

SOHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE

A Useful Guide to the GCSE Exam Process

For non-Year 11 Students taking
GCSEs in summer 2024

(For students & their parents/carers)



Happy
to help

Check the school website under Student Experience / Exams
for information about your exams, results and certificates

This booklet is for both students and their parents/carers to enable you to understand the forthcoming GCSE examinations. It answers all the most frequently asked questions.

As Examinations Officer, I am responsible for administering all public examination arrangements and for oversight of students during exams.

I have an experienced team of invigilators who are present during all examinations under my supervision. Not only are they there to ensure that examinations are run correctly, but also to help you should you have a problem.

Please take a few minutes to read through this booklet. If there is anything that you are unsure about, then please ask me. My office is upstairs in Beechurst along from room B4, near the stairwell.

This booklet contains information about collecting results and certificates, please keep for your reference until certificates have been collected.

Thank you.

N Botcher

Mrs Nicola Botcher
Examinations Officer



Standards of Behaviour

Soham Village College expects the highest standards of behaviour during **all** examinations from **every** student.

Strict guidelines are set by the Examination Boards, which the College have to implement. Any misconduct **will** be reported to the Exam Boards and will be dealt with severely. You may lose marks or even be disqualified from all further GCSE examinations.

Uniform

All students must wear correct school uniform for exams, those who are not dressed properly may not be admitted to the examination. In hot weather blazers may be removed.

Legal Surnames/Forenames

All students will be entered for exams using their legal names. It is possible to use a 'preferred' name, but this must be clearly indicated on the exam statement of entry, issued in January, and returned by the stated deadline otherwise penalty fees may apply.

Exam Timetables – Summer Series

You will be given a provisional timetable, printed on WHITE paper, before the Easter holidays. This will give you the dates of your exams and allow you to plan your revision.

A full final timetable, printed on GREEN paper, will be issued as soon as possible after Easter. I will speak to you personally should anything change on your final timetable.

Your timetable is **important!** Look after it! On the day before each exam, make sure you double-check that you have read the information correctly, and ensure that you turn up at the correct time. Don't miss an exam just because you made a mistake – it's YOUR future that it could affect. GCSE exams cannot be re-scheduled.

If you lose your timetable please ask me for a re-print. Don't try and guess or ask a friend as timetables are individual to you. A clipboard will be placed on my desk to which you should add your name. I will re-print as soon as I can and will leave your timetable in a named envelope for you to collect later. It is your responsibility to return to collect it.

'START' time is NOT 'arrival' time

The 'start' time as stated on your timetable is when you should be putting pen to paper – it is **not** the time to arrive. You must arrive 10/15 minutes beforehand and line up in your subject sets as you normally do.

Equipment

Remember it is **YOUR** responsibility to bring the correct equipment to your exams. Think carefully about what you need.

What should I bring into the exam room?

- ✓ Writing materials **and** spares in a clear plastic pencil case or bag
- ✓ **Black** biro/pen (you **must** write in BLACK as papers are scanned)
- ✓ Ruler
- ✓ Eraser
- ✓ Calculator – without a lid (unless this is specifically banned)
- ✓ Any specific equipment for the exam you are sitting
- ✓ Bottle of water (not juice) – bottle must be transparent without labels
- ✓ Tissues (constant sniffing disturbs other students)

What shouldn't I bring into the exam room? ...

- ✗ Coats & Bags
- ✗ Unauthorised books, notes or rough paper
- ✗ Calculator lid or calculator instructions/formulas
- ✗ Mobile phones, Airpods, earphones/earbuds, iPods, MP3/4 players, watches of any kind, no potential technological/web enabled sources of information

Do not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your ANSWERS. You can highlight QUESTIONS if this of help to you.

Unauthorised Items

Remember, possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to penalties and possible disqualification.

Start of Exam

You must enter the exam venue quietly and sit at the desk which has your named exam label on it.

DO NOT OPEN YOUR PAPER OR START WRITING UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO

The Chief Invigilator will start the exam by announcing that you are subject to exam regulations. Unauthorised items will be collected in. You will be asked to complete your details on the answer paper/booklet. Legal surnames/forenames must be used, unless previously agreed with me. Do not use abbreviated names. Exam board erratum notices will be read out if applicable. Your answers must be written clearly and in black ink.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO YOU

What if I have a problem before the exam? ...

Headache, unwell, upset at home, wrong paper, equipment missing? SPEAK to me or an invigilator **BEFORE** the exam starts. I will do all I can to help, but cannot help after the exam has finished and you have left.

What if I feel ill during the exam? ...

