the examination to discuss the best course of action.

You must also provide proof that you are not fit to sit the examination, but you will be given full information when you contact school. If you are feeling unwell, but still able to travel, you must come into school, and we can assess the situation then. In most cases, it is better to take the examination if you can.

Special Consideration

If you are ill and subject to very strict criteria, it may be possible to apply for special consideration for the examination affected, but this is not guaranteed. Awarding Bodies decide on the validity of each application. To support the application for Special Consideration, you will be required to satisfy their requirements of providing evidence of being unfit for an examination and you will need to provide a doctor's note. In any event, always contact the exams officer (email aprice@swchs.net).

Access Arrangements/ Medical

Access arrangements during exams may have been approved for candidates with physical difficulties, language difficulties or specific learning difficulties. Any eligible student will have had access to these arrangements during their time in school. We can only apply access arrangements which have been approved by the board. It must be the candidate's normal way of working and not all students have the same access arrangements.

If you have a medical condition, we will have discussed a plan with you, together with agreeing how we will manage any medication you may need. Any questions or problems, please always speak to the exams officer or SENCo team as soon as possible.

Summer 2026 contingency days

The contingency day at the end of the exam series is on **Wednesday 24 June 2026**.

These dates are scheduled as part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for exams. In the event of national or significant local disruption to exams in the United Kingdom candidates could be asked to sit exams on any one of the contingency days. For example, if there were to be extreme high temperatures during the exams, the exam boards may take the decision to move the exams on the affected days to the contingency day at the end of June.

Candidates must remain available until Wednesday 24 June 2026 should examinations need to be rescheduled. You should consider the need to be available to sit an exam at short notice on any of the contingency days when making your plans for the summer. The Awarding Bodies will not accept being on holiday as reason to miss a rescheduled exam.

After examinations

Results

A-Level and Level 3 Results – Thursday 13th August

GCSE and Level 2 Results – Thursday 20th August

On results day you will receive a Statement of Results. **THIS IS NOT YOUR FINAL CERTIFICATE.** The statement lists ALL the examinations you have taken and any components within the qualification. A capital letter indicates an OVERALL grade, whereas a lowercase letter indicates a COMPONENT within the qualification. The points are the value given to the OVERALL grade for data analysis.

All results will be sent by email only to your SWCHS email address at 8am on results day. (Please note that school email cannot be accessed from overseas). You will receive a further email containing the breakdown of marks for each paper later in the day.

You will need to save a copy of your statement of results so that you have a copy after your access to school emails ends once you have left SWCHS.

Post-Results Services

After results day you may decide that you wish to get a copy of your paper back to help you decide whether to apply for a review of marking. Full instructions about how to apply to get papers back or apply for a review of marking will be on the **SWCHS website in the Examinations section**. **Only you as the candidate can apply**, your parents cannot do it on your behalf. Please be mindful when requesting a review of marking that grades can go down as well as up or even remain the same. The exam boards charge a fee for each paper that is sent off for a review of marking and there is an admin fee involved for getting any scripts back. Full details of costs and deadlines will be with the Post Results instructions on the SWCHS website. If you have any queries, please contact the exams officer as soon as possible after receiving your results (aprice@swchs.net).

Certificates

Examination certificates will be available to collect during the second half of the Autumn term (usually in December). The date will be communicated to you via email, when confirmed.

Certificates can only be collected by you. If you are unable to collect your certificates in December, then you may nominate a family member or close friend to collect them on your behalf. You will need to write a letter of permission for that person to collect your certificates. Your nominated person will need to bring this with them when collecting, along with photographic ID of themselves to prove who they are. **You will need to give us 24 hours notice of when your certificates are being collected so that we can arrange to have them ready at reception.**

Unfortunately, we are not allowed to send certificates in the ordinary post. If you are unable to arrange collection of your certificates, please contact the exams officer to find out how much it will cost you to have the certificates send via Parcelforce.

The awarding bodies advise us to keep certificates for **one year only**, after which we are allowed to dispose of them through our confidential waste service. Whilst we do keep them for longer than this, we do not keep them indefinitely. Therefore, it is imperative that you collect your certificates when instructed. You may be asked to show them when starting a new job or applying for further training or education in the future. If we no longer have your certificates you will need to request replacement certificates from the exam boards directly. This can take six weeks and there will be a fee of at least £50 for each certificate.

JCQ Important Information

The JCQ Information for candidates posters and instructions can be viewed on the SWCHS website (Information > Examinations). Copies will also be sent with the first draft your timetable. Please familiarise yourself with the content of the JCQ information for candidates.