HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

EXAMS BOOKLET 2026-27

A GUIDE FOR ALL STUDENTS

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Introduction

Exams are very important times in your life. The exams that you will be taking this academic year will influence what you do in the future, so it is very important that they run as smoothly as possible. This booklet has been produced to help you organise and prepare yourself for your examinations.

Hitchin Girls' School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the exam and assessment process in place in the school, and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

This booklet contains guidance and information from the school and JCQ. **It is your responsibility to read and understand this information.** If there is anything you do not understand please ask a teacher, or one of the Exams' office staff for help.

Purpose of this handbook

- To complement the Exam briefing information given in assemblies
- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations/assessments
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidates documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
  (See page 11 and 12)
- To answer questions candidates may have
- To inform candidates of any exams-related documents that they need to be made aware of

Written timetabled exams

Statement of Entry

- At the end of January/beginning of February you will receive a statement of entry showing all the exams you are entered for. It is your responsibility to check this very carefully and inform the exams office staff of any missing exams, or amendments to tiers in science and maths
- If there are ANY mistakes (e.g. name, date of birth, exam entry, wrong tier, etc.) you MUST inform the exams office staff immediately
- Mistakes that are not spotted at this stage could mean that you may not be entered for all your exams or that your certificate is incorrectly printed later

Exam Timetable

- Your exam timetable will be issued to you during the latter part of the spring term. Please check your individual timetable very carefully
- Check each exam date carefully and check to see if the exam is in the morning or the afternoon. If there is an exam on the list that you were not expecting to take (e.g. if you know that you have already dropped or been withdrawn from a subject) you MUST tell the exams office staff immediately
- Make sure you know which room and seat you need to go to for each exam
- Extra time will not be permitted if you have simply misread your timetable

Contingency day - Summer 2027

The Exam Contingency Day is on 23rd June 2027

- This date has been set by JCQ as a contingency day should a sustained national or local disruption arise during the Summer 2027 examination series
- All students must ensure they are available on these days in case any exams need to be rearranged. Please do not book a holiday until after the 24th June 2027

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

- If you have a clash with two exams being held at the same day and same time you will be contacted and informed of the arrangements for your supervision between exams. If in doubt please go and speak to the Exams Officer
- If you are sitting exams at other schools you MUST check that you do not have a clash. Please inform the Exams Officer immediately if you do

Where you will take your exams

- Most exams will take place in the Main Hall or Gym but not all of them. Please check your individual timetable to make sure you know where you are supposed to be
- Do not enter an exam room until instructed to do so by the invigilator or a member of staff
- Make sure that you are sat in the correct seat in the correct room to avoid you being marked as absent or sitting the wrong exam paper

What time your exams will start and finish

- Morning exams start at 09.00 and afternoon exams start at 13.30. You are required to be ready for your exams 15 mins before these times
- You will not be allowed to leave before the scheduled finish time, even if you have finished your exam

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of invigilators
- The invigilators are there to ensure the smooth running of the Exams
- The invigilators must follow the strict rules and regulations as directed by JCQ and awarding bodies

Exam room conditions

- You will be told where to gather before your exams – please arrive at least 15 mins prior to the published start time of each exam
- A member of staff will register you and escort you to the exam room
- You are under 'formal exam conditions' from the moment you line up outside the exam room – this means you must line up in silence
- Once inside the exam room Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room
- Candidates must not communicate with or disturb other candidates
- If you need assistance, put your hand up clearly and wait for an invigilator to attend to you
- Please do not write on exam desks, it is regarded as vandalism and you may have to pay for any damage
- The invigilators will collect your papers before you leave the room. ABSOLUTE SILENCE MUST BE MAINTAINED DURING THIS TIME
- Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper MUST NOT be taken from the exam room
- You will be dismissed row by row IN SILENCE
- Please do not congregate outside the exam room to chat to your friends – there may well be other exams still in progress around you

Where you will sit in the exam room

- Your seat number is shown on your individual exam timetable
- In the main exam rooms seats are lettered and numbered so you can easily find the correct seat
- **Please check your seat number before each exam**
- If you are unsure a member of the exams team will be available to help you locate your exam desk

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

- Your teacher or head of year will mark you as present as you enter the exam room
- At every exam your allocated desk will have a slip of paper giving your forename, surname, candidate number, and the paper reference for the exam you are sitting
- Please use this slip of paper to check you are sat at the correct desk and are sitting the correct paper
- This same information will be required to complete the front of your answer booklet
- Candidate number - You have been allocated a 4 digit number that refers only to you. You can find this on your exam timetable.
- When completing the information on each answer paper, you MUST use your legal names, not those you like to go by

