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Ethos Academy Trust

Candidate Exam Handbook

2025-2026



Nurturing inclusive learning communities



1	Summary	This handbook details all the relevant information candidates will need to know in relation to their exams.			
2	Responsible person	Head of Centre / Exams Officer			
3	Accountable ELT member	Mel Kilner			
4	Applies to	Ethos College			
5	Trustees and/or individuals who have overseen development of this policy	N/A			
6	Headteachers/Service Heads who were consulted and have given approval (if applicable)	Mel Kilner			
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Date	Version	Action	Summary of changes
01/10/23	2.1	Minor Addition	Added earphones/buds to list of what should not be brought into the exam room. Section 15 AI Misuse Section 24
01/10/24	2.2	Minor Addition	Candidates must not be in possession of smart glasses and any other smart devices
10/12/25	2.3	No Additions	

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1. Introduction

Ethos College is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the exam and assessment processes in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

2. Purpose of the candidate exam handbook

- ▶ To complement the candidate briefing session (given by group staff)
- ▶ To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- ▶ To ensure copies of relevant JCQ “Information for candidates” documents and posters are provided in advance of any exams/assessments being taken
- ▶ To answer any questions candidates may have etc.

3. Coursework/non-examination assessments

Some qualifications offered by Ethos College involve elements of coursework or non-examination assessments. These elements provide candidates with an opportunity to do some independent research into a topic. The research may involve looking for information in published sources such as textbooks, encyclopaedias, journals, TV, radio and on the internet. Using information from published sources (including the internet) as the basis for an assignment is a good way to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a subject.

- ▶ Relevant JCQ information for candidates documents are contained in the appendices to this document
- ▶ Assessments take place throughout the year – teachers will provide candidates with relevant dates and deadlines
- ▶ Work is marked/assessed by the subject teacher and then checked by another member of staff (who ensures that the mark scheme has been applied correctly)
- ▶ For all non-examination assessments candidates will be informed of their centre assessed marks at least two weeks before the submission deadline
- ▶ If a candidate believes that marking and authentication have not been done correctly there is a procedure for appealing an internal assessment decision and requesting a review of the centre’s marking – details are available from the Exams Officer
- ▶ Coursework etc. is sent to an external moderator who checks that the centre’s marking has been done correctly. At this point a candidate’s mark may go up or down. This process is outside the control of Ethos College

4. Contingency Period

The exams for summer 2025 will take place from 5th May 2025 through to 20th June 2025. Candidates are advised to remain available to sit exams up to and including 26th June 2025 as that is the contingency day.

5. Covid-19 Measures in place for exams

Please see Appendix 9 for all measures we have put in place for exams taking place during the pandemic. These measures will only be implemented under guidance from the government.

6. Written exams

Written exams take place throughout the year. The following information is available to candidates:

- ▶ Entries are made using the candidate's legal name, not a preferred name
- ▶ Individual candidate exam timetables are issued at least one month before the first exam. Candidates are asked to check that all details are correct. A coloured copy of the timetable will be issued at the same time and candidates are requested to sign and return this to the Exams Officer. If unsure of any of the details, candidates must see the Exams Officer immediately
- ▶ Centre exam timetables will be on display in the corridor outside the Exam Store Room before and during the exam period. Exam room information is included on the timetable. This may be subject to change – candidates must check regularly
- ▶ Seating plans for each room are given to the invigilator before the start of the exam. The invigilator will direct candidates to their desk
- ▶ The JCQ information for candidates documents – see appendices
- ▶ Exam room posters - Warning to candidates, No unauthorised items - see appendices

7. Two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (an exam clash)

The Exams Officer will identify any clashes of exams and re-arrange the start times before candidate exam timetables are issued.

Where possible the exams will take place on the same day. In order to maintain security, candidates who are affected by this will be kept under supervision by centre staff for the applicable time period. Candidates will not be allowed to use mobile phones or any device which has access to the internet.

Any candidates affected by timetable clashes will receive additional information from the Exams Officer re rest breaks and revision between exams. Different regulations apply depending on the timings and duration of such exams.

8. Additional information for off-site / transfer candidates

Off-site/transfer candidates will be asked to bring a form of photographic ID for the purposes of identification. They will be asked to show this to the Exams Officer who will also store any personal belongings (including phones and watches) for them during the exam. The Exams Officer will escort the candidate to the exam room and introduce them to the invigilator.

9. Where you will take your exams

Exams are held in any of the centre's available rooms. The location of each exam is identified on the Centre Exam Timetable displayed in the corridor outside the Exam Store Room.

