



The Gryphon School

EXAMS GUIDE

2019 - 2020

Introduction

This exams handbook has been designed to inform you about examination procedures, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and to help, guide and support you and your parents/carers through the examination process. All students will expect to have Pre-public Exams (formerly called mocks) in addition to your actual GCSE and A level exams.

Read it carefully to make sure you understand what happens on the day of the exam and what is expected of you. You should also share it with your parents/carers.

Keep the handbook somewhere safe, but if you do lose it, you can find a copy on the school website.

Taking exams can be stressful, but knowing what to expect will help you approach yours in a calm and well-organised way.

If you or your parents/carers have any questions or need help or advice, please do not hesitate to come and see me in the Exams Office.

Good luck in all your exams and remember that we are here to help.

Mrs Hole
SAST Trust Examinations Manager

School Contact Details

School telephone number 01935 813122

Exams Office telephone number 01935 811067

6th form Office telephone number 01935 811055

Year 11 Office telephone number 01935 810119

exams@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

Key Dates

Year 11 PPE:	18 – 29 November 2019
	24 February – 6 March 2020
Year 13 PPE:	6 – 10 January 2020
	23 – 27 March 2020
Summer Exams:	11 May – 24 June 2020*
A level Results Day:	13 August 2020
GCSE Results Day:	20 August 2020

There will also be other exams throughout the year (BTEC, Art, Catering, Music, Orals) and your teachers will advise you of these dates.

*You must remain available for the whole of the exam season up to and including Wednesday 24 June 2020 in case an awarding body needs to invoke its contingency plan.

Important Information

Every year JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) issue 'Information for Candidates' documents.

- Written Exams
- Non-Examination Assessment
- Onscreen Tests
- Coursework
- Social Media
- Privacy Notice

They can be found on the school website. You should read them all as they give you information about what you are allowed and not allowed to do during your exams.

<https://www.gryphon.dorset.sch.uk/learning/examinations/>

Before your exams

You will be given an examination pass that you have to bring with you to all exams as photographic proof of who you are. It also has your candidate number on it. If you lose it then you will need to ask for a replacement at Visitor reception, there will be a cost of £2 for this.

You will receive your provisional summer exam timetable in February. This timetable tells you what exams you have been entered for as well as the start time and length of each exam.

Check your timetable carefully. Make sure that all the exams you expect to take are listed including any resits, and that you know whether each exam is in the morning or afternoon. Also that you have been entered at the right tier i.e. foundation or higher. **You alone are responsible for checking your timetable.**

If any subjects are missing, or you notice any clashes – i.e. exams for two of your subjects taking place at the same time – please come to the Exams Office in visitor reception and ask to speak to the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.

Towards the end of April you will receive your final timetable which tells you the room that your exam is taking place and the number of the desk allocated to you.

Your timetable is unique to you. Just because someone is in the same class as you doesn't mean you will sit the exam in the same place.

If you lose your timetable, ask for a new copy from The Exams Office. There will be a cost of 50p for a new one.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I have an accident or am ill before the exam?

If you have had an accident or are ill you must call as soon as you can, ideally no later than 8.30am then we can help or advise you on the measures that we can put in place to enable you to take your exam.

In the case of an injury that prevents you from writing; it may be possible to provide you with a scribe to write your answers or for you to use IT.

Medical evidence may be required to support any request for Special Consideration if you miss an exam. In some cases a missed exam can result in no grade for that subject.

What happens if the school bus is delayed?

Don't panic. The bus companies usually contact the school to inform us of delays and breakdowns but if possible phone the school and let us know. When you arrive please come to the Visitor Reception where a member of staff will escort you to your exam room.

If I am late can I still sit the examination?

You must contact the school as soon as you know that you may be late for your exam.

Provided you are not more than 1 hour late, it may still be possible for you to sit the examination. You should get to school as quickly as possible and report to the Visitor Reception. A member of staff will escort you to the exam room. You may not enter an examination room without permission after an examination has begun. It may not be possible to allow you any extra time if you start the examination later.

You should also be aware that if you start the exam more than 30 minutes after the published starting time, the school must inform the exam boards and it is possible that the board may decide not to accept your work. Please ensure that you allow enough time to get to school so that if you are delayed (e.g. through transport problems) you will still arrive on time.

What equipment do I need?

You need to have the following equipment in a **clear** pencil case:

- Examination Pass
- Pens – black ink at least 2
- Pencils – at least 2
- Eraser
- Pencil sharpener

- Ruler
- Compass
- Protractor
- Calculator
- Coloured pencils

If I have forgotten equipment, will it be provided for me?

