



ST MARTIN'S
Catholic Academy

CANDIDATE EXAM HANDBOOK

2025/26

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Introduction

Dear Candidates,

Saint Martin's Catholic School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the examination and assessment process in place at the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates. This handbook provides candidates and parents/carers with all necessary information surrounding examinations held at Saint Martin's Catholic Academy.

Please read this guide carefully. It contains all the information you need to ensure that your exams run smoothly. Once you have read and understood this guide, please complete the online [Candidate Exam Handbook Confirmation Form](#) via this link by **Wednesday 14th January 2026**.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Examinations Officer, Miss Hickey via jhickey@saint-martins.net.

Purpose of this handbook

- To inform candidates about malpractice in examinations/assessments.
- To inform candidates about the use of their personal data and copyright.
- To ensure candidates are provided with all relevant information about their exams and assessments.
- To ensure copies of relevant JCQ information for candidate documents and exam room posters are provided to candidates.
- To answer questions candidates may have.
- To inform candidates of any exam-related policies they need to be made aware of.

Malpractice

- To maintain the integrity of qualifications, strict regulations are in place.
- Malpractice means any act or practice which is in breach of the regulations.
- Any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice will be investigated and reported to the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice:
 - Introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room
 - Breaches of examination conditions
 - Exchanging, obtaining, receiving, or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to)
 - Offences relating to the content of candidates' work
 - Undermining the integrity of examinations/assessments
- Candidates are to be aware of the JCQ information regarding malpractice and social media via the following link: [Information for candidates – social media](#)
- **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
- **Research and using references**
Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference must show the name of the AI tool used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2026.
You should also reference the sources used by the AI tool in generating the content.
You **must** retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes 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...Where computer-generated content has been used (such as an AI Chatbot), your reference **must** show the name of the 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 trying to pass them off as your own. It could also include AI-produced material. Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is taken very seriously.

- It is important candidates are aware of malpractice in examinations. If candidates are suspected of malpractice, they may be removed from the examination room and may have their paper disqualified. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, they may be disqualified from the entire examination series. Such cases are reported directly to the relevant Awarding Body, and the outcome is determined by Awarding Body. Please see the schools Exam Malpractice Policy, available on the school website.

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, 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.
- The awarding bodies' privacy notices can be found on the [school website](#).

Copyright

- The copyright of work created by a candidate that is submitted to an awarding body for assessment belongs to the candidate.
- By submitting this work, a candidate is granting the awarding body a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use their assessment materials.
- Candidates' may access their Student Materials (including examination scripts) through the post result service: access to scripts.

Coursework assessments/non-examination assessments

- Candidates are to be aware of the JCQ information regarding [coursework](#), [non-examination assessments](#), [AI use in assessments](#) and [social media](#).
- If using AI, ensure you are using it correctly. Misuse of AI will be treated as malpractice..
- Students will be informed of their non-examination and coursework assessments by their subject teacher.
- Saint Martin's is committed to ensuring that whenever staff have marked candidates' work, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.
- Where NEA/coursework units are marked internally, they will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Saint Martin's Catholic Academy is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where several subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking. The awarding body will also carry out external moderation tasks. On being informed of their centre assessed-marks, if a candidate believes that the above procedures were not followed in relation to the marking of their work, or that the assessor has not properly applied the mark scheme to their marking, then they may make use of this appeals procedure to consider whether to request a review of the centre's marking. The internal appeals policy can be found on the school website.

Written timetabled exams

- Candidates will receive their statement of entry via their form Tutor by Tuesday 27th January 2026. Candidates are to check all personal details and exam entries are correct by Tuesday 3rd February 2026.
- If any of the information is incorrect, please inform the Exams Officer by Tuesday 3rd February 2026.
- The exam timetables are available via the [school website](#)- under Students > Exams Information.
- Candidates will receive their individual candidate timetable two weeks before via their school email.
- Candidates are to be aware of the JCQ information for candidates documents. These are available on the [school website](#) and the [JCQ website](#).
- Candidates are to be aware of the Exam room posters- [Warning to candidates](#) and [Unauthorised items](#). These are on the school website and outside the exam rooms during the exam season.
- Candidates are to be aware of the JCQ information regarding [written exams](#).

Contingency session - Summer 2026

- Candidates are expected to be available up until and including the last contingency date, Wednesday 24th June 2026.
- In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in Summer 2025, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations may be rescheduled.

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash)

- When a candidate has two exams scheduled at the same time this is called a timetable clash.
- One paper will be taken, followed by a short, supervised break, in the exam room, before the next paper is taken in the same session. Formal examination conditions will be in place during this break.
- The timetable clash arrangements will be discussed with the candidate before the scheduled date.

