CATHAYS HIGH SCHOOL
YSGOL UWCHRADD CATHAYS
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL
CYFLEOEDD I BAWB

EXAMINATIONS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS 2026-27

Early Entry for Examinations – Information for Parents 2026-2027

In order to raise standards and maximise pupils' chances of gaining the best possible GCSE grades and to allow opportunities for More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils, the school enters pupils early for some examinations – i.e. they may sit some examinations in Year 9 or Year 10 as well as at the end of Year 11 as in the traditional model. This differs according to subject.

Glossary

Linear courses – This means that all examinations take place at the end of the course.
Modular courses - This means that pupils study a module of work and then sit an examination on that module before moving on to the next module.
NEA Assessments – This is similar to coursework, but pupils complete NEA work in school under supervised conditions.
AS (Advanced Subsidiary) – This the first half of an A Level.
Short Course GCSE – A qualification equivalent to half a GCSE, graded A*-G.
Full Course GCSE – A full GCSE qualification graded A*-G.

From September 2025

English Language and Literature (GCSE) – Single and Double Award.

The course is made up of 6 units. 3 are examination units and 3 are non-examined assessments. Pupils will sit the examination units in year 10 and 11

From September 2025

Mathematics and Numeracy Double award

Pupils will sit 3 examinations
Unit 1: Financial Mathematics and Other Applications of Numeracy (Written exam 30%)
Unit 2: Non-calculator Mathematics (Written exam 30%)
Unit 3: Calculator Mathematics (Written exam 40%)
Pupils will sit exams in year 10 and 11

Science

Most pupils sit two GCSE subjects. The courses are linear and examinations take place in June of Year 10 and June of Year 11. There is also an assessed practical task for students in Year 10 and 11. Some pupils complete a triple (separate) GCSE Science course. This involves three separate GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Students sit examinations in all three subjects at the end of Year 10 and the end of Year 11. There are also assessed practical tasks to complete.

Cymraeg – Welsh

In Year 10, Pupils start the Full Course Welsh Second Language GCSE. The course involves one examination, more NEA assessments, and pupils sit their examination in June of Year 11.

Other subjects

Most subjects are examined across year 10 and 11 and a number of subjects will have NEA Assessments to complete through Year 10 and Year 11. Pupils who are More-Able and Talented (MAT) in a certain language or subject may be given the opportunity to sit examinations as early as Year 7. For example, many pupils in Years 7-9 will sit GCSE examinations in Community Languages, e.g. Arabic, Italian, Chinese, Bengali, French etc.

Visit Exam Information - Cathays High School ¦ Ysgol Uwchradd Cathays for further information about:

Exam Timetables
Results Days
Non-Examination Assessments
On-screen Tests
Coursework
Social Media

Frequently Asked Questions about Examinations

- **Who is responsible for the public examinations taken in school?**

The Centre's Exams Officer is responsible for the administration of all public examination arrangements and for the oversight of students during exams, under the responsibility of the Head of Centre, the Headteacher. There is a team of adult invigilators who will be present during the exams at all times, and who are supervised by the Exams Officer. The awarding bodies, or Examination Boards, set down strict criteria which must be followed for the conduct of exams, and the centre is required to follow them precisely.

- **Who is entered for public examinations?**

It is centre policy to enter every student who is being taught a subject for the most appropriate level of examination.

- **Can students take holidays during term time?**

Dates for exams are rigidly fixed by the Exam Boards, and pupils will be given individual timetables showing their examination dates at a time near to the exam season. Parents are reminded that they require the Headteacher's permission to take students out of the centre, and if they book holidays during term time it is at their own risk. It is strongly against good practice and centre policy to take holidays in term time. ***Any exams missed cannot be taken at another time.***

- **NEA Assessments**

Many subjects have NEA Assessments which are tasks which have to be completed in school under supervised conditions. These are marked and assessed by teachers and the marks and work are sent to the Boards well before the formal examinations take place. The centre sets specific dates and times for these tasks to be completed; this is to meet the Board deadlines. These cannot be changed. ***Students who fail to attend their NEA Assessment sessions will not be allocated a mark*** for this portion, and their overall grade will suffer.