If you feel unwell, raise your hand - an invigilator will attend. You can leave the room under supervision and return when you feel able to do so. You will be allowed to make up the time lost.

What if the fire or lockdown alarm sounds? ...

The Chief Invigilator will stop the exam and tell you to close your answerbooks. You must leave the exam room in silence and in an orderly manner. Do not discuss the exam with anyone as this would constitute malpractice and would have to be reported to the exam board. The exam will be re-started once everyone is back in the room and settled. You will be allowed the full time for the exam.

What happens when the exam finishes?

Use all the available time in your exam. Check your answers and instructions carefully. Don't forget that questions appear on the back page too sometimes! You cannot leave the exam early. No-one may leave the exam room until all papers have been collected.

You will be dismissed a column at a time. You are still under exam conditions until you are completely out of the exam room. Remember some students may still be working. Do not disturb the rest of the school. You must return to your scheduled lesson.

What happens if my exam goes over break or lunchtime?

Exam start times are scheduled by the exam boards and therefore you may miss your normal break or lunchtimes. YOU must be aware of when your exams are and make sure your teacher knows that you may have to

leave lessons early. Messages will be sent out to teaching staff. You will always be allowed a short break before and after an exam, if applicable, to eat and drink, etc. You may need to plan your meals slightly differently if you have an exam. The canteen may be available, but there won't necessarily be a full selection of food to choose from, you may prefer to bring a packed lunch. Make sure you eat and drink.

MALPRACTICE

The consequences for ignoring any of the exam regulations can be severe, this may be bringing in unauthorised equipment as mentioned previously, ignoring instructions from an invigilator, communicating with other students or causing a disruption in the exam room.

Students have lost marks in the past, do not risk this happening to you.

LEAVE YOUR MOBILE PHONES ETC IN A SAFE PLACE

If you do bring them to an exam, please be aware that the school cannot be held responsible for the safe keeping of these items during exams.

You will be asked to hand in any unauthorised items at the beginning of the exam. These items will be placed in plastic boxes and kept at the front of the exam room. I strongly advise that you put your items into a named envelope/plastic bag to enable quick identification upon retrieval and to avoid the possibility of someone taking the wrong items.

Items which are left behind at the end of the exam will be placed in a large secure zipped wallet and taken to the Finance Office for safe-keeping. Students may retrieve items from there.

MOBILE PHONES MUST BE SWITCHED OFF!

What if I forget to come for a GCSE exam?

- Exam dates and times are set by Exam Boards and cannot be re-arranged; therefore you will have missed the exam and will receive 'zero' marks for that particular paper.
- You may be charged for any exam you miss unless there is a good reason why you missed it.

What if I arrive late for my GCSE exam?

➤ DON'T PANIC!

- Report immediately to Reception, The Finance Office or the Admin Office in Beechurst – near B8. **DO NOT ENTER THE EXAM ROOM!** I will be contacted and will come and speak to you.
- I will do my best to accommodate you, but this is not guaranteed.
- IMPORTANT - If you are very late, you **must** be accompanied to school by a parent/carer. Report to reception with your parent/carer and say you have a GCSE exam. Wait with your parent/carer until I arrive to collect you. A report may have to be completed, which you and your parent/carer will need to sign, this will be sent to the Exam Board and it is at their discretion as to whether or not they accept your work.
- If you arrive when the exam has finished, you will **not** be admitted.

What if I'm ill or have injured myself and cannot write?

- I need to know as soon as possible in order to make suitable arrangements. If you cannot write, then you may be allocated a scribe. Make sure that I know **well before** you enter the exam room. If you cannot find me, ask Student Services, Head of Year or the Finance Department to contact me on the radio.
- If you are extremely unwell and not fit to sit the exam, your parents/carers **MUST** phone Reception on **01353 724100** by 8.30am on the morning of the exam you're unable to attend. You must speak to someone, **do not leave a message**.

The exam boards require a self-certification form to be completed if the school was unaware of your illness. Your parents/carers will be asked whether they contacted a medical professional for advice regarding your symptoms. It is advisable to do this, however, please note that Doctor's certificates are not required. You and your parents/carers will have to sign a declaration stating that you understand it is fraudulent to claim illness when this is not the case.

Retrospective information is not accepted by the Examination Boards, therefore it is important that advice or a visit to the doctors is made **either before or on the day** of the missed exam.

The Exam Board may award a grade to students who are absent for an acceptable reason as long as 25% of the total assessment has been completed.

What if I have problems that may affect my examination performance?

