CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

This handbook is reviewed and updated annually

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Introduction

Oakwood Park Grammar School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment processes 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 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 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 available in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have
- To inform candidates of 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
- JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice:
    - Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
    - Breaches of examination conditions
    - Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)
    - Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
    - Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments

For example, things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your coursework is not your own independent work

And non-examination assessments and coursework:

Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference must show the name of the AI bot used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/), 25/01/2026. You should retain a copy of the computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and trying to pass them off as your own. It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.

More information can be found in the school's Exams Policy under 'Examinations Policies' on the Examinations section of the school's website.

Personal data

- The awarding bodies collect information about exam candidates
- To understand what information is collected and how it is used, you must read the JCQ Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice. This can be found under 'Information for Candidates' on the Examinations section of the school's website.

Copyright

- The copyright of any form of 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

- Relevant JCQ Information for Candidates documents - coursework, non-examination assessments, social media, the use of AI etc can be found under 'Information for Candidates' on the Examinations section of the school's website
- Candidates will be told by subject teachers when assessments will take place and when deadlines need to be met
- How work is marked/assessed, which NEA is externally marked/assessed and when candidates are informed of their centre-assessed marks is detailed in the specific policies on the school website, as is the internal appeals procedure.

  OPGS will notify candidates, including any private candidates entered through the centre, of their examination entries and the dates and times of their examinations/assessments.

  The school will ensure that the JCQ Information for Candidates documents (coursework, non-examination assessments, on-screen tests, privacy notice, social media and written examinations) are distributed to all candidates electronically **prior** to assessments and/or examinations taking place. Candidates will also be made aware of the content of the JCQ Unauthorised Items and Warning to Candidates posters.

Written timetabled exams

- Candidates will be provided with a Statement of Entry and must check that personal details and exam entries, including tiers, are correct
- Any errors must immediately be reported to the Exams Officer in person or via exams@opgs.org
- Candidate personal exam timetables will be provided in hardcopy to ensure candidates know the date and time of all their exams and any relevant information regarding seating arrangements, exam rooms, etc. This information will also be available on Edulink.
- JCQ Information for Candidates documents – written examinations, social media etc and exam room posters – 'Warning to Candidates' and 'Unauthorised Items' - can be found under 'Information for Candidates' on the Examinations section of the school's website.

Contingency sessions - Summer 2026

Contingency days are designed to be used in the event of significant national or local disruption to examinations. Timetabled this year is the whole day of 24 June. Candidates must be available on this date.

What to do if you identify you have a timetable clash

- Timetable clashes are where a candidate is entered to take two or more exams at the same time, on the same day.
- If the clash takes place within the same session (AM/PM) and the combined time is three hours or less, the exams must take place consecutively with no more than a twenty minute break between them. Exam conditions will be maintained throughout.
- If the combined time is more than three hours, one exam can be moved to an earlier or later session. Candidates will be supervised between exams

Overnight Supervision Arrangements Policy

- Where candidates are entered for multiple examinations (three or more examinations), timetabled for the same day and the total duration for those papers is more than **six hours for GCE** and **more than five and a half hours for GCSE - including approved extra time or supervised rest breaks, c**andidates may be allowed to take an examination the following morning, including Saturdays.

- Where the need for overnight supervision is identified, the Exams Office/SLG will contact both student and parents to make clear the necessary arrangements and the consequences should they not be adhered to.

All clash candidates will be notified either electronically or by hardcopy prior to their examinations.

Where you will take your exams

Rooming information will be on your final, personal exam timetables. Please do check Edulink for any changes, including on the day of exams.

What time your exams will start and finish

- At OPGS, public/external exams start at 8.50am for the morning session and 1.50pm for the afternoon session.

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of external invigilators
- Invigilators are trained and must follow strict rules and guidance as directed by JCQ and awarding bodies.

Exam room conditions

- Candidates are under formal exam conditions from the moment they enter the exam room until they are given permission to leave by the invigilator
- Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times
- Candidates must not communicate with or disturb other candidates
- Relevant information will be displayed in the exam room (centre number, subject title, paper number; and the actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each exam)
- Personal details must not be added to the front of answer booklets until candidates are instructed to do so by the invigilator
- Candidates should raise their hand if assistance is required from an invigilator e.g. additional answer sheets/answer books etc.

- Candidates must not open the question paper until told to do so
- Candidates must IMMEDIATELY alert an invigilator if they think they have been given the wrong question paper.