- **What arrangements are made for study leave?**

Lessons continue for all students (including Year 11, 12 and 13) up until May half-term (unless the half-term is late). If students have examinations prior to this period, they attend their examination and attend lessons when they do not have examinations. This enables all students to have access to facilities and expert help and revision from their teachers for as long as possible. After May half-term, students have permission to revise at home when they do not have examinations. However, a number of subjects run whole and half-day revision sessions for students in their subject after the half-term holiday and it is strongly advised that students attend these when they are made aware of them.

- **What information will students receive about their examination entries?**

When the entries have been submitted on the centre's computer system, students will be given a '*Statement of Entry*' detailing their subject and tiers for all exams for which they have been entered. They should **check all details carefully. The Exams Office must be informed of any errors in personal details**. The personal details on a student's Statement of Entry must match their legal ID as this is what will be displayed on their certificates. Once entries have been confirmed as correct, and the exam board's deadline has passed, changes to personal details on certificates will have to be ***paid for by the student*.**

- **What are modular examinations?**

Modular GCSE and AS/A2 levels involve written examinations on sections of the syllabus taken at intervals throughout the course, rather than all at the end. Most modular sessions are in January and May/June. Students have the opportunity to retake certain units on the advice of their subject teachers. In England, modular examinations are no longer available for GCSE examinations and there are restrictions on A- Level examination opportunities. Rules differ in Wales but are subject to regular changes.

- **Where will the examinations be held?**

The main locations for written papers are either the Upper Hall, Lower Hall or the Sports Hall. Seating plans will be placed on the Exams Notice Board (opposite the staff room) in advance of the examination. This will show the room and seat number for each student. It is the student's responsibility to check this seating plan ***before*** entering the examination room. Candidates must sit in the seat allocated to them. Candidates are asked to arrive at the examination room at least 10 minutes before the advertised start time, and wait quietly outside the room until they are invited to enter. **Examination regulations apply as soon as the student enters the exam room**. Special rooming arrangements are made for specific students who have Additional Learning Needs.

- **How do I know when exams take place?**

The main period for summer exams is from the start of May until the end of June/early July, but some oral examinations and practical examinations will take place earlier. All candidates will receive individual timetables outlining the date, time and length of each examination once entries have been made. It is helpful if parents make sure a copy of this timetable is available to them at home. In November and January, examinations usually take place in the first two weeks after the half-term and Christmas holiday. Therefore, it is vitally important that students taking those examinations are back in school on the first day after the holidays.

- **What are the examination start times?**

The exam boards dictate the permissible start times for exams. ***Exams start promptly at 8.30am for morning examinations, and 1pm for afternoon sessions***. The length of each examination varies, and it will mean that ***some examinations finish later than the normal school day***. Students and parents should be aware of this and make appropriate arrangements for getting home. ***Students will not be allowed out of an exam early*** for any reason. ***It is the candidate's responsibility to be aware of the start time and length of their examinations,*** especially if they are entitled to receive an allowance of extra time, as this means the exam will finish even later for those students.

- **What happens if a student has more than one exam at the same time?**

If a student is timetabled to sit two or more exams for two or more ***different subjects*** at the same time, this is known as a clash. If they are timetabled for two exams for the *same subject* at the same time, this is intentional on the part of the board, and the exams are designed to run one after the other. If the student has a clash, arrangements can be made and permission can be granted for one of the papers to be taken at a different time of the day. The Exams Officer will inform the student of the new arrangement. Should a student notice a clash on their individual exam timetable but they haven't been made aware of the new arrangement, ***they should report this to the Exams Officer immediately***. During a clash arrangement, students ***will have to remain supervised*** in between the two papers. If the supervision is from a morning to an afternoon session, the candidate will have to remain supervised over lunch time. They should bring some revision or reading material and their lunch and a drink. ***Electronic equipment, such as mobile phones or MP3 players AirPods, earphones/earbuds, will not be permitted*** during this time.