Where you will take your exams

- Exams will be taken in designated exam rooms such as the main school hall or allocated classrooms.
- Two weeks before the start of the exam series, candidates will receive an individual candidate timetable. This will state their room and seat allocation for each exam. This timetable will be sent to the candidate's school email account.
- Outside the hall there will be seating plans for the sessions taking place each day. You can also check your room and seat via these seating plans.
- It is important candidates sit in the correct seat. If cannot find your seat, please ask an invigilator for guidance.

What time your exams will start and finish

- There is a morning and an afternoon exam session during the summer series.
- Morning sessions will start at 9am.
- Afternoon sessions will start at 1:00pm on Mondays and 1:15pm Tuesday- Friday.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to attend their exams for the full duration until they are dismissed by an invigilator after all the examination scripts have been collected.
- Some exams may run over the school day, particularly on a Monday or if you are entitled to extra-time. If an exam finishes after the end of school day candidates will be responsible to organise alternative provisions of getting home.
- The JCQ regulations state, candidates who take an exam earlier than the awarding body's published start time of 09:00 or 13:30 must be kept under centre supervision until one hour after the JCQ published start time. Therefore, students will not be released until 14:30 even if their exam is due to finish earlier.

Supervision during your exams

- Exams are supervised by a team of invigilators.

- Invigilators must follow strict rules and regulations when conducting exams, as directed by JCQ.
- Invigilators are unable to help you with the content of your assessment, however if you need any other assistance or need to raise any concerns, please raise your hand and an invigilator will support you.

Exam room conditions

- Candidates are to line up outside in the tennis courts in their relevant rows before being invited in to the examination room. If you are allocated to a classroom, please line up outside the classroom.
- All students are under formal exam conditions as soon as they enter the examination room until they leave the exam room.
- Candidates must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once they have entered the examination room. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.
- Candidates must listen to and follow the instructions of the invigilator, at all times.
- Candidates must not write on their exam paper until instructed to do so by an invigilator, this includes completing your details on the front of the paper.
- Candidates must not open the question paper until the examination has begun. If they do, this must be reported to the relevant awarding body.
- Candidates must not have on them or near them any unauthorised materials. If unauthorised materials are accidentally brought into the exam room, they must be handed in to an invigilator. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- If a candidate needs to leave the exam room, they must raise their hand to attract an invigilator's attention and be escorted and supervised by an invigilator.
- If you leave the exam room without permission or supervision you will not be allowed back into the examination room.
- Candidates must remain under exam conditions whilst papers are being collected at the end of the exam.
- All examination materials must be left in the examination room. This includes question papers, answer booklets and additional answer sheets (even if they have been left blank).
- Candidates must be aware of : [JCQ Warning to Candidates Poster](#)

Where you will sit in the exam room

- Candidates must sit in their allocated seat. This is likely to be different for each exam. If there is an issue with the place provided, please inform an invigilator.

How your identity is confirmed in the exam room

- Candidates are invited into the exam room via a staff member, such as SLT.
- On the desk will be a candidate identification card, this will display the candidates legal name, picture and candidate number.

What equipment you need to bring to your exams

- Candidates are expected to bring the relevant equipment needed for each exam. Please check with your subject teachers of the equipment required for each exam.
- For non-calculator exams, please do not bring your calculators into the exam room.
- Candidates are to bring their equipment in a clear pencil case.

Using calculators

- In this section a calculator is defined as an electronic device whose primary purpose is to carry out mathematical calculations.
- This is the published guidance on calculators unless specifically varied by an awarding body in a qualification specification.
- The instructions on the question paper will say whether calculators are allowed or not. If the instructions do not include such a statement, calculators should be treated as standard equipment and may be used by candidates.

- Where the use of a calculator is allowed, candidates are responsible for making sure that their calculators meet the awarding bodies' regulations.
- During an examination a calculator must not be able to offer any of these facilities:
 - language translators;
 - symbolic algebra manipulation;
 - symbolic differentiation or integration;
 - communication with other machines or the internet.
- During an examination a calculator must not give access to pre-stored information. This includes:
 - databanks, such as the periodic table (with the exception of scientific constants);
 - ictionaries;
 - mathematical formulae;
 - text.
- A calculator must not be borrowed from another candidate during an examination.

Some calculators have an 'exam mode'. This is acceptable in examinations where the exam mode is activated and the exam mode results in the calculator becoming compliant with the above requirements.

What you must not bring into the exam room

- Candidates must not bring their coats or bags into the exam room.
- Unauthorised items such as AirPods, earphones/earbuds, iPods, mobile phones, smart devices, watches, smart glasses, notes or books must not be brought into the exam room.
- Candidates are to be aware of [JCQ unauthorised items poster](#).
- If a candidate is found to have any unauthorised item on them in the exam room, whether they intended to use it or not, may lead to disqualification.

Food and drink in exam rooms

- Food is not allowed in the exam room.
- Only water in a clear bottle, free from any labels or writing is allowed in the exam room. Bottles not meeting this requirement will be removed without discussion.

