



**SHIREBROOK  
ACADEMY**

*Your GCSE Exams are rapidly approaching. This booklet is designed to offer you help and advice in preparation for these Exams. This booklet also states the rules and regulations of the exam boards that you must adhere to. Please read through this booklet to ensure that you are familiar with what is expected of you. May I take this opportunity to wish you well in your forthcoming examinations. Do your best! Good Luck.*

**Mr A Gilbert**  
Vice Principal

# **A GUIDE TO GCSE EXAMS**

The rules and regulations of GCSE  
Examinations for Parents and Students

# BE PREPARED FOR YOUR EXAMS

Subject teachers are available to assist in the preparation for your examinations, ask about what topics are needed for each paper.

- Extra lessons may be available during lunch time, at the beginning or end of the day. Find out about these and attend them.
- Your final examination timetable will give you all the details you will need: dates, starting and finishing times etc. It is your responsibility to look after this timetable. Make sure you keep it somewhere safe!
- When you are given your exam timetable check it carefully. Make sure you have been entered for the right exams at the right level. Make sure your personal details are correct.
- Remember to use your legal name in all examinations and controlled assessments and not the name that you are known by in school.
- Take the timetable home, pin it up where you will see it every day. Take a photo on your phone and/or photocopy it if you can.
- Get together **ALL** the equipment you may need the night before: a pen (black ink only and a spare one!) a pencil, ruler, eraser, compass, protractor etc. **NO** correction fluid is to be used in the exam
- All this equipment must be stored in a clear, plastic bag or case
- For certain exams you may require a calculator. Check in which exams you can use them with your Teacher
- No other material must be taken into the hall and must be left in your bag

**If there is anything you are unsure about, ask.**



## ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM

- Have something to eat and drink before the examination; you will not do your best if you are hungry.
- Make sure you know where you are sitting for each exam as you will not be in the same seat each time. If you are not sure there will be a seating plan for the current day on display ON THE Science bridge, outside the main Sports Hall and any additional rooms.

### IMPORTANT

**DO NOT write your seat number on your hand or arm.**

- Visit the toilet before entering the examination room; you will only be allowed out of the venue in a real emergency and will need to be escorted by an invigilator.
- Arrive at your assembly area at least 10 minutes before the start of the exam.



## DURING THE EXAMINATION

- Read the instructions on the front of the question and answer papers carefully so you understand what you need to do.
- Fill in any information on the front when told to do so.
- Work carefully and write clearly.
- Don't rush. Pace yourself – if you have two hours to answer four questions, for example, make sure you spend half an hour on each. Exam questions are carefully designed and tested – they should take the estimated length of time to complete.
- Show all your working/rough work. Cross it through when you've finished with it. Hand it in with the rest of your answers.
- Leave yourself 5-10 minutes at the end to read through and check all your answers. Boring though this may seem, it is vitally important; you can often find mistakes/omissions and put them right. It could mean the difference between a Grade 6 and a Grade 7

### **During the exam, put your hand up if:**

- You need more paper.
- Feel ill.
- You have a particular problem and don't know what to do. You must not ask for (and you will not be given) any explanation of the questions – this is part of the exam.

### **At the end of the exam stop writing when you are told to.**

Make sure your name and exam number are on all separate pieces of paper you hand in. If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or loose sheets of paper you must fasten them together with a treasury tag which an invigilator will give you.

### **Exam conditions DO NOT end until you have left the room.**

Don't be tempted to talk/turn around/communicate in any way with other people. Your paper could still be cancelled!

**You must not leave the exam room until you are told to do so**

## YOU MUST NOT:

**1. Become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the exam.**

If you are, this will be reported to the exam board. It may mean being disqualified from all your exams – not just the one you were caught in.

**2. Talk to or disturb other people in any way once the exam has begun.**

If you do so, the same will happen as in **No 1**.

**3. Take into the exam room any unauthorised equipment - for example:**

- Bags, coats etc
- Ordinary pencil cases, notes etc
- Calculator cases & instruction leaflets
- Mobile telephones, MP3 players or iPod's or any other electronic devices

**Candidates have been disqualified from their exams in previous years due to their behaviour and mobile phones going off.**

**4. Impersonate another candidate**

This is a criminal offence and is dealt with by the police. You may be prosecuted in a court of law.

## YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ILL ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM

If you are ill and unable to attend an exam it is vital you phone the school first thing in the morning to inform us.

**Please telephone 01623 742722**

You must also obtain a note from your doctor detailing the reason for non-attendance. There is the possibility of submitting this note to the Examinations Board to ask for special consideration. The board looks at this in conjunction with other exam marks from the student in that particular subject, coursework marks and mock exam marks. This will then sometimes enable them to adjust the mark and grade accordingly.

If you are feeling unwell, but still able to travel, we suggest you come to the exam and we can assess the situation then. In most cases it is better to take the exam if you can.

If in doubt – **PHONE THE SCHOOL**

If you do not attend an exam without a valid reason, it is possible that you will be charged for that exam.



## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

### Reader, scribe and extra time.

Some students are tested to see if they are eligible for extra support in their exams. This can include having a reader, a scribe (someone to write your answers down) or being given extra time to complete the exam.

If you are allocated one or more of these support mechanisms, it is important you know what to expect and what help you are allowed without breaking the rules.