- **What happens if a student is late?**

If parents are aware that their son/daughter has got the timing of the examination wrong and has missed the starting time, they should ***telephone the centre immediately*** and get a message to the Exams Officer. Depending on how long the exam has been in progress, it may be possible for the candidate to be admitted. However, we are bound by examination board regulations on this matter. ***Candidates who arrive more than 1 hour after the start of the exam will not be admitted.***

- **What should students bring to the examinations?**

Candidates should bring writing equipment, highlighters, coloured pencils, erasers etc. in a transparent pencil case. Non-transparent pencil boxes or cases will not be permitted in the examination room. Pens should be ***black ink only.*** Some subject papers will require the use of dictionaries or set texts, and candidates will be advised by their subject teachers about this.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they bring everything they need to the examination, including calculators, as equipment will not normally be given to pupils.

- **What should candidates NOT bring with them?**

The following items are strictly banned from exam rooms and should not be brought into the examination room under any circumstances:

- **AirPods**
- **Earphones/earbuds**
- **iPods; mobile phones**
- **MP3/4 players or similar devices**
- **Watches**
- **Smart watches**
- **Smart glasses**
- **Any other smart device**

The Exam Boards treat possession of these items as malpractice and should this happen the student could be disqualified.

If an item such as this is brought in error to the exam room, then it may be possible that the item can be handed to an invigilator ***before the start*** of an exam, but the centre cannot be responsible for the security of these while the examination is in progress.

The use of Tippex or correction pens is not permitted. All work, including rough work, must be done in the exam question/answer book. Candidates should neatly cross through any rough work. Notes, papers and text books etc are only allowed in certain exams and candidates will be informed by the subject teachers in advance. Candidates should not bring lucky mascots etc. into the examination room.

No food items or chewing gum are allowed, although candidates may bring a ***clear bottle*** of drink with them, provided that the label is removed. Cans etc are not permitted.

- **What happens if a student does not turn up for an examination?**

A student who is absent from any examination will receive a grade based only on the course components which they have completed. If a student is absent due to illness, the procedure is:

1. Parent to contact the school to tell us the pupil is unable to attend due to illness. This needs to be done each day a pupil is absent.

2. The school will then send you a 'Self Certification for Candidates who have missed an examination' form to be completed. The form consists of 4 parts:

   Part A: This is completed by the Centre and states the details of the examination missed.

   Part B: This is completed and signed by the doctor/nurse or receptionist of your surgery stating whether or not your son/daughter was seen by a doctor or nurse at the surgery and if they were declared unfit for examinations.

   Part C: This is completed by the parent, declaring that school was called and the surgery contacted.

   Part D: The pupil signs to state they were too ill to attend their examination.

Both parents and pupils sign to declare that they are aware it is fraudulent to declare a candidate is ill when he/she is fit to attend.

The completed form is returned to the Exams Office and sent to the appropriate Examination Board.
NB: Medical notes from doctors are no longer accepted as an alternative to this form.

- **What should a student wear for examinations?**

All pupils other than pupils in Years 12 & 13 are required to wear ***normal uniform*** during examinations. Students who are not complying with uniform regulations will not be allowed to enter the examination room. All coats must be removed ***before*** entering the examination room, and are to be placed at an allocated area of the examination room, along with their bags.

- **What happens if a student finishes early?**

Students are not permitted to leave examinations early. They must sit quietly at their desk so as not to disturb other candidates until the finish time.

- **When and how are the results distributed?**

Results Days take place during the last two weeks of August. The dates will be made available on the school website once known and students will also be informed of the dates nearer the time. Results will be available for collection from 09:00am – 12:00pm. Students wishing for a relative or friend to collect their results on their behalf MUST provide a signed letter of authorisation to the Exams Office. ***Results will not normally be given over the phone.*** Any student wishing to have their results posted must leave a stamped addressed envelope with the Exams Office before the end of the summer term. Students will be advised of any changes to this process via their Form Tutors. This information will also be made available on the school website.

- **When do students receive certificates?**

The Exam Boards issue certificates in October/November. The Centre distributes certificates to those pupils still on roll in December. Students who have left the centre will need to contact the school from January to arrange the collection of their certificates. All certificates need to be signed for. **Uncollected Certificates will be destroyed after a period of time,** and students will need to contact each Examination Board to arrange for a replacement certificate to be sent. The boards do charge a fee for this service.