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- You should bring BLACK pens, pencil, rubber, calculator (where allowed) and any other equipment needed for your exams. Do NOT rely upon the school to provide these
- Only clear pencil cases (or a clear plastic bag) are allowed on your desk
- You are not allowed to use gel pens, correcting fluid or erasable pens
- Water is permitted in the exam room in a clear water bottle only. Please bear in mind that if spilt they can spoil your exam papers. There should be no label, logos or writing on the bottle

Using calculators

Calculators are treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates **unless stated otherwise on the front of the exam paper**

Calculators must be:

• of a size suitable for use on the desk

• either battery or solar powered

• free of lids, cases and covers which have printed instructions or formulae

Calculators must not:

be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities:

- language translators
- symbolic algebra manipulation
- symbolic differentiation or integration
- communication with other machines or the internet

- be borrowed from another candidate during an examination for any reason
- have retrievable information stored in them. This includes:
  - databanks
  - dictionaries
  - mathematical formulae
  - text

The candidate is responsible for the following:

- the calculator's power supply
- the calculator's working condition
- clearing anything stored in the calculator

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

- Bags and coats should be left in your school locker. Bags and coats are not allowed inside the exam room
- Wrist Watches, Smart Watches and Smart Glasses are not permitted in the exam room – a clock will clearly display the time at the front of the exam room
- Mobile phones – Students must not have mobile phones in their possession (either on or off). They are to be left, TURNED OFF, in a bag or locker, outside of the exam room
- No food (including chewing gum or sweets) is allowed in the exam hall (if you have a special requirement – please see the Exams Officer prior to the start of the summer exams starting). Make sure you eat a good breakfast or lunch before your exams – it will help you concentrate

If any of the items above are found on your person during an exam they will be classed as unauthorised material and reported to the exam board.

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.

The following are examples of malpractice. This is not an exhaustive list and as such does not limit the scope of the definitions set out earlier in this document. Other instances of malpractice may be identified and considered by the awarding bodies at their discretion.

Candidate malpractice
For example:
- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations;
- the unauthorised use of alternative electronic devices or technology during remote assessment and remote invigilation;
- accessing the internet, online materials or AI tools during remote assessment and remote invigilation, where this is not permitted;
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments;
- collusion: working collaboratively with others, beyond what is permitted;
- copying from another candidate (including the use of technology to aid the copying);

• allowing work to be copied, eg posting work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
• the deliberate destruction of another candidate's work;
• disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language);
• allowing others to assist in the production of controlled assessments, coursework, non examination assessments, examination responses or assisting others in the production of controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or examination responses;
• the misuse, or the attempted misuse, of examination and assessment materials and resources (eg exemplar materials);
• being in possession of unauthorised confidential information about an examination or assessment;
• bringing into the examination room notes in the wrong format (where notes are permitted in examinations) or inappropriately annotated texts (in open book examinations);
• the inclusion of offensive comments, obscenities or drawings; discriminatory language, remarks or drawings directed at an individual or group in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or portfolios;
• personation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment;
• plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, third party sources or incomplete referencing (including the internet and artificial intelligence (AI) tools);
• theft of another candidate's work;
• being in possession (whether used or not) of unauthorised material during an examination or assessment, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), watches, instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when prohibited), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, AirPods, MP3/4 players, pagers, or other similar electronic devices;
• facilitating malpractice on the part of other candidates;
• behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of the examination

Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies

Malpractice can lead to anything from the individual assessment being discounted to disqualification from the whole award. In severe cases, you could be disqualified from taking any exams for **UP TO 5 YEARS.**

What you should wear for your exams

Normal school uniform should be worn for all exams. If you are in the 6th form please follow the 6th form dress code.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- Aim to arrive at your lining up point at least 15 minutes prior to an exam AT THE LATEST. If you arrive late, report to the main reception as soon as you arrive and you will be escorted to your exam

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

- If you are ill and are unable to attend an exam it is vital you phone the school first thing in the morning (01462 621300) to inform us

- Please inform us of the reason for non-attendance. In some circumstances we may be able to contact the Examinations Board to ask for special consideration
- If you are feeling unwell, but still able to travel, please come in to school and we can assess the situation then
- If in doubt – PHONE THE SCHOOL
- If you feel ill during the examination please bring this to the attention of the invigilator as soon as you can

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

- If you do not attend an exam without a valid reason, you will be charged for that exam

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

- In the unlikely event of an emergency in the Exam room the invigilators will assess the situation and where required pause the exam and follow our emergency evacuation / invacuation procedure
- Please remain in your seat and wait to be given instructions by the invigilator
- The exam will be resumed as soon as possible and the relevant exam board will be informed of the situation

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

Access arrangements are pre-agreed and approved by the exam board. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. Examples of access arrangements are Laptop, Extra time, Smaller Room,

- Access Arrangements are agreed and arranged by the Schools' Special Needs Co-ordinator
- Practical details for the Access Arrangements will be confirmed with candidates, around the time the exam timetables are sent out
- Individual candidate timetables will indicate where Access Arrangement candidates are if they are in a different room from the rest of the cohort