10. What time your exams will start and finish

Written exams take place at the following times:

- ▶ Morning – 9.30 am. Candidates must wait quietly outside the exam room by **9.20 am**. The invigilator will direct everyone to their seat and read out the instructions before starting the exam
- ▶ Afternoon – 1.00 pm. Candidates must be outside the exam room by **12.55 pm**
- ▶ The duration of each exam paper is clearly indicated on the paper itself and the exam start/end times will also be displayed on the notice board in each exam room
- ▶ Candidates must stay under supervision until 10.00 am for a morning exam or 2.30 pm for an afternoon exam.
- ▶ If a candidate chooses to leave the exam early they will be supervised by a member of staff until 10.00 am for a morning exam or 2.30 pm for an afternoon exam
- ▶ Candidates who choose to end the exam early will not be allowed back in to the exam room

11. Supervision during your exams

Candidates will be supervised at all times by at least one invigilator in the room.

- ▶ Exams are supervised by centre staff who have been fully trained
- ▶ The rules state that subject teaching staff may not be present in the exam room before or during an exam in their subject
- ▶ Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams as directed by JCQ awarding bodies etc. They may not help candidates in any way

12. Exam conditions

Candidates are asked to make their way to the exam room in a quiet manner, to be on time and wait quietly outside until the invigilator asks them to enter.

- ▶ Candidates may not wear coats, hats or have hoods up during exams
- ▶ Candidates may not wear a watch during exams. Watches must be handed to group staff for secure storage before going to the exam room
- ▶ Candidates are under exam conditions from the moment they enter the exam room until they are given permission to leave by the invigilator. This means that candidates must be silent for the duration of the exam
- ▶ If a candidate wishes to speak to the invigilator they must raise their hand and wait for the member of staff to come to them

- ▶ Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator at all times in the exam room
- ▶ Candidates must not communicate with other candidates. They must face the front of the room at all times
- ▶ The following information is displayed in the exam room: centre number, date of exam, start and finish times, exam title, and evacuation procedures. A clock is also provided
- ▶ The invigilator will instruct candidates to complete the front of their answer books (legal first name, surname, centre number, candidate number, paper details, and signature if required). Candidates may not complete these details until told to do so
- ▶ Candidates must not open the question paper until the examination begins
- ▶ The invigilator will inform candidates about the use of additional answer sheets / answer books etc.

13. Where you will sit in the exam room

The invigilator will have the seating plan for the room and will direct candidates to their seats.

14. What equipment you need to bring to your exams

Ethos College provides all necessary equipment for all exams and ensures that it complies with all regulations.

If candidates wish to provide their own equipment it should be in a clear plastic pencil case. Please note:

- ▶ Pens – must be black permanent ink (no gel pens or erasable ink)
- ▶ Rulers – must be clear plastic with cm/mm markings only (no inches)
- ▶ Calculators - see paragraph 15

15. What you should not bring into the exam room

Candidates may not bring any of the following in to the exam room:

- ▶ revision notes, study guides, dictionaries etc.
- ▶ own blank paper for rough work
- ▶ any prohibited annotations
- ▶ technological/web enabled sources of information such as iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, and smartwatches
- ▶ any type of wrist watch
- ▶ any items that are not specified on the exam paper instructions/stationery list
- ▶ calculators for exam papers where these are not allowed
- ▶ Ear phones or ear buds
- ▶ Smart Glasses
- ▶ Any other Smart device

If a candidate brings any unauthorised materials in to the exam room then all such materials must be handed to the invigilator before the exam starts.

If a candidate has access to any unauthorised items during the exam this is considered as malpractice. This will be reported to the awarding body. Depending on the severity of the offence, penalties range from a warning, to loss of marks or disqualification. In some cases, candidates can be barred from entering exams for a set period of time.

16. Using calculators

Candidates must be aware of JCQ awarding body instructions regarding the use of calculators in exams.

Candidates may use a calculator in an examination unless prohibited by the awarding body's specification. Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.

Calculators must be:

- 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.

The candidate is responsible for the following:

- the calculator's power supply;
- the calculator's working condition;
- clearing anything stored in the calculator.

Calculators must not:

- be designed or adapted to offer any of these facilities: -

- 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:

- databanks;
- dictionaries;
- mathematical formulas;
- text.

[Taken from *JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations*, Section 10.3]

17. Food and drink in exam rooms

Ethos College will provide each candidate with a refillable plastic bottle at the start of the exams. **It is the candidate's responsibility to refill their bottle with water and bring it with them to every exam.** The Exams Officer will write the candidate's name on the base of the bottle.

