The Gryphon School

EXAMS GUIDE

2026 - 2027

SAST
SHERBORNE AREA SCHOOLS' TRUST

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 Mock Exams 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 Examinations Manager

School Contact Details

School telephone number	01935 813122
Exams Office telephone number	01935 811067
6th form Office telephone number	01935 811055

exams@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

Key Dates

Year 11 Mocks:	10 – 17 November 2026
	8 – 12 March 2027
Year 13 Mocks:	7 – 11 December 2026
	15 – 19 March 2027
Summer Exams:	7 May – 23 June 2027*
A level Results Day:	12 August 2027
GCSE Results Day:	19 August 2027

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

*You must remain available to sit exams for the whole of the exam season up to and including Wednesday 23 June 2027 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. They can be found on the school website

- Written Exams
- Non-Examination Assessment
- Onscreen Tests
- Coursework
- Social Media
- Privacy Notice
- Warning to Candidates poster
- Unauthorised items poster

You **must** 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/

Exam Boards Used

A level		**GCSE**	
Ancient History	OCR	BTEC Sport	Pearson/Edexcel
Biology	OCR	Biology	Pearson/Edexcel
BTEC Digital Media	Pearson/Edexcel	Business	Pearson/Edexcel
BTEC Sport	Pearson/Edexcel	Chemistry	Pearson/Edexcel
Business	AQA	Computer Science	OCR
Chemistry	OCR	Drama	Eduqas
Computer Science	OCR	Economics	AQA
Core Maths	OCR	English Lang & Lit	AQA
Criminology	WJEC	Film Studies	Eduqas
Drama	Eduqas	Fine Art and 3D	AQA
Economics	AQA	Further Maths	AQA
English Lang & Lit	AQA	Geography	Pearson/Edexcel
Film Studies	Eduqas	History	OCR
Fine Art and 3D	AQA	Hospitality	WJEC
French	AQA	IMedia	OCR
Further Maths	Pearson/Edexcel	Maths	Pearson/Edexcel
Geography	Pearson/Edexcel	Music	Eduqas
History	Pearson/Edexcel	Physics	Pearson/Edexcel
Law	AQA	Photography	Eduqas
Maths	Pearson/Edexcel	Polish	AQA
Music	Eduqas	RE	AQA
PE	AQA	Science	Pearson/Edexcel
Photography	Eduqas	Spanish	AQA
Physics	AQA		
Project	AQA		
Psychology	AQA		
RE	OCR		
Sociology	AQA		
Spanish	AQA		

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 Statement of Entry in February. This tells you what exams you have been entered for. Check it carefully. Make sure that all the exams you expect to take are listed. If anything is missing speak to Mrs Hole 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.

Malpractice

To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict regulations are in place. Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of these regulations. Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant exam board.

This covers:

- Introduction of unauthorised material into the exam room
- Breaches of examination conditions
- Exchanging, obtaining, receiving or passing on information which could be exam related (or the attempt to)
- Offences relating to the content of candidates work
- Undermining the integrity of exams and/or assessments

You are under exam conditions as soon as you enter the exam room until you are given permission to leave by the invigilator.

You must listen to and always follow the instructions from the invigilator.

You must not communicate with or disturb other candidates

You cannot touch/write on the answer/question booklet until you are told to by the invigilator.

All are classed as malpractice and will be reported to the exam board which could result in you receiving no marks for that paper or subject.

Social Media

Do not:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what is in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment is not your own independent work.

The use of AI in Non-examination Assessment

You must reference any use of AI in your non-examination assessment and coursework.

- Where computer generated content has been used (such as AI Chatbot) your reference must show
    - The name of the AI tool used
    - The date the content was generated
    - Ie ChatGPT3.5 (Https://openai.com/blog/chatgbt/) 25/01/2027
    - Reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating content
- You **must** retain a copy of the questions/prompts used to generate the AI generated content itself 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

Plagiarism involves taking someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or outputs and not crediting the source, this includes outputs from AI tool and trying to pass them off as your own.

It is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.

Personal Data

Any person involved in completing examinations/assessments where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies

The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth and gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications

Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programs and data (Student Materials). Awarding bodies may use the Student Materials to evaluate candidates' performance in the relevant assessment. They may also use the Student Materials for other purposes as outlined in their privacy policies and in accordance with their terms. Candidates can be directed to the relevant awarding body's privacy notice it they require further information about how their Student Material may be used by the awarding body. A candidate may notify the awarding body, by giving notice to the centre, that they wish to opt out of the awarding body's use of their Student Materials for the purposes set out above.

The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, Test scores to the awarding bodies for the purpose of applying for examination access arrangements.

The centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender and medical conditions to the awarding bodies for the purpose of applying for Special Consideration.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I don't agree with my Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) mark from my teacher?

Your teacher will inform you of your mark (not grade) for any NEA that you have completed. If you feel that the assessment process was wrong, then you should discuss this with your teacher and Head of Department first. If you feel strongly that this has been exhausted then you can make a formal appeal against your centre assessed mark for your NEA, this is only used in exceptional circumstances and must be done within 7 days of receiving your mark. Please see Mrs Hole who will be able to help.

You should be aware that your mark may still change after the exam board moderation process has taken place.

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

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 or calculators, 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. Scripts are scanned and black ink shows up better.

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 hoodies, 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 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.

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

You will receive instructions from the learning support department. Where possible you will be seated with others who have arrangements 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?

If you have examinations in both morning and afternoon sessions, you 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. You will normally sit one paper then have a break during which you will be supervised and must not have any communication with other candidates. You will then sit your 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, wristwatch, smart glasses and air pods?

Mobile phones, smart watches, other electronic means of communication or electronic smart devices, wrist watches, air pods, earphones/earbuds 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, wristwatch or other electronic communication or smart 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 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**.

My exam is due to finish after 3.10pm and I get a bus what do I do?

You will need to make alternative arrangements to get home as the buses will not be able to wait for you.

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 not be allowed to go during the first and last half hour of the exam (this does not apply if you have a medical condition that we know about) 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 12 August 2027, and GCSE is Thursday 19 August 2027. You can come in and collect your results in person from 9.00am. If you are unable to collect them yourself, 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. You can also 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 on the day

You will also be able to access your results through your Arbor login from 10.30am. If you wish to do this, please make sure that your password is up to date.

Results will be emailed to your school email on the Monday after results day.

What do I do if I don't get the grades I need or have a concern about my result?

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 be able to advise you on 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.

What about my Certificates?

Your certificates should be in school towards the end of November. There will be information in your results envelope on how to collect your certificates

It is very important that you keep your original certificates 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.

INTERPRET: 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.