Results

- Results from the Summer Exams 2025 exams are available as follows:

  GCE (A'Level) – Thursday 12th August 2027

  GCSE – Thursday 19th August 2027
- Details for the collection of results will be confirmed closer to the time
- Members of staff will be available immediately after the publication of results to help students
- Under no circumstances will results handed over to anyone other than the student (including parents/guardians) without the exams office staff having prior written consent

Post-results services

Once you have received your results, you may feel that you wish to submit a query about them, particularly if you feel that you did well in the exam and your results do not reflect this. You need to speak with the Head of Department to voice your concerns as soon as possible. They will be able to offer you advice on the way forward.

Following the issue of results, awarding bodies make post-results services available. If teaching staff at Hitchin Girls' School, or a candidate have a concern that a result may not be accurate, post-results services may be considered

The JCQ post-results services usually available are:

- Reviews of Results (RoRs):
  - Service 2 (Review of marking)
  - Priority Service 2 (Review of marking) - This service is only available for externally assessed components of A-level's where the results are needed for a further education application
- Access to Scripts (ATS):
  - Copies of scripts to support reviews of marking
- In the first instance you need to speak with the Exams Office staff to voice your concerns as soon as possible. They will be able to offer you advice on the way forward. If we feel that you have achieved the grade we expected you to, it would not be something that the school would pursue or pay for. If you are dissatisfied with the decision, you are able to pursue an enquiry yourself through the school
- If you wish to make an enquiry yourself, we must have your written consent before anything can be submitted to the Examination Board. You will need to complete the Candidate Consent Form obtainable from the Exams Office. This must be returned to the Exams Office by the deadline specified on the form along with the respective payment. No enquiries will be made without the completed form and payment being received
- On occasion, the school may feel that your result warrants an enquiry, in this instance we may pay for it, however, we still need your written permission and you will be asked to complete the form accordingly if you wish us to proceed

A WORD OF WARNING!

If you request a review of marking, there are 3 possible outcomes:

- Your original mark is lowered, so your final grade may be lower than the original grade you received
- Your original mark is confirmed as correct, and there is no change to your grade
- Your original mark is raised, so your final grade may be higher than the original grade you received

Certificates

- The School usually organises a celebration in the autumn term where you will be invited back and awarded your Exam Certificates. We only keep exam certificates for **one year** – after this time the certificates will be shredded

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

Copyright

- The copyright of any 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

Internal appeals procedures

Certain qualifications contain components of non-examination assessment (or units of coursework) which are internally assessed (marked) by Hitchin Girls' School and internally reviewed/standardised. The marks awarded are then submitted to the awarding body for external moderation.

- If a candidate feels they have valid grounds to appeal this mark a candidate can request a review of centre marking by writing to the Exams Officer - exams@hgs.herts.sch.uk and completing the internal appeals form. No requests will be accepted after the published deadline
- Full details of the procedure and deadlines can be found in our Internal Appeals Procedure (please request this from Exams Office staff if required)

Complaints and appeals procedure

Details of Hitchin Girls' Schools complaints and appeals procedure can be requested from Exams Office staff.

Appendix 1 - JCQ Information for candidates

This link takes you to the following documents:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

- Information for candidates -coursework
- Information for candidates - non-examination assessments
- Information for students - on screen tests
- Information for candidates- written exams
- Information for candidates - social media
- Preparing to sit your exams
- Information for candidates - shown at the bottom of this booklet
- Information for candidates, AI - show at the bottom of this booklet

For full information on the JCQ Privacy Policies please refer to the JCQ website:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/
https://www.jcq.org.uk/privacy-policy-2/

Appendix 2 - JCQ Unauthorised items poster and JCQ Warning to candidates poster

These posters will be displayed outside each exam room. You **mus**t note that *"Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in* ***DISQUALIFICATION*** *from your examination and your overall qualification."*

Unauthorised items poster http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters



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 during your examination, raise your hand to speak to an invigilator.
Do not speak to or disturb anyone else.

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.

JCQ CIC© 2026 – Effective from 1 September 2026

JCQ

AQA CAMBRIDGE OCR City & Guilds CCEA NCFE Pearson WJEC CBAC

NO MOBILE PHONES
NO SMART GLASSES
NO WATCHES

NO STORAGE OR WEB-ENABLED DEVICES



Possession of unauthorised items 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.

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 includes use or possession of hidden AI-enabled technology like smart glasses.
- This is what exam boards call **AI misuse and it 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) 25/03/2025

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.

AI misuse can have serious consequences including possible disqualification.

How to make sure you don't misuse AI

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.

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.

LAST CHECKS — Know the rules — Check with your teachers — ACKNOWLEDGE and DECLARE

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2025