If you have an equipment failure we do have a supply of black pens, pencils, rulers, erasers and pencil sharpeners that we can let you borrow for your exam. We DO NOT have mathematical equipment, calculators or coloured pencils so it is important that you do not forget yours.

Why do I have to use a black pen?

It is an exam board regulation.

What can I wear?

Make sure that you are wearing school uniform and dressed appropriately for an exam. Sometimes you may be in the hall for 2-3 hours; you should have a warm outer layer in case it is needed. You are not permitted to wear hats, caps, scarves or coats during exams.

I have lost my examination pass?

If you lose your examination pass go to Visitor Reception for a replacement. There will be a cost of £2.00 for a new one. The best place to keep your pass is in your clear pencil case with all of your other exam equipment.

What room am I doing my exam in?

The room and seat that you have been allocated for your exams are printed on your individual timetable. You can also find this information on the notice boards in your year area and in the entrance to the Café. Please look at these notice boards regularly for any changes.

I am entitled to extra time and / or other special arrangements – how will this affect the way I take my exams?

These students will receive particular instructions from the learning support department. Where possible such candidates will be seated together or in additional rooms to minimize disturbance from other candidates who will finish earlier. The invigilators will include the additional time when they display the finishing time of your exam on the board.

If I have more than one exam on a day can I get lunch at school?

Pupils who have examinations in both morning and afternoon sessions may obtain lunch from the Café in the usual way or bring a packed lunch.

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

Speak to Mrs Hole as soon as possible. The school will re-schedule papers internally (on the same day) where there is a clash of subjects. Candidates will normally sit one paper then have a break during which they will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. They will then sit their second subject paper. Correct times should be on your individual candidate timetable. It may be necessary for you to bring a packed lunch if you have to remain supervised until both examinations are completed.

Can I take my bag and coat into the exam room?

No. Bags, coats, scarfs and hats (unless for medical or religious reasons) need to be left in the common room or on the school bag racks as they cannot be taken into the exam room.

What about my mobile phone, smart watch or wrist watch?

Mobile phones, smart watches, other electronic means of communication or electronic storage devices and wrist watches are not allowed into the exams room. The invigilators will have a box that you can put these items in but you are strongly advised not to bring these items into school as the school is unable to take responsibility for their safekeeping.

If you are found in possession of a mobile phone, smart watch or other electronic communication or storage device, even if it is turned off, it will be taken from you and a report made to the awarding body and you may face disqualification from the subject concerned.

Can I take food and drink into the examination room?

You are not allowed to take food into the examination room. However, you can take in a bottle of water but it must be in a clear bottle with the label removed. You are not allowed squash.

What do I do if I forget my Candidate Number?

Candidate Numbers are a four-digit code printed on your exam pass, your timetable, seating plan and attendance register.

What if I feel ill during the exam?

Put your hand up and an invigilator will assist you. You should inform an invigilator if you feel ill before or during an exam and you feel this may have affected your performance.

What time does my exam start?

The start time for your exams is printed on your individual timetable. Unless otherwise stated morning exams start at 9.00am, mid-morning exams start at 11.00am and afternoon exams start at 1.00pm. These are the times that the exams start not the times for you to arrive. **You should be ready to enter the exam room 15 minutes before the start of the exam.**

If I miss the examination can I take it another day?

No. Exam timetables are published nationally and you must attend on the stated date and time.

How do I know how long the exam is?

The length of the exam is shown in minutes on your individual timetable under the heading 'duration'. It is also printed on the front of the exam paper. Invigilators will tell you when to start and finish the exam. They will also write the start and finish times on the notice board at the front of the exam room. There will be a clock in all exam rooms, if you are unable to see these please alert an invigilator.

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 to inform the invigilator immediately.

Which questions do I answer?

It is important that you spend 5 minutes reading the instructions on the front of the exam paper carefully so that you know exactly which questions you must answer as some sections are compulsory and others give a choice. If you are in any doubt please ask an invigilator.

Can I go to the toilet during the exam?

Only if it is absolutely necessary, as this disrupts the concentration of others. You will be escorted by an invigilator and will not be allowed any extra time.

What do I do if I forget the Schools Centre Number?

The Centre Number is 55357. It will be clearly displayed in all examination rooms.

Can I leave the exam early?

It is the school policy not to allow candidates to leave the exam room early as this is disruptive to other candidates and you are then not making good use of the time available to you. A candidate may not leave the examination room without the permission of the invigilators. If you have finished the paper, use any time remaining to check over your answers and ensure you have completed your details on the front of the answer booklet correctly.

When do I get my results?