- Headaches, stomach aches, general upset, etc, speak to me **before** the exam so that I am aware. A phone call after the exam from your parents/carers cannot be acted upon.
- More serious illness, or family circumstances which may affect examination performance, arising shortly before or during the exams, should be reported as soon as possible to me so that an application for **special consideration** can be made to the Examination Boards. Medical letters may be required. It should be understood, however, that the maximum amount of consideration given is only 5% of the total raw marks available for the component concerned, this is for the most extreme cases and is entirely at the discretion of the Exam Boards.

Personal Data and Freedom of Information

Relevant personal data (name, date of birth, gender) will be transferred to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications. This personal data, together with the examination results and outcomes of any reviews of marking, reviews of moderation and appeals may be shared within the Academy Trust

Awarding bodies may be required to provide a candidate's personal data to educational agencies such as the DfE, The Skills Funding Agency, UCAS, Local Authorities, EFA and Learning Records Service (LRS). Additionally, candidates' personal data may be provided to a central record of qualifications approved by the awarding bodies for statistical and policy development purposes. Awarding bodies maintain a comprehensive archive record of candidates' examination results. The purpose is to provide an audit trail of the results certificated and to maintain an accurate record of an individual's achievements.

USEFUL INFORMATION ON WEBSITE

- Copies of this booklet
 - Students with Access Arrangements - Notes
 - Information about collecting your exam results
 - Information about collecting your coursework
 - Information about collecting your exam certificates
 - Policy on Internal Assessments for External Qualifications
 - Reviews of Marking, Access to Scripts, Appeals
 - Complaints & Appeals procedure
 - Simplified version of the GCSE Timetable (when available)
 - Wellbeing (Useful information under 'Student Support')
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JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications)

JCQ sets out regulations for the conducting of and the taking of examinations. It acts as a single voice for the six largest qualification providers in the UK

You **MUST** make yourself familiar with the documents listed below. They can all be found on the school website, details as above.

- JCQ Information for Candidates – Non-Examination Assessments
- JCQ Information for Candidates – On-Screen Tests
- JCQ Information for Candidates – Privacy Notice
- JCQ Information for Candidates – Social Media
- JCQ Information for Candidates – Written Examinations
- JCQ Unauthorised Items Poster
- JCQ Warning to Candidates Poster



RESULTS DAY

Thursday 22 August 2024

Results will be available from Beechurst Hall from 10.00am until midday.

Go4Schools – results will usually be available from midday.

If you are unable to collect your results in person, but have a relative or friend who is willing to do so on your behalf, please provide them with a letter of authorisation.

It is not possible to give results by e-mail or telephone. Please make suitable alternative arrangements if you cannot collect in person.

Results not collected by 12noon will be kept and distributed at the beginning of the new term in September.



Results not as expected?

Want to see a copy of your script?

Examinations measure only your performance on the day, and candidates can do better or worse than anticipated for all sorts of reasons. If you have **serious** concerns about your received grade, please contact me as soon as possible either on Results Day or the start of term. Reviews of Marking (ROMs) can be made with the appropriate Examination Board, copies of scripts may also be obtained. The final date for submission of enquiries to the Boards is around the end of September, so don't delay. Post-results service requests can only be made by me, the Exams Officer. Please note there are costs involved. Further information can be found on the exams section of the website 'Reviews of Marking, Access to Scripts and Appeals'

CERTIFICATES & COURSEWORK

Certificates are issued for all GCSE awards.

They do not arrive in schools until November. You will be notified by your form tutor when these are available for collection. You will need to collect them from me in person as I will require you to sign for them.

Your certificates are valuable documents and you **WILL** need them in the future when applying for university or jobs. Please make every effort to collect your certificates when requested to do so. Certificates which have not been collected after one year may be destroyed. To obtain replacements you would need to contact the relevant exam board and will be charged upwards of £45.00 for each certificate required.

Coursework is not routinely returned to students, but if you do require it, please speak to your subject teacher any time from the beginning of October. Coursework not collected by the end of the autumn term will be destroyed.



AND FINALLY ...

Examination Board rules are strict and must be followed to the letter. Do not jeopardise your chances or those of other students in the exam room by behaving badly. Even eye contact can be taken as communication.

Any misbehaviour **MUST** be reported to the Board and will **ALWAYS** be dealt with very severely.

REMEMBER, if you feel unwell or think something is wrong, you need to speak to me or an invigilator as soon as possible. We are here to help.

EXAM QUESTIONS

Read them carefully – check the back page.

It's amazing how many people don't!

Revise and behave sensibly
and you won't have any
problems.

Remember it's YOUR future.

GOOD LUCK!