



Candidate Exam Handbook

2025-2026

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Introduction

Sale High School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the exam and assessment process in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

Purpose of the Candidate Exam Handbook

- To complement candidate assemblies
- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations and 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 and assessments being taken
- To ensure copies of relevant *JCQ Information For Candidates* documents and exam room posters are provided in advance of any exams and assessments being taken
- To answer questions candidates may have.
- To inform candidates of signpost candidates (and where relevant parents/carers) to any exams-related policies and 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
- You should be aware that the following also constitute malpractice:
 - copying or allowing work to be copied – i.e. posting written work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
 - the use of AI without properly referencing (passing it off as your own work);
 - collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates beyond what is permitted;
 - allowing others to help produce your work or helping others with theirs;
 - being in possession of confidential assessment related information in advance of the examination;
 - exchanging, obtaining, receiving (even if not requested) or passing on assessment related information by any means of communication (even if just attempting to);
 - failing to report to your centre assessment related information being shared online; or
 - passing on rumours of exam content
- The guidelines on the use of AI are very specific
 - Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference **must** show the name of the AI tool 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 also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content. You **must** retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how you used it. This **must** be submitted with your work for final assessment so that your teacher can review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.
- If you copy the words, ideas or outputs of others and do not show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating.
- Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and trying to pass them off as your own. It could also include AI-produced material. Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.
- The school **will** report to the awarding body immediately all cases of **suspected** or **actual** malpractice in connection with the examination.

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*, a copy of which is included on the school website.

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

Coursework Assessments/Non-Examination Assessments

- Some components of a qualification may involve coursework or non-examined assessment.
- Relevant *JCQ Information for Candidates* documents - coursework, Non-Examination Assessments, social media are included on the school website.
- Sale High School publishes a Non-Examination Policy that sets out the procedures for planning and managing non-examination assessment, defining responsibilities and the management of risks.
 - Candidates will be informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the school's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
 - Candidates may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the school's marking of the assessment
 - Candidates will be informed of the use of AI (e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice)
- The full published procedure is available to candidates through the school website (Click on Welcome to Year 11 or Parents and then Exams).

Written Timetabled Exams

- The centre will notify candidates of the examination entries that have been made on their behalf, and the time and date of each component paper.
- Heads of Department for subject areas inform the Exams Officer of entries to be made. Once this information has been received, the Exams Officer makes the entries to the awarding bodies.
- A Candidate statement of entry is then issued to each individual candidate to check that personal details and exam entries are correct
- If this information is incorrect, the candidate must inform the Exams Officer as soon as possible
- Once entries are confirmed, individual candidate exam timetables are issued to ensure candidates know the date and time of all their exams/assessments, and any relevant information regarding seating arrangements, exam rooms etc.
- The *JCQ Information for Candidates* documents – written examination, social media – which all candidates must read, are available on the school website
- Exam room posters – Warning to candidates, Unauthorised Items – which all candidates must read, are available on the school website under Welcome to Year 11 or Parents and Exams.

Contingency Day - Summer 2025

- The awarding bodies have designated a contingency days on **Wednesday 24th June 2026.**
- All students must make themselves available to sit examinations up to and including the 24th June 2026.
- This means that in the event of national or local disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, the awarding bodies may, as a last resort, reschedule the examination to the published contingency date.
- Candidates should ensure they are available on that date and be mindful of this when making plans for the summer. If a candidate chooses not to be available for a re-scheduled examination, they will **not** be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements.

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

- The Exams Officer will be aware of the clashes on your timetable and will make arrangements as below.
- Candidates will then be issued with another timetable with the rescheduled arrangements once they have been finalised, and well in advance of the examination date(s), showing times and dates that allow the candidate to sit all necessary exam component papers.
- If candidates are taking two or more examinations in a session and the total time is **three hours or less**, they will be sat in the same session, with a supervised break of no more than twenty minutes between papers within a session. This must be conducted within the examination room, under formal examination conditions at all times. Therefore, candidates cannot revise.
 - For candidates with approved supervised rest breaks (as defined in section 5.1 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments), the rest break may be conducted outside of the examination room, with the candidate being supervised at all times.
- If candidates are taking two or more papers timetabled in a session and the total time is **more than three hours** including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks, one or more of the examinations will take place in a later or earlier session within the same day. Candidates will be supervised between examinations by an invigilator or member of staff.
 - Candidates may revise using their own resources whilst under centre supervision between examinations but must not:

- a) be in possession of an electronic communication/storage device or have access to the internet;
 - b) have contact with any candidate who has sat the examination;
 - c) be coached by a member of centre staff.
- When 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 five and a half hours for GCSE** examinations, including approved extra time allowances and/or supervised rest breaks;candidates may, at the centre's discretion, be allowed to take an examination the following morning, including Saturdays, provided the head of centre is satisfied that arrangements for overnight supervision of a candidate where necessary are sufficient to ensure that the candidate does not meet or communicate with anyone who may have knowledge of the content of the examination paper. This includes any form of electronic communication/storage device, e.g. telephone (both landline and mobile), e-mail, Internet and social media. It also extends to television and radio, which could report key details of the day's examinations. Candidates are not allowed to take examinations on an earlier day than that scheduled on the timetable.

Where you will take your exams

- The vast majority of external examinations will take place in the Sports Hall. The venue will be clearly shown on the exam timetable.
- Where candidates are eligible for access arrangements, alternative venues within the school may be used; these will be shown on your examination timetable. The allocated EAA rooms are: Room 9, Room 59, the headteachers boardroom and Meeting Room 1.

What time your exams will start and finish

- Candidate exam timetables will show the start time of each examination (usually 9.00am for morning sessions and 1.30pm for afternoon sessions). Please ensure the timetable is checked carefully for variations.
- Timetables show the duration (length) of the examination.
- Candidates are not allowed to leave the examination room until the examination has finished.
- The finish time of each examination will be clearly displayed in the examination room.
- There will be no toilet breaks during the first hour of the exam nor in the last 15 minutes, unless with a toilet pass. Invigilators will be informed of which candidates have a toilet pass. Candidates must insure they have been to the toilet before the exams start, the toilets will be open for 15 minutes prior to the exams

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of external invigilators and by school staff who are not subject teachers.
- Invigilators follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies.
- Candidates are required to comply with direction from the invigilators at all times.

Exam Room Conditions

- Candidates should arrive at the examination room **at least 10 minutes prior** to the published start time and wait outside.
- A member of the Senior Leadership team (SLT)/exam officer will invite candidates into the room at the appropriate time and check the identity of students entering the exam room. Candidates must not enter the room until they have been given clear permission to do so.
- Candidates may be required to show their pockets are empty and be scanned with a portable metal detector.
- Candidates are subject to formal exam conditions from the moment they enter the exam room – and until they are given permission to leave by the invigilator.
- Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator and exam officer at all times in the exam room.
- Candidates must not communicate with or disturb other candidates. Any candidate attempting to communicate when in the exam room, or disturbing other candidates must be reported to the awarding body
- The centre number, subject title, paper number; and the actual starting and finishing times, and date, of each exam are displayed in the exam room.
- Question papers or answer books must not be opened prior to the exam starting. The front of the answer books (first name and surname, candidate number etc.) must not be completed until instructed to do so by the invigilator.
- Additional answer sheets/answer books are available from invigilators if required.

Where you will sit in the exam room

Each examination room is set out in a grid format. Each column of desks is allocated a letter to identify the appropriate column (starting from the left, A); each row of desks is allocated a number to identify the appropriate row (starting from the left, 1).

- Candidate timetables will show the desk they have been allocated using this grid format (e.g. Seat A1, B4, G9, C2, etc).
- Seating plans are displayed around the examination room, showing the candidate number and desk reference.
- Desks will be numbered with white cards to help identify the desk row/number. Candidate cards are also placed on each desk to show which candidate is sitting there.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

- SLT present at the start of each exam to welcome candidates and check only correct year groups are entering the exam room.
- Candidate cards are placed on each desk to indicate which candidate is sitting there.
- The card shows the candidate photograph, candidate number and full name of each candidate.
- The invigilator/exam officer will use this card to verify the identity of each candidate by checking the card and the candidate name and number against the seating plan and register.
- It is therefore vital that these cards are left facing upright on the desk and are not written on or defaced in any way, as they form part of the official identity verification process required by the awarding bodies.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- **Candidates are responsible for ensuring they bring the correct equipment to each examination.**

- Please check with your subject teacher what equipment you will need for each examination.
- Any pencil cases taken into the examination room must be see-through.

Using Calculators

- Candidates may bring their own calculators to the exam if the exam paper states they are required. The memory must be cleared and the lid removed and placed under the desk. An invigilator may check that there is nothing stored in the memory or written on the calculator
- Candidates must be aware of JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in exams

<p>Calculators must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 formulas. 	<p>Calculators must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ databanks; ○ dictionaries; ○ mathematical formulas; ○ text.
<p>The candidate is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the calculator's power supply; ○ the calculator's working condition; ○ clearing anything stored in the calculator. 	

