

Examinations handbook
Information for Students and Parents
2021-2022



RIDGEWAY
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Introduction

- We aim to make the exam experience as stress-free and successful as possible for all candidates
- This booklet will provide you with the information you need to feel prepared for the exam season ahead. Please read it carefully as there is some important information included.
- The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) sets down strict criteria for the conduct of examinations and their rules and regulations must be closely followed. You should therefore pay attention to the Notice to Candidates at the back of this book.
- Our mock exam weeks in November and March are an ideal opportunity to experience the exam seasons as closely as possible to how it will be in real exams. This prepares the students, parents and staff for the challenges they may face during exams. Therefore, we ask that you treat your mock exams as seriously as if they were your GCSE examinations.
- If there is anything you are unsure about after reading this booklet, please ask for help.



Exams officer : Mrs R Craig. My office is in reception, next to the medical room.

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RIDGEWAY
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Exam instructions for candidates

Before the exams

- Before your Summer exams, you will receive a Statement of Entry which shows every exam you have been entered for. It is important that you check all the details, including your name and how it is spelt, Date of Birth and subjects.
- Before every exam season, you will be given a timetable which will show the days, times and subjects of your exams. It is important that you check this to make sure that you have the correct subjects listed. Some subjects will have multiple exams that make up your total mark.
- Please ensure that all the components for all of your subjects are included.
- Please notify the Exams office if you have any concerns about the dates or times of your exams, or if any are missing.



Essential equipment

- It is important that you have the correct equipment for your exams. This includes:
- Black writing pen (+spare)
- Pencil
- Sharpener
- Ruler
- Calculator – ensure your calculator is the correct specification for your exam, and that you know how to use it.
- These items must be in a clear pencil case which will stay on your desk during the exam
- Please note that in exams you must not use: Tippex, gel pens, or blue ink. You will not be permitted to have any fidget toy or mascot without prior agreement with the Exams Officer.



During exam week

- During exam weeks, you will be expected to arrive on time for registration before your exam. If you think you may be late, please contact the school office and let us know. (see pg 10 for more information on late arrivals)
- If you are unwell during the exams and are absent from school, there will be no option to retake the exam when you return. You would need to take it at the next available exam season. You would need to provide a doctor's note to say why you are absent. Please note, you may be charged the entry fee for the examination, which can be in excess of £80.
- The school timetable will be adjusted to allow for the length of the afternoon exams, and this means on your timetable you may think your exam is during lunchtime. We will ensure that all students taking exams get their breaks and lunches although they may be at slightly different times to normal.
- We ask that all candidates make themselves available for exams on the specified dates; this means no medical or dental appointments where at all possible, and only being absent from school for the most extreme of reasons. JCQ provide a set of dates for the summer exams, and we ask that you ensure your child is available up until the final date **even if their timetable suggests they would finish earlier**. The final date is the 'contingency date' which allows for examinations to be moved or amended in extreme circumstances (for example, a fire or flood at school which means an exam cannot take place).
- School uniform rules must be adhered to during exams. No coats or hoodies are allowed to be worn in the exam hall. Our normal rules about piercings, makeup, appropriate footwear and haircuts will still apply.
- All coats and bags will need to remain outside the hall at all times. Only bring into the hall the things you need for the exam. We will tell you where you can leave your bags and coats during your exam.
- Most exams will take place in the school hall unless you have special circumstances which mean you take exams in a different place/ location within school. Practical elements of exams such as Art, food or Music will take place in their respective classrooms.



At the time of writing the exam dates and contingency date for summer 2022 has not been published. Therefore, we would ask that you assume you will be required in school until the end of the summer term, July 20th 2022. We will notify you when the date is released.

During exam week (2)

- Morning exams start at 9.00 and afternoon exams at 1.00. They may start a few minutes before/after this time. This will be clearly marked on your timetable. Exams have a 'published start time' and the exam can only be scheduled in a short window around this time.
- In very rare circumstances, the exam may exceed the end of the school day at 3.00pm. If this is to happen, we will notify parents and arrangements will need to be made for children who catch buses home.
- On your timetable you will be given a seat number. It will help the exam to start promptly if you know your seat and row (eg Row A seat 7). You must sit in the allocated seat. If you arrive at your seat and there is any issue with it, you must raise your hand to speak to an invigilator who may be able to help you. You must not move yourself to a different seat. You will not be in the same seat for every exam so please check before you arrive.
- No bags, mobile phones, electronic devices or **WRIST WATCHES** of any sort are allowed in the exam room. There is a clock visible at all times. You must leave your devices in your bags outside of the hall. Please note that your valuables are your responsibility, and we would ask that you do not bring valuable items to school during the exam weeks when they will be left unattended.
 - Please ensure that any revision notes or any other papers are removed from your blazer and pockets before entering the exam room.
 - Anyone found with a mobile phone on them, even switched off, may be disqualified.