Ethos College also provides sweets for longer exams (of at least 1¼ hours' duration). Sweets are provided in plastic cups with all other packaging removed.

Candidates may **not** bring any other food or drink (including juice) to the exam room.

18. Toilet breaks

Candidates are reminded to go to the toilet before going to the exam room. Toilet breaks are allowed but the time taken will not be added on at the end of the exam. Candidates will only be allowed to leave the room one at a time and will be accompanied by a member of staff.

19. What to do if you arrive late for an exam

Candidates who arrive late (within the first thirty minutes following the start of an exam) will be allowed to take the exam and will be allowed the full time.

If possible, a separate room will be provided in order to minimise disruption to other candidates who have already started the exam. This is at the Centre's discretion.

Candidates who arrive after 10.00 am for a morning exam or after 2.30 pm for an afternoon exam will be considered **very late**. The Exams Officer must report the arrival time and reason for late arrival to the awarding body. The Exams Officer will warn the candidate that the awarding body may not accept their work (if, for example, it is felt that security may have been breached).

Please contact the centre asap if you are running late for an exam.

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

Candidates who are unable to attend due to an acceptable reason must phone the centre as early as possible. Written evidence (for example, a medical note) will be requested. For candidates who are absent for acceptable reasons the *Special Consideration* guidance will be followed.

In cases where no message has been received re absence group staff will inform the Exams Officer and phone the candidate to establish the reason.

Candidates who become unwell during the exam will be allowed a supervised rest break. This time will be added to the end of the exam if the candidate is able to continue. If a candidate is unable to continue, the exam will end and the exam script will be submitted to the awarding body. The *Special Consideration* guidance will be followed.

21. What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from an exam

If a candidate fails to arrive at the centre by the end of the exam they will be marked as absent and no marks will be awarded for the paper. Candidates who fail to attend for all papers (in a subject) may be withdrawn from the exam.

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

The centre's emergency evacuation procedure is displayed in each exam room – see appendices.

The Exams Officer will submit a Request for Special Consideration to the awarding body in the event of disruption to the exam.

23. Candidates with access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment or examination. They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment/exam and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment/exam.

- ▶ Group staff and the SENDCO assess candidates and gather evidence to demonstrate the normal way of working. If required, the SENDCO then applies for the relevant access arrangements
- ▶ The SENDCO informs the candidates about approved arrangements that will be put in place for exams and discusses any instances when these arrangements may not apply
- ▶ Where a candidate will be seated for a particular exam depends on the type of access arrangement that is in place. If necessary a separate room will be provided
- ▶ Access arrangements will only be granted in exams if they reflect the “normal way of working” in class and have also been used during mock exams. Ethos College must withdraw any access arrangements for exams if this is not the case
- ▶ The invigilator will be aware of any candidates who are entitled to Supervised Rest Breaks. If a candidate wishes to request a break they must hold up their hand and the invigilator will come to them. Breaks may be taken at the desk (with no access to the exam paper during that time) or outside the room, in which case the candidate will be issued with a rest break pass and supervised by another member of staff. The time taken will be allowed at the end of the exam. Candidates may not communicate with staff or other candidates about the exam during a rest break

24. Alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice

Ethos College must report any incidents of malpractice by candidates.

Examples of candidate malpractice include (for example):

- ▶ Allowing work to be copied, i.e. posting work on social networking sites
- ▶ Copying from another candidate
- ▶ Disruptive behaviour in the exam room, including the use of offensive language
- ▶ Allowing others to assist (or assisting others) in the production of coursework/non-examination assessments
- ▶ Being in possession of confidential materials before an exam
- ▶ Plagiarism (copying from or reproduction of published sources)
- ▶ Misuse of AI and using AI without acknowledgement or attribution

This list is not exhaustive – full information is given in the JCQ publication “Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments”.

Depending on the severity of the offence, penalties range from a warning, to loss of marks or disqualification. In some cases candidates can be barred from entering exams for a set period of time. More information can be found in the

- ▶ “Indicative sanctions against candidates” table [Appendix 6 in the JCQ publication [Suspected Malpractice : Policies and Procedures](#)]

25. Results

For exams that take place between November and March candidates will be issued with their provisional statements of results as soon as they are available for release.

Results day for the main summer exams is. A letter with more details about collecting results will be issued during the summer term.