A level results day is Thursday 15 August 2019 and GCSE is Thursday 22 August 2019. You can come in and collect your results in person from 9.00am. If you are unable to collect them yourself and you wish for someone else to pick them up we will need written permission from you stating who will be collecting them and that person will need to bring in some form of identification or you can provide us with an A4 stamped addressed envelope and we will then post your results to you. We do not give results over the phone or by email.

You will also be able to access your results through your Progresso login from 10.00am. If you wish to do this, please make sure that your password is up to date.

What do I do if I don't get the grades I need?

Staff will be available to advise you on Results Day. If you feel strongly that it is necessary to make an enquiry about your result you should first consult the Head of Subject who will give their advice as to the advisability of requesting a review of marking. You should be aware that your mark could go down as well as up or may even stay the same. The Examinations Manager will advise you on the cost of this process. Details of the post results service, including review of marking will be included in the envelope with your results. Please note that there are strict deadlines connected to the post results service.

When can I collect my Certificates?

Your certificates should be in school ready for you to collect towards the end of November. When they are ready for collection we will put messages on the school website, twitter and facebook. You will need to sign for them when you collect them. If someone else is collecting them on your behalf we will need written permission from you stating who can collect them and that person will need to bring in some form of identification.

If you would like your certificate posted home then you will need to collect a form from the exams office. Please note that this will involve a cost to you of £4.00 to cover the recorded delivery.

It is very important that you do not forget to pick up your original certificates and keep them safe at home. In the future Universities and employers may ask you for copies.

Exam Words

These are all words that you will find in examination questions. You will need to **REMEMBER WHAT THEY MEAN** if you are going to be able to write the **RIGHT SORT OF ANSWER**. Every subject has its own set of words that are used to ask questions.

Make sure that you know and understand the “question words” for each of your subjects.

- CALCULATE:** Do the sum and show all your working out.
- COMPARE:** Are the things very alike (similar) or are there important differences?
Explain which do you think are best?
Make sure that you write down your reasons for thinking as you do?
- CONTRAST:** Find the differences and describe them clearly.
- CRITICISE:** Use **EVIDENCE** to support your opinion on the value and importance of theories, facts or other people's ideas or views.
- DEDUCE:** Use the information you are given or already know to find the answer.
- DEFINE:** Give the meaning of.....
- DESCRIBE:** Write in detail about....
- DETERMINE:** Put the numbers you need into the equation and then do the sum.
- DISCUSS:** Write about the important parts of this topic.
Are there two sides to the question?

Make sure that you write about all the points which are for the argument and all the points which are against the argument.

- DISTINGUISH:** Explain the difference.
- ESTIMATE:** Think of some 'best guess' numbers for the bits of the problem and do your sums using these 'best guess' numbers.
- EVALUATE:** Decide why something is important or successful.
- EXPLAIN:** Make everything clear so that the reader can understand what you mean.
- FIND:** Work out the answer.
- ILLUSTRATE:** Write down some examples to make your ideas clear.
- INTEPRET:** Explain the meaning in your own words – for example you might be asked to **INTERPRET** a graph. Here you should write down what the graph shows you.
- JUSTIFY:** Write down your reasons to support an argument or an action.
- MEASURE:** Decide what sort of measurement is needed and then use this measuring scale
(Such as length = ruler. Macbeth's actions = your view of his actions based on evidence from the play)
- OUTLINE:** Write about the most important parts of a topic and leave out all those little details.
- PREDICT:** Using your own knowledge of what has happened before in the same sort of situations, work out what you think will happen in this situation. Make sure you write about the reasons for your answer.
- RELATE:** Write about the connection between things
- REVIEW:** Write about the topic, explaining it clearly from all points of view
- SKETCH:** Draw a simple diagram, graph or picture – and **LABEL** it –to show what is important.
- STATE:** Write a short answer about the main point.

SUGGEST: Think about an answer that might be reasonable – you might find several ways of solving the question – write about them all.

SUMMARISE: Bring together and mention all the main points when you write your answer. You don't have to write about all the details of each point you make.

TRACE: Show how something has developed from its beginning to its end.

WHAT IS MEANT BY/WHAT IS UNDERSTOOD BY:

Write about what the title, statement or word means and then give some more information about it. Look at the marks for the question for a guide to how much you need to write and how many points you need to make. Sometimes each point you write about is worth a mark, sometimes each point you make will be worth only half a mark.

REMEMBER some words mean **slightly different things in different subjects**. Choose the **most sensible meaning** for your answer.

Finally we wish all of our exam candidates the very best of luck in your forthcoming exams.