On Exam day

- Students are requested to wait quietly outside the hall. We understand that this is a stressful time and you may want to chat with your friends, however there may be other candidates who are feeling anxious. Please be respectful to your peers.
- You may bring a bottle of water in a clear bottle. No fizzy drinks or other food or drink is permitted, including sweets, cough sweets or chewing gum. Anyone found with these items will have them confiscated.
- As soon as you enter the exam room you must be in, and remain in, exam conditions. This means **No talking or communicating with any other candidates**, even nonverbal communication or attempting to make others laugh.
 - On your desk will be your paper, answer booklet if needed and your candidate card. Your candidate card must remain on your desk, visible to the invigilators at all times. Please do not doodle on or deface your candidate card as it is a means of identifying you and is a requirement of JCQ. If students deface their cards and they need to be replaced, this may incur a charge.



On exams day (2)

- You will be given an opportunity to hand in any unauthorised materials before the exam starts if you have brought them in error. This includes phones, written notes, flashcards, or anything in pencil cases that has writing on.
- Please refrain from writing on your hands as you will be asked to remove any writing from your hands with wipes before the exam begins. You may need to have your hands photographed if the ink will not come off.



The Invigilators

- The invigilation team are there to help you. They are experienced and trained professionals who have worked in exams for many years. You must listen carefully to the instructions they give you and any information they have to give you about the exam or the paper.
- If you need to attract the attention of an invigilator, raise your hand and wait for someone to come to you. Do not leave your seat without the invigilator's permission.
- You must raise your hand to speak to them if you have any concerns or issues during the exam.
- Please note, the invigilator cannot:
 - Read any part of the paper to you except the front page
 - Tell you how to spell a word
 - Tell you what a word means or tell you that you are correct
 - Give you any help in any form for any part of your exam.
 - Let you leave or move seat without good reason
- Our invigilators are trained members of staff and as such they have authority to challenge students' behaviour where they deem it necessary.
- The priority of the invigilator is to ensure fairness and integrity of the exam paper, and the safety of our students.



The invigilators (2)

- You will be instructed to write on the front of your paper and to read the instructions. You need to check that you have the correct subject, paper and tier.
- If you have an answer booklet you will need to fill in the details on there as well. If, during the course of the exam, you use any additional sheets of paper, these must be named and numbered.
- The invigilators will read through a script that gives you all the information you need for your exam. Then they will tell you to start, and will write the start and finish time of the exam on the board. If you cannot see the board clearly, please notify an invigilator.
- All candidates will remain in the hall for the published duration of the exam. No one will be allowed to leave early. If you have finished your paper, use the time to check, add additional points, or check your SPaG. Any students who are found to be drawing on the desk, their hands, or the blank pages of their paper will be asked to stop and their names given to subject tutors. We would also ask students to refrain from laying their head on the desk.
 - If you qualify for extra time (see access arrangements) then you do not have to stay for the duration of the ET but you still must stay for the published duration.



Toilet breaks

- Please ensure that you use the toilet before the start of your exam. Toilet breaks are permitted but they are disruptive to both you and your peers and we ask that you try not to take a toilet break if at all possible. You will not be given the time you miss, unless your toilet break is part of an adjustment made for you (for example if you have a medical condition).
- It is the invigilators' discretion to offer a toilet break. Depending on ratios of staff to students, they may be unable to leave the hall. We will not give toilet breaks in the first 30 minutes or the last 15 minutes of an exam. If the exam is 60 minutes or less, or uses a recorded script (eg Music) then no breaks will be permitted at all. You will be supervised during the break, escorted to the toilet door and back to the hall.



- If you have a medical need to use the toilet more frequently, please ensure that you notify Mrs Craig (Exams Officer) so we can ensure that the necessary information is provided to the invigilators.

Students who are late for exams

- The rules concerning lateness are set by JCQ and therefore we must adhere to them for all formal exams. During our mock exams, we aim to follow the JCQ rules as closely as possible so that students have a realistic experience of what will be expected of them.
- Therefore, during formal and mock exams, we ask that:
- Students arrive on time for school (8.45) on exam days, attend registration, and then reach the exam hall by 8.55. this will allow exams to start promptly at 9.00 am
- Students who travel to school by car or bus and who may be affected by traffic, notify school as soon as possible and leave a message for Mrs Craig.
- If you arrive up to 60 minutes after the published start time, where possible, you will be admitted to the exam.
- Your time will start once you have completed the necessary admin and you will be given, and be expected to stay for, the full time allowed, even if this means you remain in the hall once everyone else has left.