What you should wear for your exams

- School uniform must be worn for all exams. Candidates are able to remove their blazer once they have been invited to sit down.

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

- Candidates are not allowed to bring their coats and bags into the exam room. Coats, bags and unauthorised items including mobile phones and watches are to be stored in the candidate's locker.

What to do if you arrive late for your exam

- Candidates who are likely to be late for an exam, please contact the School Reception on 01455 212386.
- Candidates who arrive late for an exam must go straight to Reception and await instruction from the Exams Officer.

What to do if you are unwell on the day of your exam

- If a candidate is unwell and unable to attend the exam their parent/carer is to inform the school via the attendance officer. The exam officer may be in contact to confirm reason of absence and request any necessary evidence to send to the awarding body.
- If a candidate is unwell but is able to attend the exam, please see the exams officer before the exam session.
- If a candidate is unwell during the exam, please raise your hand and inform an invigilator.
- Candidates may be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but their attendance to an examination or assessment is materially

affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. This includes temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment. Evidence must be obtained for an application.

What happens if you have an unauthorised absence from your exam

- If a candidate is absent from an exam without an authorised reason they will receive 0 marks for that exam.
- An unauthorised absence from an exam is likely to affect your overall grade.
- Any candidate who does not turn up to an exam without a valid reason will be charged the entry fee for the qualification.

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

- If an emergency takes place candidates will receive instructions from the invigilators.
- Candidates are to remain silent and not communicate with any other candidates.
- If the exam hall needs evacuating, candidates will be instructed to leave in exam conditions and evacuate to the tennis courts.
- If/when possible to return to the exam room, students will be given the full remaining time allowance for the exam.
- The examination board will be contacted about the incident, and a special consideration application will be submitted.

Candidates with access arrangements/reasonable adjustments

- Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working.
- Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated by centres, others require prior JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) awarding body approval.
- Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment.
- Access arrangements can only be granted if the student meets the JCQ criteria.
- If you have any questions regarding access arrangements, please contact the SENCo for further information.
- All access arrangements should be the student's normal way of working and be arranged and implemented before exams take place.
- Please see the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) access arrangements guidance for parents, carers and students [here](#).

Results

- Results day Thursday 20th August 2026. Candidate's will be invited to come and collect their results from the school hall. Times of the day will be communicated closer to the date.
- Candidates will receive a statement of provisional results.
- There will be senior leadership team staff available on the day to support candidates if needed.
- If a candidate is unable to collect their results in person they may request, in writing, a named person to collect on their behalf or an email copy (private email will need to be provided as candidates' school emails will no longer be active). Please note, this request must come from the candidate (not parent). If requesting an email copy, this may not be sent out until later in the day.

Post-results services

- Post results services are available if a candidate has a query about their results.
- Details of services, fees, the relevant forms and request deadline dates will be sent via email prior to results day and will be available on the day when results are collected.
- Deadlines vary and it is the responsibility of the candidate to consult with staff and ensure they complete all necessary paperwork and submit payment in good time.

Certificates

- Candidates will be invited to a Prize Giving evening, where certificates will be available to collect.

- After prize-giving, certificates will be available to collect from school.
- Alternatively, candidates may nominate a person to collect certificates on their behalf by providing the Exams Officer with written permission. Nominated person must provide ID evidence on collection of certificates.

Internal appeals procedure

- The internal appeals policy and internal appeals form can be found on the [school website](#).

Complaints policy

The centre's **Complaints Policy** (Exams) can be found on the [school website](#).

Links to JCQ Information for Candidates Documents

- [Coursework 2025-26](#)

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain elements of coursework assessment.

- [Non-Examination Assessments 2025-26](#)

You **must** read this information if you are undertaking qualifications that contain components of non-examination assessment.

- [Written Exams 2025-26](#)

You **must** read this information before you take any externally assessed written exams.

- [Social Media](#)

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using social media.

- [Artificial Intelligence and Assessments](#)

You **must** read this information to help you stay within examination/assessment regulations when using artificial intelligence. This information explains: What is AI? What is an AI tool? When can I use AI? When can I not use an AI tool? If I'm allowed to use AI, how is this breaking the rules? How to make sure you don't misuse AI.

- [Unauthorised Items Poster](#)

This poster will be displayed outside each exam room. You **must** note that "*Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone or any watch, is a serious offence and could result in **DISQUALIFICATION** from your examination and your overall qualification.*"

- [Warning to Candidates Poster](#)

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

- [AI Poster for Students](#)

This poster is a quick guide to help you to better understand the rules for use of AI in assessments.

Candidate Confirmation

To confirm you have received, read and understood the contents of this handbook, please complete online [Candidate Exam Handbook Confirmation Form](#) via this link by **Wednesday 14th January 2026**.

If there is anything you do not understand, you should ask the Exams Officer, Miss Hickey for clarification.