Malpractice

- If a candidate is suspected of malpractice, the invigilator will warn the candidate that he/she may be removed from the examination room. The candidate will also be warned that the awarding body will be informed and may decide to penalise or disqualify them. The Invigilator **must** record what has happened.
- Wherever possible, the Invigilator will remove and keep any unauthorised material that a candidate may have in the examination. The invigilator will summon assistance if necessary.
- The Head of Centre has the authority to remove a candidate from the examination room if the candidate would disrupt others by remaining in the room.

- **The Head of Centre must report to the awarding body immediately all cases of suspected or actual malpractice in connection with the examination.**

Appendix 4
Information for candidates for written examinations – effective from 1 September 2026

This document has been written to help you. Read it carefully and follow the instructions.
If there is anything you do not understand, ask your teacher.
You should also check with your teacher which calculator you may use in your exams.

A	**Regulations – Make sure you understand the rules**
1	Be on time for all your exams. If you are late, your work might not be accepted.
2	**Do not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice during the exam.
3	If you try to cheat or break the rules in any way, you could be disqualified from **all** your exams.
4	You **must not** take any unauthorised material into the exam room, including: a) notes; b) earphones or earbuds (e.g. AirPods), MP3/4 players or similar devices, smart devices, smart glasses, tablets (e.g. iPads or iPods); c) a mobile phone; d) a watch (e.g. analogue, digital, smartwatch); Any pencil cases taken into the exam room **must** be see-through. **Remember: possession of unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to sanctions and possible disqualification.**
5	**Do not** use correcting pens, fluid or tape, erasable pens, highlighters or gel pens in your answers.
6	**Do not** talk to or try to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the exam room.
7	You **must not** write inappropriate, obscene or offensive material.
8	If you leave the exam room unaccompanied by an invigilator before the exam has finished, you **will not** be allowed to return.
9	**Do not** borrow anything from another candidate during the exam.
B	**Information – Make sure you attend your exams and bring what you need**
1	Know the dates and times of all your exams. Arrive at least ten minutes before the start of your exam.
2	If you arrive late for an exam, report to the invigilator running the exam.
3	If you arrive more than one hour after the published starting time for the exam, you may not be allowed to take it.
4	Only take into the exam room the pens, pencils, erasers and any other permitted equipment needed for the exam.
5	You **must** write clearly and in black ink. Coloured pencils or inks may be used for only diagrams, maps, charts, etc., unless the instructions printed on the front of the question paper state otherwise.

C	Calculators, dictionaries and computer spellcheckers
1	You may use a calculator unless you are told otherwise.
2	If you use a calculator: a) make sure it works properly; check that the batteries are working properly; b) clear anything stored in its memory and make sure it is in exam mode; c) remove any parts such as cases, lids or covers which have printed instructions or formulae; d) **do not** bring any operating instructions or prepared programs into the exam room.
3	**Do not** use a dictionary or computer spellchecker unless you are told otherwise.

D	Instructions during the exam
1	Always listen to the invigilator. Always follow their instructions.
2	Tell the invigilator at once if: a) you think you have not been given the right question paper or all of the materials listed on the front of the paper; b) the question paper is incomplete or badly printed; c) you think you have not been given the expected access arrangement(s).
3	Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and/or on the answer booklet.
4	**Do not** start writing anything until the invigilator tells you to fill in all the details required on the front of the question paper and/or the answer booklet. **Do not** open the question paper until you are told that the exam has begun.
5	Remember to write your answers within the designated sections of the answer booklet.
6	Do your rough work on the proper exam stationery. Cross it through and place any additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. (For CCEA examinations place any additional sheets **behind** your answer booklet.) Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use, including those used for rough work.
E	**Advice and assistance**
1	If, on the day of the exam, you feel that your work may be affected by ill health or any other reason, tell the invigilator.
2	Put up your hand during the exam if: a) you have a problem and are not sure what you should do; b) you do not feel well; c) you need more paper.
3	You **must not** ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.
F	**At the end of the exam**
1	If you have used more than one answer booklet and/or any supplementary answer sheets, place them in the correct order. Place any loose additional answer sheets inside your answer booklet. Make sure you add your candidate details to any additional answer sheets that you use. For CCEA examinations, any loose additional sheets should be placed **behind** your answer booklet.
2	**Do not** leave the exam room until told to do so by the invigilator.
3	**Do not** take any stationery from the exam room. This includes the question paper, answer booklets (used or unused), rough work or any other materials provided for the exam.