What you should **NOT** bring into the exam room

Candidates must not have access to items other than those stated in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list or the specification for that subject.

Potential technological/web enabled sources of information such as:

- Notes, AirPods, Earphones/Earbuds, an iPod, a mobile phone, a MP3/4 player or similar device, a watch, smart glasses or any other smart device. Watches of any kind **are not permitted**.

This means that:

- all unauthorised items are left outside of the examination room or switched off in school bag in designated storage space;
- any pencil cases taken into the examination room must be see-through;
- any water bottles must be clear and free of labels.

If candidates have access to unauthorised items in the examination room this may be considered as malpractice. They could be subject to penalties in accordance with the JCQ publication Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures - <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>

Prior to the examination starting, candidates will be instructed to hand over any mobile devices or to remove their wrist watches if they haven't done so already and they should be handed over to an invigilator until the end of the exam.

Food and Drink in Exam Rooms

- Food is not allowed in the examination room.
- If you are subject to a supervised break (e.g. because of a timetable clash), you may bring in snacks for the break but these must be left at the back of the examination room or left with an invigilator until the break starts. The invigilator will inform you when this is.

- You may bring in water to drink. This must be in a clear bottle, with no labels attached, or writing. No other types of drinks are permitted.

What you should wear for your exams

- Candidates must wear full school uniform for each examination. Non uniform clothing is not permitted. Hoodies and coats are not permitted and these must be removed prior to the examination starting

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

- A suitable storage area will be identified for personal belongings such as bags, coats, unauthorised materials including switched off mobile phones.
- Mobile phones can be left with Student Services if required, i.e. if a student has no bag or coat they can leave personal belongings in.

What to do if you arrive late for an exam

- If you are late for an examination, you must telephone Attendance to let them know. They will inform the Exams Officer.
- On arrival, inform Student Services desk that you have arrived and then go straight to the examination room.
- Enter the room as quietly and unobtrusively as possible in order to not disrupt other candidates.
- Wait at the back of the room for the invigilator who will come to you and take you to your seat.
- The invigilator will note the reason you arrived late, including any details of special arrangements made for you to reach the centre; the actual starting and finishing times of the examination; the time the candidate started the examination; the time the candidate finished the examination.
- Depending on the time of arrival, you may not be permitted entry to the exam room and for very late arrivals please be aware that in some circumstances, the awarding body may not accept your script.

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

- If you are unwell and unable to attend the exam, either you or your parent/carer must telephone the school as soon as possible to let us know. You will be marked absent on the examination register.
- If you are unwell but manage to attend the exam, please inform the Exams Officer, who will ensure that the invigilators are aware and ready to help if needed.
- If you feel unwell during the exam, put your hand up and wait for an invigilator to come to you. Inform the invigilator that you feel unwell. If you need to leave the room, they will escort and supervise you. You will be allowed to re-enter the examination room if you feel able to continue. Do not leave the exam room unattended as you will not be allowed to re enter.
- If you were absent, or feel your performance has been compromised, we may be able to apply for special circumstances. You must supply a medical note confirming that you were unfit to sit the examination or that your performance would have been compromised. This must be obtained from your GP/hospital and passed to the Exams Officer, along with any other supporting documentation, as soon as is practicable. The school will make the application on your behalf and it will be the Exams officer and SLT that will decide whether to support the application. The school is not informed of the level of adjustment, if any, made. We are only informed whether or not an application has been accepted or rejected. There is no guarantee that the awarding body will accept the application.

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

- In the event of an emergency in the examination room, above all, remain calm. The invigilators will tell you what to do so wait for instructions.

- In the event of a fire alarm, you will be asked to stop writing and the time of the examination will be paused. Remain in your seat. You must remain silent and not communicate with any other candidate. A member of SLT or the Exams Officer will inform the invigilator of whether the room needs to be evacuated or not. Wait for those instructions.
- If you are directed to leave the room, you should close your answer booklet and follow the invigilator's instructions. You will assemble on the basketball court at the back of the school regardless of your exam room, and you will not join your form group. Candidates will assemble with the other candidates. You are not permitted to communicate with any other candidate during this time. If and when it is safe to do so, you will be directed by the invigilator to return to the examination room, again you must remain silent at all times. The examination will re-start and the finish time will be amended so that you have the full working time set for the examination. The Exams Officer will inform the awarding bodies of the disruption that has occurred.
- In the event of a Lockdown, candidates in classrooms will follow the usual procedure that as practised in school, when advised by the invigilator. Candidates in the hall will follow the procedure but will not be required to sit under the desks