If you have a reader	If you have a scribe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can read all questions to you and any support materials except anything that assesses reading ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they will write down exactly what you say, word for word</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they cannot read symbols e.g. <math>x + =</math> <math>&lt; &gt;</math> or value units e.g. cm, Kg, KM/h. Readers must just point to these.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can change what they have written as many times as you wish</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they must not give any hints and must not re-read anything that they aren't asked to by the candidate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they won't change any word you say even if it is the wrong word or term</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tell your reader when you want them to move on to the next question or if you want them to repeat anything (they can repeat it as often as you need it repeating)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they can do drawings/diagrams but you may lose some of the marks for it</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicate to your scribe if you wish to dictate punctuation. If you don't dictate punctuation you won't get the marks for it.</li> </ul>

# EXAM CHECK LIST



Aim to arrive at school 15 minutes prior to the start of an exam **AT THE LATEST**. It is much better to leave yourself plenty of time in case of problems with the journey.

- **Morning exams start at 9am**
- **Afternoon exams usually start at 1.30pm unless stated differently on your individual exam timetable.**



When taking exams, bags, coats and mobile phones should be left in the designated areas. Because of this, it is recommended that you do not bring valuables with you to the exam.



The examination boards have strict regulations regarding **Electronic equipment** which we must follow at all times.

- Mobile phones, I-Pads, mp3 players and smart watches are banned from all exam venues. If you are found in possession of any of these or we find one left in your bag during an examination you are breaking JCQ regulations and a malpractice report will be sent to the exam board. This usually results in you being disqualified from that examination and possibly any subsequent examinations with that exam board.
- You will be given an opportunity before every exam to hand in any electronic equipment.
- The school takes no responsibility for equipment brought on site.



You should bring with you the correct equipment needed to do your exams. **Use black ink only**. Only clear pencil cases are allowed on your desk, any others should be left in your bag. **Do not use gel pens.**

## EXAM CHECK LIST



In an exam where you have the use of a calculator, you should not have a calculator cover on your desk. It is also important that before you use a calculator you ensure the memory has been cleared.



There is absolutely no talking or communication between students once you enter the exam hall. If you have any questions you should raise your hand once seated and an invigilator will come to you.



You should wear your **full uniform** for all your exams.



**No food is allowed in the exam hall.** If you have a special requirement please see the Examination Officer before the exams.



**Water bottles only** are allowed in the Exam hall. These should be clear bottles with a spill-proof cap.



New guidelines state that **all watches must be removed** while completing an exam. It must be placed on the desk in front of you throughout. You may refer to it for timekeeping still.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q. What do I do if I lose my exam timetable?

When you are given your exam timetable we suggest that you photocopy it or take a photo of it on your mobile phone, you can then keep a copy at home. If you lose your timetable completely you can get a replacement copy from your form tutor (they may ask you to write the information directly in your planner).

### Q. What do I do if there is a clash on my timetable?

It will be indicated on the timetable if there is a clash of exams, with details of which exam to sit first and the start time of the following exam. If you have any questions then consult the Exams Officer immediately.

### Q. What do I do if I think I have the wrong paper?

Invigilators will ask you to check before the exam starts. If you think something is wrong put your hand up and tell an Invigilator immediately as mistakes cannot be rectified after the exam.

### Q. If I'm late can I still sit the exam?

Provided you are not more than 1 hour late, for an exam that lasts 1 hour or more it **may** be possible for you to still sit the exam. You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to reception. A member of staff will escort you to the exam room. You **must not enter** the exam room without permission once an exam has started. It may not be possible to allow you extra time if you start the exam late. You should also be aware that for exams lasting **less than 1 hour**, if you start an exam 30 minutes after the published starting time, the school must inform the exam board and it is possible that they may not accept your work.

### Q. If I miss the examination can I take it another day?

No. Timetables are regulated by the exam boards and you must attend on the given dates and times.

### Q. I am not sure whether I need a calculator or not?

Check with subject staff in advance. They should know whether a calculator is permitted or not. If in doubt put it in your bag anyway.

### Q. The person sitting next to me is distracting me!

Put up your hand and tell the invigilator. They will deal with it for you. **DO** not be tempted to speak to the candidate yourself as it will jeopardise your papers.

### Q. What if I get thirsty?

You may take a bottle of water in with you but it must be a clear bottle with no writing on it. You are advised to keep it on the floor to minimise the likelihood of spilling water on your paper.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. Why do I need a black pen?**

Many of the papers are now sent electronically to the markers and black ink gives the clearest copies for this process. You need your work to be as easy to read as possible.

### **Q. How do I know what to do in the examination?**

The instructions will be on the front of the paper and you will be given time at the start of the examination to read these. Make sure you know how many questions to do. If the paper is in different sections make sure you know how many questions from each section and the time recommendations. If there are specific instructions, such as the correcting of answers, make sure you know the level of accuracy required. You will have done practice papers with your teachers so should be familiar with what is required.

### **Q. What happens if I feel unwell before or in an examination?**

Tell the invigilator. It may be possible to move you to a seat near a door if you are likely to need to go out. If you do have to go out an invigilator will need to accompany you. It may be necessary for you to obtain a medical certificate in order that special considerations can be applied for. The examination officer will advise you on this.

### **Q. I have overslept and will be late for my exam – should I stay at home?**

NO! Call the School immediately and you will be given advice. You do need to get in as quickly as possible.

### **Q. I have finished my exam early; can I leave and go home?**

NO! The School does not allow students to leave the examination room early. The amount of time allocated to each examination is the amount of time it should take to complete it. If you finish, check through your answers, read the instructions again on the front of the paper and make sure you have answered the correct number of questions from the right sections.

### **Q. What should I do if the emergency alarm is sounded during an exam?**

It is really important that you remain calm and quiet – it is still exam conditions. The invigilator will give clear instructions which will include all students leaving through the closest emergency exit and grouping on the MUGA. You will be supervised by invigilators and senior staff to ensure you remain silent and don't communicate with other students. When safe you will return to your exam and added time will be allocated. You must leave all bags, coats, equipment and exam papers when you leave. We will ensure they stay safe and untouched.

