Medina College
ASPIRE AND ACHIEVE

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16 October 2026

Dear Parents/carers

Following our recent Year 11 Revision and Futures Evening, I am writing to share some important information ahead of the trial examinations, which begin on Tuesday 3 November.

The GCSE examinations that students will sit next summer represent the culmination of more than a decade of education. We want every student to have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and achieve the best possible outcomes. Trial examinations are an important part of this preparation, helping students become familiar with formal exam conditions and identify areas for improvement.

Our school values of Ambition, Courage, Confidence and Kindness underpin our approach. We want students to aim high, approach challenges positively and develop confidence through preparation. Equally, kindness means recognising that our actions affect others, and every student deserves an exam environment free from disruption. Our three school rules, Ready, Respectful and Safe, remain just as important during examinations.

Exam expectations

Public exams are governed by strict regulations set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). We follow these same expectations during trial examinations to prepare students for next summer.

Students receive guidance through assemblies and regular reminders from staff. In particular, students must enter the examination venue in silence, remain silent throughout and leave in silence when instructed. They must follow all instructions and respect the right of others to concentrate.

Any breach of exam regulations may be considered *malpractice*. Examples include:

- Failing to follow instructions from an invigilator or examination supervisor.
- Talking, communicating or attempting to communicate with another student, including through gestures.
- Disruptive behaviour, including inappropriate or offensive language.
- Bringing unauthorised materials into the examination venue, including notes, mobile phones, watches, earbuds or other electronic devices.
- Leaving the examination venue without permission or before being dismissed.
- Any behaviour that undermines the fairness or integrity of an examination.

This is not an exhaustive list. Importantly, simply being in possession of an unauthorised item, even if it is not used, can constitute malpractice.

Why this matters

Our message to students is simple: every mark, in every paper, in every subject matters**.** We do not want an avoidable decision to put their hard work or future opportunities at risk.

In public exams, schools must report suspected malpractice to the relevant examination board. Sanctions can range from a warning or loss of marks to disqualification from individual exams, entire qualifications or, in the most serious cases, all examinations in a series. Students can also be barred from entering future examinations for a specified period.

These decisions are made by the exam boards, not the school. Failure to uphold exam regulations can also result in sanctions against the school as an examination centre, potentially affecting other students.

As November's trial examinations are internal assessments, incidents will not be reported to exam boards as public exam malpractice. However, we will take any breaches seriously, follow them up with students and write to parents and carers to explain what has happened and seek your support. We would much rather students learn these expectations now than face potentially serious consequences next summer.

Important JCQ Information

We ask that students and parents familiarise themselves with the following official guidance:

- Preparing to Sit Your Exams
- Information for Candidates – AI and Assessments
- AI and Assessments Student Poster
- Information for Candidates – Written Examinations

The Warning to Candidates and Unauthorised Items posters are displayed in our exam venues.

We recognise that exams can be challenging, and our priority is to ensure students feel prepared, supported and confident. These trial examinations are an important milestone, but they are not the final destination. There is still time to make significant progress before next summer.

We would appreciate your support in reinforcing these expectations at home. By working together, we can ensure every student has the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Paul, Mrs K Sandiford and Mrs A Mursell
Executive Headteacher and Co-Heads of School