

St Albans Girls' School



GCSE EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

Public Exams Summer 2026



Shaping Tomorrow, Today

INTRODUCTION

This booklet aims to provide important information as well as key points to remember to guide you through the public examination period.

Please take time to read the guidance because it will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams and allow you to focus on doing your best on the day.

The STAGS [website](#) also contains useful information about examinations, including the [JCO Information for Candidates - written exams 2025 -2026](#)

As Exams Officer I am happy to help with any questions or concerns. If there is anything that you are not sure about, please come to the exams office or get in touch.

Phone: 01727 853134 Option 2

Email: exams@stags.aetrust.uk

Mrs Maddison, Exams Officer: maddisonm@stags.aetrust.uk

Mrs Lavelle, Assistant Exams Officer: lavellea@stags.aetrust.uk

Best wishes



Mrs Maddison
Examinations Officer



STUDY LEAVE

Your last day of school is on Thursday 30 April 2026 - this is your Year 11 Celebration Day



During study leave you can come into school at any point during the school day. You **MUST** sign in and sign out via student reception. It is important that in the event of a fire we know where you are in the building.

If you are staying on the school premises before or after an examination you **MUST** attend your scheduled lessons as per your timetable. A member of staff will be in the room to supervise you.

TIMETABLE

Your individual candidate timetable with details of the dates of your examinations, where they are taking place and your seat number can be found in Edulink.

It is a good idea to print a copy of your timetable.

It is essential that you understand your timetable:

- It is **YOUR** responsibility to arrive for your examinations on the right day and at the right time
- Please ensure any queries regarding timetables are dealt with straight away by visiting the exams office
- An exam **CANNOT** be rescheduled to another day if a candidate misses an exam or is very late

CENTRE NUMBER

The centre number for St Albans Girls' School is **17519**.

This is used by all candidates on the front of their answer booklets.

CANDIDATE NUMBER

You have a unique four digit exam number which is also used by all candidates on the front of their answer booklets.

Your candidate number can be found on your timetable.

It can also be found on your desk label in the exam room. Please check the desk label to ensure you are entering the correct centre number and candidate number.

EXAMINATION START TIMES

Morning examinations start time is **8:45am** and afternoon examinations start time is **1pm**.

It takes time to seat all candidates so you must arrive at the examination room **15** minutes before the start of the exam – this means students need to be lining up at **8:30am** and at **12:45pm**.

Once candidates have been asked to be silent they are under exam conditions and you must remain silent whilst entering the exam room.



LUNCH

If you have an afternoon exam, lunch will be available in the Restaurant during Lesson 3.

Alternatively, you may prefer to bring a packed lunch on the days you have an afternoon exam

WHAT IF I AM LATE?

If there is an emergency that makes you late please contact the school as soon as possible.

A candidate is considered **very** late if they arrive one hour after the published starting time of the exam:

- If a candidate arrives very late for an examination they will be able to sit the exam, however the awarding body might **not** accept their work
- The awarding body will consider each case individually in light of statements from parents/carers, the candidate and the school
- Be aware that misreading the timetable or being caught in 'normal' traffic is not considered acceptable reasons for being very late

EXAMINATION CLASHES

If two exams or more have been timetabled in one session (morning or afternoon) it means that there is a CLASH.

As per JCQ exam regulations, if you are taking two or more exams and the total time is three hours or less you will take one exam followed by the next in the same session:

- You will be given a supervised break of no more than twenty minutes between papers
- This break is conducted in the Sports Hall or examination room (unless you have an access arrangement for Movement Breaks)

If you are taking two or more exams and the total time is more than three hours (including extra time) you will take the second exam during a later or earlier session within the same day.

- Should an exam be moved to a different session the candidate has to be supervised throughout the time between the exams in order to ensure the integrity of the exam is maintained
- Candidates who have exams at later times will be supervised in a classroom and will not be permitted to have access to their mobile phones, laptops or the internet

Candidates should check the exam timetable carefully to see when exams are taking place. It is advisable to bring a snack or a packed lunch into school on the days where there are clashes.