Candidates with Access Arrangements

- Access arrangements are applied for and agreed with the awarding body before an examination.
- They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the examination and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.
- The evidence of need may vary depending on the disability and access arrangement applied for and candidates are involved in any decisions/discussion regarding appropriate arrangements. The decision to apply for access arrangements rest solely with the SENCo and the awarding bodies decisions are final
- The school SENCo informs candidates of the approved arrangements that are in place for them and any instances when these arrangements may not apply.
- The venues of each examination will be shown on the candidate exam timetable.

Results

- GCSE results will be issued on **Thursday 20th August 2026**.
 - Year 11 results are available for collection from 9am; (timings are subject to confirmation)
- There will be a number of senior staff available in school immediately after the publication of results for any queries on Results Day.
- If you are unable to collect your results, you can make arrangements for someone to collect them on your behalf. You will need to submit written or email confirmation (this must be from the students school email address) that you give permission for the named person to collect your results. This written permission must be passed to the Exams Officer or SLT member before the end of the school term (i.e. before the summer holidays). The person collecting your results will need to bring a form of identification with them on the day in order to collect them.
- Results that are not collected on Results Day will be stored by the Exams Officer. Arrangements for collection can be made by appointment.
- Results for the Year 10 language GCSE's will be available from the Exams Officer on the first day of the term in September

Post-Results Services

- A number of services are available to candidates following the publication of results. If you don't have a result, have questions about or are unhappy with your result then you may wish to use one of the **post-results services** (e.g. review of results and appeals, access to scripts).
- Candidates will be given a form to sign on Results day to give consent for the school to access their marked exam scripts. Subject teachers will be able to view these on request and advise as to whether further services are recommended. These details will be available in the Results Handbook published on the school website in June

Certificates

- Certificates are not released to the school until all awarding body administrative processes are complete. This is usually in November.
- Certificates are distributed at GCSE Certificate Evening (usually November/December).
- Candidates are invited to attend an informal evening at Sale High school to collect their certificates and to catch up with former classmates and teachers with drinks and snacks. The date and time of the Certificate Evening will be communicated to candidates directly once dates are confirmed.
- If you are unable to attend Certificate Evening, you can arrange to collect certificates following this date, by arrangement with the Exams Officer.
- You can make arrangements for someone to collect certificates on your behalf. You will need to submit written confirmation that you give permission for the named person to collect your results. This written permission must be passed to the Exams Officer. The person collecting your results will need to bring a form of identification with them in order to collect them.
- Unclaimed certificates are stored by the Exams Officer. Please note that the school is only obliged to keep the certificates for one calendar year.

Internal Appeals Procedures

- Sale High School publishes an Internal Appeals procedure that relates to internal assessment decisions, the internal assessment procedure and a process to manage disputes when a candidate disagrees with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal.
- The Internal Appeals procedure is available through the school website
- The published procedure explains how to appeal
- The published procedure explains how to request a review of the centre's marking and timescales etc.

Complaints and Appeals Procedure

- Sale High School publishes a Complaints and Appeals procedure that sets out the procedures to be followed should a candidate or their parent/carer wish to make a complaint or appeal regarding the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification.
- The Complaints and Appeals procedure is available through the school website
- The published procedure explains how to make a formal complaint
- The published procedure explains how a formal complaint is investigated
- The published procedure explains how to appeal if the candidate remains dissatisfied and believes there are clear grounds for an appeal.

Documents available on our website:

- Exam Preparation Booklet
- JCQ info for Candidates - Coursework
- JCQ Info for Candidates - Non-exam assessments
- JCQ Info for Candidates - On-Screen Tests
- JCQ Info for Candidates - Written Exams
- JCQ Preparing to Sit Your Exams
- JCQ Info for Candidates - AI and Assessments
- JCQ Social Media Infographic
- JCQ Info for Candidates - No Mobile Phones
- JCQ Info for Candidates - Warning to Candidates
- JCQ Information for Candidates - Privacy Notice
- JCQ Post Results Services
- Internal Appeals Access Arrangements
- Internal Appeals Internal Assessment Decision Procedure
- Internal Appeals Reviews of Results and Appeals Procedure
- Non Exams Assessment Procedures