- ▶ The letter will contain details of the times to collect results, how to request results by post, and how to arrange for someone else to collect results if the candidate is unavailable
- ▶ At this stage the results are provisional – they only become final once the all Reviews of Results have been processed
- ▶ Uncollected results will be posted out first class on results day. However, **if a candidate is required to provide evidence of results for a college place we strongly recommend collecting results on the day or making arrangements for a nominated person to collect them**
- ▶ Senior members of centre staff will be available on results day to discuss results with candidates and offer advice re post-results services

26. Post-results services

If the centre, a candidate or parent/carer/guardian has a concern and believes a result may not be accurate, a review of the result (ROR) may be requested. **Candidates are advised that marks may go down** and this is outside the control of Ethos College. The following services are available:

- Service 1 – clerical re-check
- Service 2 – review of marking
- Service 3 – review of moderation (not available to individual candidates)
- Access to Scripts – copies of marked papers to support reviews of marking and for teaching purposes
- ▶ Requests for post-results services must be made through the centre
- ▶ Senior Leaders will discuss the options with candidates on results day
- ▶ The Exams Officer must obtain consent from each candidate. Consent forms will be available to complete on results day. The Exams Officer will request consent for reviews via a candidate's school email address (for those candidates who do not collect their results in person)
- ▶ More detailed information is contained in the document "Post results services – procedures and appeals", which is available from the Exams Officer

27. Certificates

Certificates from all exams taken will be collected, checked, recorded and stored by the Exams Officer.

- ▶ Between November and December certificates will be issued to candidates who are no longer attending the centre. Certificates for candidates who are continuing at the centre will be stored until certificates for all their exams are available
- ▶ A letter is issued to candidates who have left the centre, requesting them to collect and sign for their certificates (within a three week period) or to confirm the address to which certificates should be posted (using a signed for service)
- ▶ The letter also includes details of how to arrange for certificates to be collected on a candidate's behalf if unable to attend the centre
- ▶ Candidates are requested to immediately check their certificates carefully and inform the Exams Officer of any errors

- ▶ Candidates are advised to retain their certificates as they will be required for college/job applications
- ▶ Candidates are advised that it is their responsibility to contact the awarding bodies for replacement certificates (should the candidate lose or damage their originals). Ethos College cannot do this on a candidate's behalf and the candidate will be responsible for any costs incurred
- ▶ Unclaimed certificates will be confidentially destroyed after a period of 12 months from the final date specified for collection of certificates. Candidates will then have to contact the awarding bodies for replacements (at their own cost)

28. Internal appeals procedures

There are two types of internal appeal available to candidates:

- ▶ Internal appeals procedures for centre assessed marks (if a candidate believes that the procedure for marking and checking internally assessed work has been applied incorrectly)
- ▶ Internal appeals procedures for post-results services (if a candidate is unhappy with the centre's decision not to support a review of results)
- ▶ Candidates may request a copy of the procedures and the appeals form from the Exams Officer

29. Complaints and appeals procedure (exams)

Our complaints and appeals procedure (exams) sets out grounds for complaint under the following headings:

- ▶ Teaching and learning
- ▶ Access arrangements
- ▶ Entries
- ▶ Conducting examinations
- ▶ Results and post-results

Formal complaints should be submitted on the **complaints and appeals form**, which is available from the Exams Officer (together with the complaints and appeals procedure).

Appendix A: Links to JCQ information for candidates

[JCQ Information for candidates - coursework](#)

[JCQ Information for candidates – non-examination assessments](#)

[JCQ Information exams for candidates – written](#)

[JCQ Information for candidates – Social Media](#)

The above policies are available in hardcopy in each classroom and have been emailed to all candidates.

Appendix B: Unauthorised items poster

This poster will be displayed outside the exam room



Appendix C: JCQ *Warning to Candidates* poster

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note all the warnings.

Warning to candidates



 AQA	 City & Guilds	 CCEA	 NCFE	 OCR	 Pearson	 WJEC
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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 examination or 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.

Appendix D: Ethos College Emergency Evacuation Procedures for exams

This poster will be displayed in each exam room.

The invigilator must take the following action in an emergency such as fire alarm or bomb alert (as detailed in the current JCQ <i>Instructions for conducting examinations</i> , section 25, <i>Emergencies</i>)
Stop the candidates from writing
Candidates must be advised to <u>close</u> their answer booklet. Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room
Collect the seating plan (on which attendance is marked) in order to ensure all candidates are present
Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the Fire Marshall
Candidates should leave the room in silence
Ensure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination
Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
Return to the examination room first (lead the candidates in to the exam room)
Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
If there are only a few candidates, the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination will be considered
Make a full report of the incident, start and end times, and of the action taken on the Incident Log.

