



West Hill School

Aiming High Since 1927

Year 11 GCSE Guide to Exams 2024-2025

Centre Name: West Hill School, Stalybridge

Centre Number: 33555



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Introduction

This booklet has been designed to outline expectations and practice around the GCSE period. Hopefully, all Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are covered within the booklet. If you have any questions, unanswered, please use the list below of key contacts and areas of responsibility. The contact details below are referred to throughout the booklet, as your key staff/contact details to use.

Key Staff within Year 11 Exams:

Exams Officer - Mrs Hemmings for questions relating to the exam series, entries and timetables: hemmings@westhillschool.co.uk

Attendance Officer/Assistant Head of Year - Ms Sykes for queries relating to absence or supporting absence: SSykes@westhillschool.co.uk

SENDCo and Medical Support – Mr O'Dowd for queries relating to SEND modifications/support, SEMH concerns or medical notes/injuries affecting exam performance: odowd@westhillschool.co.uk

Curriculum Deputy Headteacher – Mr Butterworth for queries relating to curriculum, further queries or issues: Butterworth@westhillschool.co.uk

Head of Year – Ms Largey for all other queries relating to your son:
Largey@westhillschool.co.uk

Dates:

Proposed 'leavers' day which marks the last formal day where all students must attend school every day is **Wednesday 11th June 2025**. As of Thursday 12th June, students attend for the remaining exams only, in full uniform.

Wednesday 18th June 2025 is the last, scheduled exam for boys at West Hill.

The Year 11 Leavers Party is planned for Tuesday 24th June 2025.

The national GCSE contingency day is Wednesday 25th June 2025 whereby any national GCSE papers may be rescheduled to, if any national error has occurred.

Your GCSE results day is: Thursday 21st August from 9:30am-12pm in the Canteen.



FAQ

Exam Timetable

What should I check on my son's exam timetable?

Check that all the details on **your** son's individual exam timetable are correct. This will be issued with this booklet.

- ✓ Your son's **legal** names are spelt correctly
- ✓ Date of birth is correct
- ✓ Ensure the exams your son is entered for are the correct subject, unit and tier e.g. higher or foundation

Please let the Exams Officer know as soon as possible if there is an error with any of the details listed on your timetable. You can find the Exams Officer, in person, in the Reception Office.

Exam Clashes

What happens if there are two exams scheduled on the same day, at the same time?

If you notice an exam clash, you and your son will be contacted on an individual basis by the Exams Officer, who will explain the arrangements put in place for you.

The usual process is that the longest exam will be completed first. A short, supervised break is then given to the student, without access to mobile phones, before the second exam is then undertaken. Please note, this may result in a later school day.

The exam board try their best to avoid clashes but with the volume of GCSE entries and variety of exams, normally there are 2-3 clashes per exam series for a minority of students and this cannot be altered.

Please contact the Exams Officer directly if you are unsure of the arrangements for your son.



Exam Venues and Seating Plans

How will my son find out where he will be sitting for the exams?

Seating plans are displayed in the Canteen and Main Hall windows, at least a week before exams and remain there all week, taken down once the exam is completed. There will also be a copy outside the main exam venue eg. Sports Hall. Form Tutors are also sent the details so that students can query any seats each morning.

The exam venue will also be clearly labelled for your son.

It is very important that your son sits in the correct seat to prevent the risk of an incorrect paper being issued.

Additionally, please discuss with your son the importance of him checking his seat in the morning before his exam.

What time do the AM and PM exams begin?

We aim for morning exams to commence at 9:15am, with early arrival and supervised revision suggested from 8am on exam mornings. Afternoon exams commence at 1:15pm with the school moving to an early lunch for all boys to ensure minimum disruption of sound to exam venues.

Equipment

What equipment should my son have?

He should bring:

- ✓ **Two black pens**
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Rubber
- ✓ Ruler
- ✓ Any other equipment needed for your exam notably a scientific calculator/ mathematical instruments.

Only **clear pencil cases** are allowed on the student desk.

All other type of pencil cases and **calculator lids** must be left in bags.

If any items are forgotten, your son should make their way to the appropriate subject teacher or **Student Reception** to borrow equipment before the exam begins. If this does not occur, they should raise their hand to request to borrow items from the exam team, in the exam hall.



Behaviour Expectations in the Exam Venue:

- ✓ Your son must not use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in **answers**.
- ✓ Any diagrams or pictures should be drawn in pencil.
- ✓ Students should draw a single neat line through the work that they do not want to be marked.
- ✓ It is the student's responsibility to clear the memory in the calculator and remove calculator lids.
- ✓ School uniform should be worn throughout the exam series.
- ✓ No food is allowed in the exam room.
- ✓ Students can bring a 500ml bottle of water in a clear transparent bottle only. Colours or writing are not allowed on the bottle. Please ensure all labels are removed from bottles.
- ✓ **Visit the toilet before all exams.** Students are not allowed a toilet break for an hour after the exam has started, and students should avoid leaving the exam venue for any toilet breaks as their time is limited (except students with medical passes/conditions).

Fire Alarm

What if the fire alarms sounds during the exam:

- ✓ If the fire alarm sounds during the examination the invigilators will tell students what to do.
- ✓ If the exam room needs to be evacuated your son will be asked to leave in complete silence and in the order they were sitting.
- ✓ Students will be taken to the evacuation point.
- ✓ Students leave **EVERYTHING** on their desk.
- ✓ Students **DO NOT** speak to anyone else and when they return.
- ✓ Students **DO NOT RESUME WRITING** until they have been told to do so. This is for record-keeping to ensure exact time is given.
- ✓ Students will still get the full working time.