Students who arrive **very late** for exams

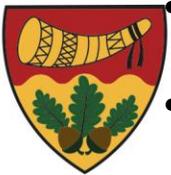
- If you arrive more than 1 hr after the published start time of the exam, or after the end of an exam for those lasting less than 60 minutes, you will be considered very late.
- Where possible, during Mock exams, we will allow you to sit the paper.
- During summer (formal) exams, the decision will be made on a case by case basis and we may need to consult the Awarding body.

- Please note that it is entirely at the discretion of the Centre whether candidates arriving late will be allowed to sit the exam.
- **If you do arrive late, it is a requirement of JCQ that you are offered the full duration of the paper even if you finish early.**
- During the school year, the office team will be working closely with Personal development tutors to identify those students who demonstrate frequent lateness. It is important that you arrive at school on time every day.
- Please note that students arriving late can disrupt the hall significantly. You may be seating in an alternative location to avoid this.
- Exams requiring a recording (eg. Music, MFL) may need to be offered in a separate room. You would need to remain in school in isolation and exam conditions until this can be facilitated.



After you exam has finished

- You will be given a five-minute warning before the end of your exam.
 - The invigilators will ask you to put down your pens which you must do immediately.
 - You must close your paper and wait for further instructions.
 - The papers will be collected in; this may be according to candidate number or in your class groups, so listen for instructions and raise your paper to be collected. Answer books will be collected separately. Once all papers are collected, you will be dismissed from the hall in your rows.
 - There may be times when there are candidates who are still working when your exam finishes. Please show them courtesy by leaving IN SILENCE and as quickly and carefully as possible.
- Once in the corridors, you need to remain calm and collect your bags. You will be able to get a drink and have your break etc if timetabled, so please follow the instructions.
 - You will not be allowed to re-enter the exam room once you have left.



NEA (non examined assessments)

- Some courses have non-examined components, such as practical assessments for Food or Art, or speaking assessments in MFL or English
- Your final grade is made up of scores from exams, and coursework, portfolio, practical or composition work.
- Your subject tutors will advise you on this is it applies to your course.
 - There are rules set by JCQ regarding Non-examined assessments and how they can be carried out.
 - If you study a course that has non-examined elements, we will provide the JCQ information that is relevant to your course.



COVID precautions

- The COVID pandemic and the regulations for schools may change at any time. The exam room will reflect the wider school policy such as the use of face masks in classrooms or social distancing. We will notify you as soon as we hear of any changes. Please feel free to bring your hand sanitiser if you wish to use it. We will not permit facemasks in the exam room for candidates.
- The invigilators may wear facemasks and/or visors if they wish to.

- If you develop COVID symptoms, please follow the current guidance regarding testing and self-isolation. Please notify school as soon as possible if you develop COVID symptoms during the exam weeks.



JCQ posters

- **Please read and familiarise yourself with the following JCQ posters. Please note the change to the wrist watch policy – NO WATCHES ARE ALLOWED. We strongly urge that if your watch is especially sentimental or valuable that you do not wear it at all on exam days as your valuables will be unattended during the exams. Your items are brought to school entirely at your own risk.**



JCQ posters



RIDGEWAY
SECONDARY SCHOOL



AQA City & Guilds CCEA OCR Pearson WJEC

NO MOBILE PHONES WATCHES MP3/4 PLAYERS

NO POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL/WEB
ENABLED SOURCES OF INFORMATION



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.

This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.

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AQA	City & Guilds	CCEA	OCR	Pearson	WJEC
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Warning to Candidates

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 exam/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, only speak to an invigilator.

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.

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Emergency evacuation and safety

- In the event of a fire alarm, close your paper immediately, put down your pen and await further instructions.
 - DO NOT LEAVE YOUR SEAT.
 - DO NOT TALK.
 - The exam team will note the time remaining and all remaining time will be given once the exam resumes. In formal exams, we will notify the exam board that an evacuation took place, which will be taken into account when marking your papers.
 - The exams team will establish the cause of the alarm, and if evacuation is necessary, they will dismiss you from the hall to a safe place.
 - You MUST remain in exam conditions- if you are talking to your peers, even if it is not about the exam, you may be disqualified.
- Occasionally there can be technical issues and other situations that arise in the exam hall.
 - Please listen carefully to the instructions given by the invigilators.
 - In the event of any unusual situation (power cut, alarms etc) please do not communicate with any other students. Try to stay calm, and remain seated to wait for instructions.
 - Any time lost will be added at the end of the exam.