IN THE EXAM ROOM

SILENCE must be maintained throughout the time in the exam room:

- Candidates must not communicate with others in any way: no talking, passing notes, turning around, waving, making eye contact etc
- Should candidates need to ask a question, or need to attract an invigilator's attention they must put up their hand
- Candidates cannot leave the room if they have finished their paper early
- When leaving at the end of an exam silence must be maintained until well away from the exam room. This is because there will be other A level and GCSE students still completing their examinations

SEATING

Most exams will take place in the Sports Hall and some take place in the Leadership Centre or in specified classrooms:

- Candidates are allocated a seat for each exam and it is important that you sit in the correct seat
- The seating plans for each day will be displayed on the noticeboard in the Sports Hall Foyer or outside the exam room
- Details of seating are also available on your personal timetable in Edulink
- Each exam desk will have a candidate card with your photo, your name, date of birth, candidate number and centre number

EXAM ROOM LAYOUT AND EXAM STARTING PROCEDURES

The exam tables are set up in rows in the Sports Hall:

- Row labels can be found on the walls and each desk has a desk label with the seat number on it
- There are three screens at the front of the Sports Hall which detail the start and finish times of exams
- Large analogue and digital clocks are also on the front wall
- Question papers will be on the exam desk when you enter the room. You must not open or write on your question paper or answer booklet until you are told to do so
- Once everyone is seated a starting message will be read out by the designated person starting the exam. This is normally a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Exam Officer or the Invigilator
- Specific exam paper instructions are then read out
- It is essential that candidates check that they have the correct paper, all the parts of the paper needed for the examination and, if relevant, that they have been entered for the correct tier. If something is not right or if you are at all unsure, please inform an invigilator immediately



EXAM STATIONERY

You must enter the correct candidate number and centre number on your answer booklet. Remember, these details are on your desk label.

If you need additional paper, please put up your hand to ask an invigilator. Extra sheets of paper must be numbered, named and have the candidate number on .

At the end of the exam candidates may need to record the numbers of the questions they have answered.

Any rough work must be handed in with answers. Cross out with a single line any work that is not to be marked. Candidates cannot use correcting pens, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in their answers.

Candidates must not draw, doodle or write rude comments on examination papers - the awarding bodies may refuse to accept the paper.

FINISHING EXAMS

When the exam is finished candidates will be asked to stop writing by the invigilator. You must stop writing **immediately** even if you are in the middle of a sentence or have not finished a word.

Once candidates have checked that they have written all the necessary information on their exam scripts and extra stationery, the papers will be collected by the invigilators.

Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper, whether used or not, must **not** be taken from the exam room.

You are still under exam conditions and therefore must remain seated in **silence** until you are dismissed from the exam room, by row.

It is very important to remain silent and not start talking to your friends until well away from the exam room because other students are completing their exams.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Coats, bags and other personal belongings cannot be brought into the exam room, they need to be left in your school locker (see Appendix 1).

EMERGENCY ACCESS ARRANGEMENT

In some adverse situations, it is possible to arrange Emergency Access Arrangements. For example, in the case of an accident that means a candidate is unable to write a laptop or a human scribe will be provided.

The candidate will be required to provide medical or other appropriate professional evidence, from their GP or hospital.



ABSENCE FROM EXAMINATION

If a student misses an examination, it **cannot** be rescheduled for another day.

As you can only take the exam at the official time, you should try to come to school if you are not too unwell.

Please telephone the school as early as possible so that we know what to expect as you may be moved to another location or a seat near the door of the exam room where you will be more comfortable.

In certain circumstances, where a student has been wholly or partly absent from an assessment for an acceptable reason e.g. owing to illness or personal misfortune, a Special Consideration application can be made for 'enhanced grading'. Evidence from a named professional person is always required.

In all cases, it is essential that medical or other appropriate professional evidence is provided by the parent/carer and given to the Examination Officer without delay to facilitate an application for Special Consideration.

Remember: misreading the timetable is not accepted by the awarding bodies as a satisfactory explanation for absence.

CONTINGENCY DAY

A contingency day is a date set by the awarding bodies at the end of the GCSE timetable in the event of a national disruption to examinations.

The contingency for Summer 2026 is **Wednesday 24 June**.

Students should consider the contingency day when making their plans for the summer as you must remain available until this date should examinations need to be rescheduled.

RESULTS

GCSE Results Day is **Thursday 20 August 2026**

Results will be available in the Sports Hall between 8.15am and 10am

You will be given an envelope containing your Statement of Results detailing your subject results.

You will also receive information and an application form for the [post-results services](#) available should you have any queries about your results.

Senior members of staff will be available on Results Day so that results can be discussed and decisions made about access to scripts and potential reviews of marking.

Please note that Statements of Results are only provisional and are not Certificates.



Statements of Results, however, should be kept somewhere secure as the information they contain may be needed at a later date, for example, when communicating with other schools, colleges and employers.

CERTIFICATES

You will receive a certificate from each Awarding Body and these are very important documents.

Students that join the sixth form at STAGS will be presented with their GCSE certificates at school in December 2026.

Students that have left STAGS can collect their certificates at Main Reception from Monday 4 January 2027.

The school is required to keep certificates for ONLY ONE YEAR AFTER ISSUE after which time they may be shredded.