Absence for Examinations

Please note, absence from exams should be rare within the whole school. Most schools have zero absences throughout the exam period.

What happens if my son is ill on the morning of an exam?

Exam boards rarely accept general sickness as a reason to be absent from an exam. The level of sickness should be that which needs a hospital visit or a visit to a walk-in centre, as a minimum. **General colds are not deemed acceptable enough to miss an exam.** This would need evidence from the relevant practitioner to be sent into Mr O'Dowd. You should call the Attendance Officer on the morning of the exam, outlining the illness and actions taken. Bed rest is not suffice, it must be severe enough to seek medical attention, otherwise, they should attend school with a negotiated agreement to leave school once the exam is completed to rest. This can be agreed with the Attendance Officer as you call the office on the morning of the exam.

My son has been hospitalised or to a walk-on centre from missing an exam(s), what should I do next?

Please contact the Attendance Officer, making us aware of the condition and update us each morning or afternoon on progress and intended return. Evidence will be required from the medical practitioners so that Mr O'Dowd can appeal for a grade still to be issued. We must advise that the exam board may not honour the request and your son may receive an 'X' meaning he is entered for the paper but has not attended, gaining 0 marks on this paper.

What happens if my son misses an exam without medical evidence for the absence?

Your son will receive an 'X' on the missed exam, meaning the exam has been missed. This means that the exam mark will be 0 marks making it harder to grade within the remaining papers. This is dependent on the exam paper weighting of any missed exams. E.g. if the missed exam is worth 50% of the overall course, then 50% of the total is 0 marks.

If you are absent from your exam and no reason is presented, you will be charged the cost of the GCSE paper that has been missed, average of £50 per paper.



What happens if my son is late for an exam?

This should be a rarity. Please contact the Attendance Officer who will support, as needed, in getting your son on time, as best we can. Students will be able to access the exam

If you are late for your exam, please report to the Exams Officer who will ensure you have the required facilities to sit your exam.

What happens if my son gets an injury such as a broken limb or sprain?

Please contact Mr O'Dowd in the immediacy whereby an alternative room and/or laptop or scribe will be issued. Medical evidence must be sent into school in order for us to support this need and provision.

Please be aware that if your family and/or son is going through family hardship such as family bereavements, please contact Ms Largey, as Head of Year, in the first instance. Based on the level of information provided, as a school we would appeal for a consideration from the exam board to consider the additional stress and wellbeing of a student to be considered, with a potential discretionary leniency of mark boundaries (e.g. 5% increase in raw marks) etc. We are here to help so please ensure we are kept up to date.

Results and Certificates

When will I collect my certificates?

GCSE results are due for collection on Thursday 21st August 2025.

Result will be available to candidates in the Canteen from 9.30am.

If you cannot come to collect your results in person, they will be posted out to you that afternoon.

If you wish for someone else to pick them up on your son's behalf, please get your son to send a signed note authorising and naming the individual who will be collecting them. In addition, the person who is collecting your results must bring some ID with them even if this is a parent. If you do not send a signed note then we will not be able to release your son's results.



Post Results Information

What if your son is unhappy with the results, have any questions, or still need help?

There is a process for appeal if your son is unhappy with the grade. Your son will need to contact the Exams Officer outlining the subject(s) or paper that he is unhappy with. We will advise if the school can support your son's request for a review, paid by us. For some, we may request that this paid for by you. If your son decides to request a review of marking please be aware your son's grade may go down, as well as up. Mrs Hemmings, Exams Officer can provide the cost and appropriate candidate request form.

Where we have students within 1-3 marks of the next, significant grade boundary for post-16 options, we will contact your son to request his consent to apply for a review of paper(s).

If your son would like to access the post results service and obtain the correct consent form please contact the Exams Officer. He must then return the completed and signed form with payment (if required) to Mrs Hemmings no later than **3.00pm on Friday, 19th September 2025**.

My son's grades are lower/higher than I expected them to be. What should I do?

Please contact your son's college/apprenticeship placement. Your son will have already received information from Mrs Appleby, and will be available to provide appropriate guidance and support.

Your results slip is not your final GCSE certificates (that will be needed for future employment and recruitment). Details will follow around the Autumn 2025 invite to return to school with your son, and his peers, to collect their formal certificates on the evening. Any uncollected will be left in reception for collection. Details will follow.



JCQ Candidate Information (all these documents are available on the school website)

You can see JCQ information on our website, please follow this link:

<https://www.westhillschool.co.uk/examinformation>

JCQ Unauthorised items poster

Warning to Candidate poster

Information for candidates – Coursework Assessment

Information for candidates – Non-examination assessments

Information for candidates – Written examinations

Information for candidates – On-screen tests

Information for candidates – Using social media and examinations/ assessment

Information for candidate – see overleaf – JCQ Preparing to sit exams

AI Poster for Students



On your exam day

This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams so that you can focus on doing your best on the day.

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.
- who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam.

What you will need:

- a clear pencil case
- at least two black ink pens – blue pens are **not acceptable**
- an approved calculator for relevant exams
- appropriate apparatus such as a ruler or protractor for relevant exams
- a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in – it **must not** have a label



What you cannot take into exams:

- any type of phone
- revision notes
- any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)



Other important information:

- Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to respond.
- Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- If you need additional answer sheets, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will provide you with one. Remember to add your details to this booklet.
- If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will escort you from the exam room.
- Remember to stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

Contingency sessions:

- There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2025 exam timetable – the afternoon of 11 June 2025 and the morning and afternoon of 25 June 2025. Make sure you are available on all three dates even if you do not have an exam.

If you have any questions about your exams, please ask your teacher or exams officer.



You can also find useful information about preparing for exams at www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

EFFECTIVE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2024