Leaving the exam room

- Candidates leaving the exam room for an approved medical reason will be allowed the full exam time (they must be accompanied by an invigilator).
- Candidates leaving the exam room for a toilet break will not be given the time back (they must be accompanied by an invigilator).
- Any candidate who leaves the exam room unaccompanied will not be permitted to re-enter the exam room.
- Once the exam has finished and all scripts/question papers have been collected, candidates will be dismissed by the invigilator. Candidates must leave the exam room in silence.

Where you will sit in the exam room

The Hall will have seating plans displayed outside. In smaller exam rooms, candidates must find their seat by referring to the candidate cards on each desk.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

Candidates' identities are confirmed using their candidate cards. These show a photo, name, centre name and number and candidate number.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

Candidates must only bring the items required for that exam i.e. black pens, pencils, ruler and any subject-specific materials such as compasses, a calculator and protractor. Any pencil cases must be see-through.

Using calculators

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

What you should <u>not</u> bring into the exam room

- Candidates should not bring any unauthorised items into the exam room, in particular any notes, spare paper or any potentially web-enabled sources of information such as mobile phones, any kind of watch or AirPods. Long hair/hair that obscures ears must be tied back.
- If a candidate has access to unauthorised items in the exam room this may be considered malpractice. This could result in disqualification.

Food and drink in exam rooms

Food is not permitted in exam rooms unless previously agreed with the Exams Officer for a medical condition.

Still water, in a small, see-through and unlabelled bottle (no more than 500ml) is permitted.

What you should wear for your exams

Full school uniform (Year 11) or business wear (Year 13) is to be worn for all exams.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

Personal items such as bags, coats and unauthorised items, must be stored in lockers or as directed by the Exams Officer.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

If you are late for an examination, please report immediately to reception who will notify the Exams Officer**.**

If a candidate is late, OPGS will permit them to sit the exam with the full time allowance.

Where a candidate is very late (more than an hour after the published starting time or at the end of an examination where its duration is under an hour) for an external exam, OPGS will permit them to sit the paper, but they will be warned the exam board may not offer a grade. The 'Very Late Arrival Form' will be completed and exam board will then be informed in accordance with JCQ regulations.

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

- Please contact school reception and email exams@opgs.org at the very earliest opportunity
- Do tell an invigilator if you are unwell during an exam.
- Where candidate is absent from exams for illness, OPGS will require written confirmation i.e. from a doctor. Where special consideration is to be applied for, to support the application, documentation will be submitted to the Awarding Body as evidence.

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

The invigilator will instruct candidates to stop working, close exam scripts and remain seated until given further instructions. If evacuated, candidates will remain in silence and in isolated exam groups.

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- The SENCo (Special Education Needs Co-ordinator) will inform the student, Exams Officer and parents of the access arrangements provided and these will be accommodated when organising and conducting their examinations.

Results

For Summer 2026 examinations

- The dates that hardcopy provisional statements of results will be issued/distributed are:
- A-level – Thursday, 13 August and GCSE – Thursday, 20 August. The results are 'Provisional' because they may be subject to amendment by an awarding body, for example through the published post-results services, prior to the issuing of certificates.
- The time window to attend school for results collection will be disclosed nearer to results day.
- Senior members of centre staff will be available at assigned times, which will be communicated prior to results day.

Post-results services

- Included with your provisional results will be the 'Post-Results Services: Request, Consent and Payment Form'. This contains information about services such as Access to Scripts and Reviews of Marking. It also includes deadlines, fees and consent information. Candidates will

be also be able to access a copy of this form on School website under 'Post Results' on the Examinations section of the school's website

- All requests for post-results services must be made through the centre

Certificates

We anticipate certificates arriving in school during November for all Summer examinations. Candidates will be notified by the School Office. In accordance with JCQ guidelines, all certificates are held in school for a period of 12 months; after which time they will be securely destroyed. **Please note the cost of replacing lost certificates is approximately £50 per document;** this can be arranged by the candidate contacting the relevant awarding body.

Internal appeals procedure

- Information on the centre's Internal Appeals procedure is available on school website under 'Examination Polices' in the Examinations section.
- Certain GCSE, GCE and other qualifications contain components of non-examination assessment (or units of coursework) which are internally assessed (marked) by Oakwood Park Grammar School and internally standardised. The marks awarded (the internal assessment decisions) which contribute to the final grade of the qualification are then submitted by a deadline set by the awarding body for external moderation. Prior to submission to the awarding body, candidates are informed of their marks / grades and given a minimum of 5 working days to appeal where necessary.
- Details of areas covered by the centre's internal appeals procedure, timescales and how to appeal are all covered in the Internal Appeals policy available on the school website.

Complaints Procedure

The Complaints and Appeals procedure is available on school website under 'Examination Policies' in the Examinations section.