If certificates are lost, they can be replaced only by direct application to the appropriate examination board by the student and not via school. This will require proof of identity and a fee of approximately £40-£60 per examination board.



WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME?

There may **not** be any spare equipment in the exam room and you **cannot** borrow from someone else once the exam has started, so be prepared!

YOU SHOULD BRING:	YOU MAY BRING:	YOU CANNOT BRING:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● at least two black ink pens ● Maths equipment ● Calculator ● Pencils, rubber, ruler ● Coloured pencils ● Clear pencil case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear, small bottle of water (label removed) ● Medication e.g. Inhaler ● Tissues (no packaging) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobile Phones ● Any type of watch ● Any internet-enabled potential sources of information such as smart glasses or AirPods ● Purse/Wallet ● Cans of drink or bottles of soft drinks ● Coats and scarves ● Notes ● Calculator lids ● Food/chewing gum ● Lip salve ● Glue sticks

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mobile phones, watches and internet-enabled devices must not be taken into an exam room under any circumstances. They should be left at home or stored in a locker prior to the start of an exam.

Being in possession of a prohibited device during an exam is regarded as cheating and will lead to sanctions and possible disqualification .

If you take a mobile phone or web-enabled device into an exam by mistake, it must be handed in to an invigilator immediately.

If you are found to have any materials with you that are not allowed, this has to be reported to the awarding bodies.



SOCIAL MEDIA

If you think you've seen a paper or a question before the exam, it is likely this is fake, but don't risk losing marks or being disqualified.

If you see something you suspect is a leak you should not share it and you must report it immediately to your teacher or the exams officer.

Information for candidates
Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers

Things to do on social media:

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher

Things not to do on social media:

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

If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- ! Receive a written warning
- ! Lose marks
- ! Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- ! Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:
jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

EXAM WELLBEING STRATEGY

“Square”, breathing is an easy-to-learn and easy-to-use technique for quickly reducing stress and anxiety. It will help to calm you so that you can assess your situation.

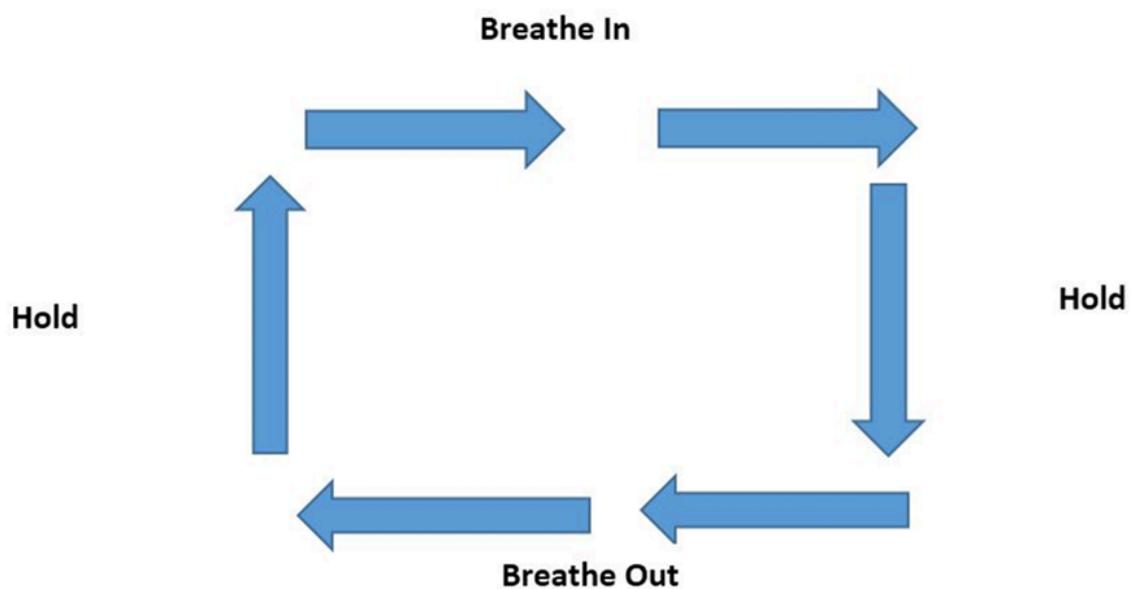
This technique can be used anywhere and can help to switch on your ‘relaxation system’.

This will then switch off your ‘arousal system’ so that your breathing will regulate and your physical anxiety symptoms will begin to subside.

Square Breathing Technique:

Begin by slowly breathing in for four seconds

1. Hold your breath for four seconds
2. Slowly breathe out for four seconds
3. Wait four seconds (don't breathe in)
4. Repeat steps 1-4





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We are a proud member of