This information must be made available to all candidates in advance of their examination(s) for each series. It may be provided electronically to candidates or in hard copy paper format.

Internal Appeals Policy for External Qualifications

APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF WORK FOR EXTERNAL QUALIFICATIONS

Cathays High School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff assess students' work for external qualifications, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and who have been trained in this activity. Students' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examinations board. Where a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation. (Refer to the Assessment, Recording, Reporting Policy for information on Internal Verification/Moderation Processes).

If a student feels that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade. The existence of this procedure is made known to students by reference in the student planner. This procedure is available from Cathays High School.

APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

1. ***Appeals should be made as soon as possible***, and must be made at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examination series.

2. Appeals should be made in writing to the Headteacher who will ensure the appeal is investigated.

3. The Headteacher or the member of staff nominated by the Headteacher will decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed with the requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA. This will be done before the end of the series. (Currently the end of June for the summer series).

4. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any correspondence with the board, any changes made to the assessment of your work, and any changes made to improve matters in future.

5. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Headteacher, and will be logged as a complaint under the complaint's procedure. A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding body at their request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body (examinations board) to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of Cathays High School and is not covered by this procedure. If you have concerns about it, please ask the Headteacher for a copy of the Appeals Procedure of the relevant Examinations Board. Records of all appeals will be held for a minimum period of 18 months.

Should the outcome of an appeal affect other pupils, then further action will be initiated by the Examinations Officer. All processes will be monitored by the senior leader with responsibility for Assessment.

Copies of this policy are to be given to pupils at the start of their course where the course is by internal assessment alone.

ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE

The school will respond promptly and objectively to any incident suggesting malpractice by learners or by staff. Once investigated, appropriate actions will be taken in line with examination board requirements for pupils and 'Professional Standards for teachers' for staff. The aim is to protect the integrity of the center and the qualifications that it offers. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of what constitutes malpractice, but the following lists give an indication of the definition of malpractice.

Malpractice by staff – some examples:

- Improper assistance to a pupil
- Allowing evidence known not to be the pupil's to be submitted
- Awarding or adjusting assessment outcomes where there is insufficient evidence to suggest the criteria for those marks have been met
- Failure to store coursework/assignments/portfolios securely
- Fraudulent claims
- Allowing impersonation
- Misusing special learner requirements etc.

Malpractice by pupils – some examples:

- Plagiarism
- Collaborative work being submitted as individual work
- Copying
- Lending work to another pupil
- Allowing another pupil to use your sources
- Destruction of another pupil's work
- Fabrication of results or evidence
- False declaration of authenticity
- Impersonation
- Introduction of unauthorized material into the Examination Room e.g. mobile phone

Full details on the Examination Board expectations are found in the JCQ document 'Guidance in dealing with instances of malpractice in examinations '.

At the commencement of each certificated course, learners are to be informed of this policy. Pupils will also be issued with copies of Examination and Coursework rules. This includes pupils sitting external examinations as part of their 'Out of hours' learning.

NB: Note to students

A. If a student has any concerns about the procedures used in assessing their internally assessed work for public exams i.e. NEA assessment/coursework/portfolios, they should discuss the matter with the Head of Department immediately. Following that, if the matter remains unresolved, the formal appeal procedure may be used by the student concerned.

B. The regulations for GCSE, GCE, Entry Level and Project Qualification Coursework Assignments and GCSE NEA Assessments state that:

   - "The work you submit for assessment must be your own"
   - "You must not copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you"
   - "If you copy the words or ideas of others and don't show your sources in references and a bibliography, this will be considered as cheating or malpractice"