Student well-being during exams

- Our students' well being is important to us and we hope you find your exam experience a positive one.
- There are things you can do to improve your well-being at this time, such as taking regular gentle exercise, having time out from school-work to recharge your batteries, eating well and getting plenty of sleep.
- If you feel that you are becoming stressed then please speak to our pastoral team, your personal development tutor or the exams team and we can offer you some support.
- We do understand that for some students, exam anxiety is a real and debilitating condition that can affect their performance in the exam, therefore please come to the Exams office or speak to your personal development tutor if you feel anxious. There are things we can do such as put you at the front or back or by the window which may help you to feel less anxious.



Additional support during exams

- Some students will be eligible for additional support with their exams. You may have already received a form to fill in regarding this. You may already be aware of the support you are going to have, particularly if you normally have support during your school day. This could be for example extra time in the exam, a rest break, a coloured or enlarged copy of the exam paper, or a specific location in the hall due to your physical or emotional needs.
- Some candidates will have a dedicated one to one invigilator who will read or scribe for them, or a separate small exam room if they suffer with anxiety. We call these 'Access Arrangements'.
 - If you feel that you need access arrangements in place and we have not already discussed them with you, please contact Mrs Craig via email and we can discuss the options available to you.
- If you are awarded Access arrangements for your Mock exams or summer exams, you will be notified before the exam week begins.
- The invigilators will know which students are allowed to have adjustments made.
- You do not have to use the arrangements if you don't want to
- After mock exams we will look at the arrangements that were put in place for you, and consider how useful they were to you. We might make changes to the arrangements for future exams .
- Please note that Access arrangements must reflect your normal way of working in school, and it is normal to have them in some subjects but not others.
- You may be asked to give feedback after the exams

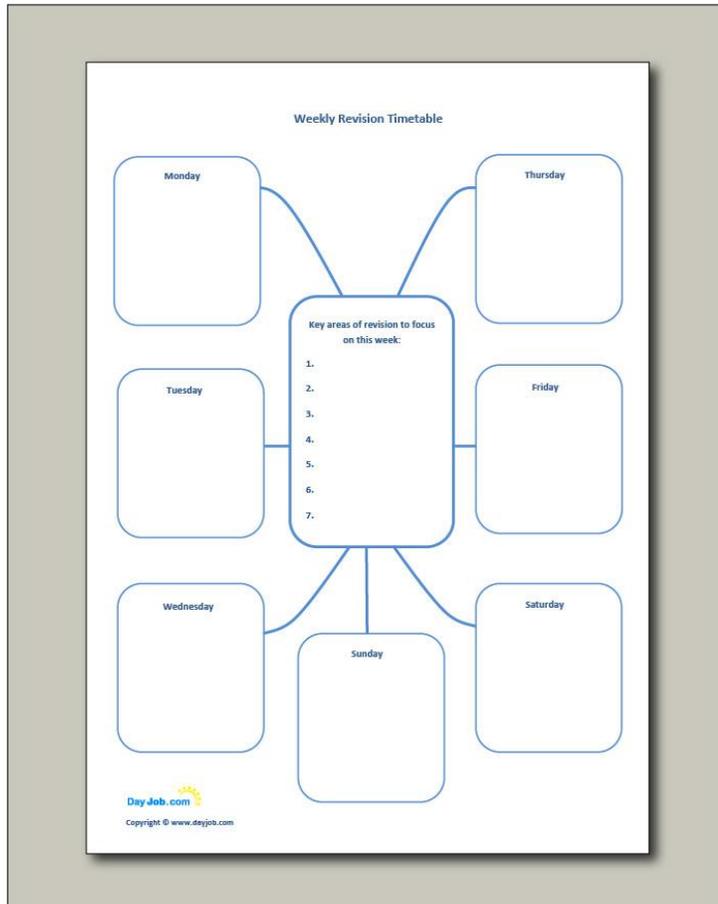


Special considerations

- Sometimes things occur without notice that can affect the way a student performs on the day of an exam. This could be a bereavement or other upsetting incident occurring before the exam, or an ongoing or recurring health condition which is either active prior to exams or flares up during the exam season.
- If you feel that you require special consideration due to any situation arising such as this, please contact Mrs Craig at the earliest possible opportunity, ideally before the exam but as soon as possible afterwards if not.
 - Please note that if it is a medical condition (such as hayfever) we will need to see proof in the form of a doctor's note and will need to share this information with the examination boards. If you suffer from any long term, ongoing conditions then it is helpful if we know about these as soon as possible. Please send an email to Mrs Craig detailing the information.



Revision timetable



- You can collect a paper copy of a revision timetable from the noticeboard outside the exams office

