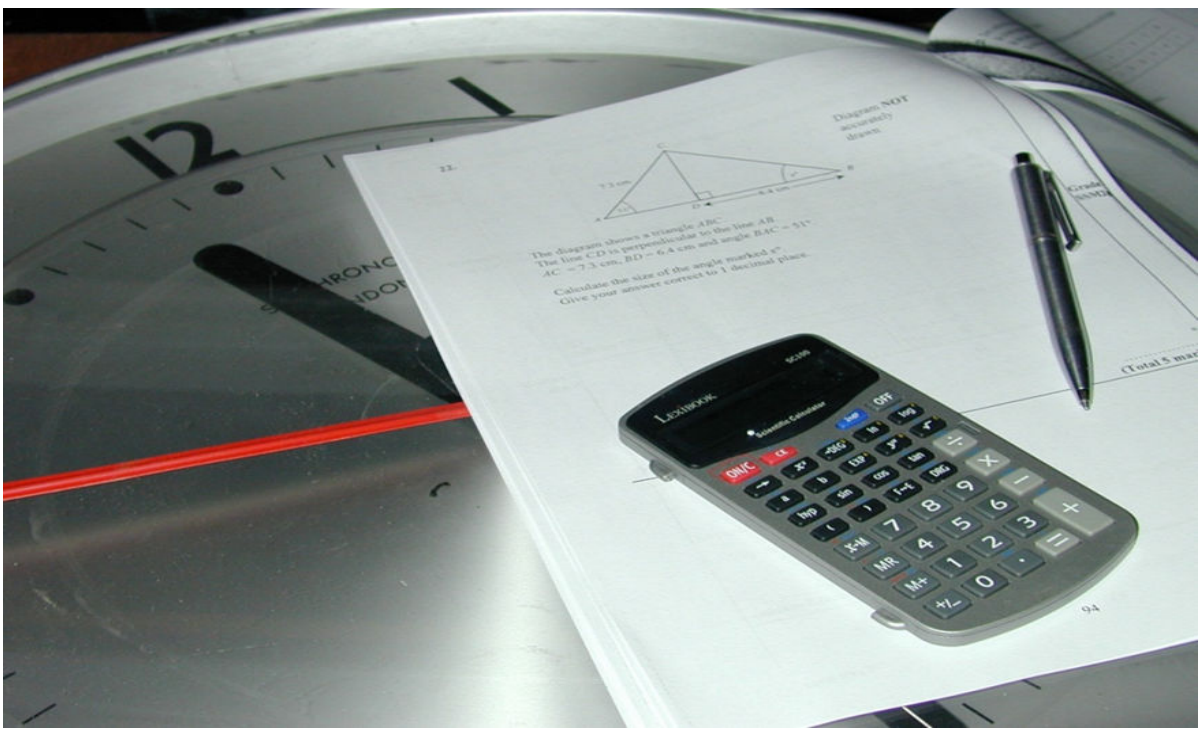
RIVERS ACADEMY
West London

Candidate Exam Handbook 2025/26 Centre Number 13144



This handbook is reviewed and updated annually
You are required to read this document carefully

Produced/reviewed by	
Mrs M Hamblin – Exams Officer	
Date of next review	Sept 2026

Contents

Introduction

The Rivers Academy West London School is committed to ensuring that candidates are fully briefed on the exam and assessment process in place in the centre and are made aware of the required JCQ/awarding body instructions and information for candidates.

Purpose of the candidate exam handbook

This handbook aims to advise you on the information you need to know about your examinations.
The exam boards have very strict rules and regulations which must be followed for the conduct of examinations and The Rivers Academy West London School is required to follow them precisely.

Contact details

The school telephone number is: 0208 890 0245
Email for the Exams officer: mhamblin@rivers-aspirations.org
Examinations Officer: Mrs M Hamblin
Head of Centre: Mrs Sarah Johnson-Scott
Vice Principal: Mr David Booth & Mrs S Khara
SENCO: Miss E O'Gallachoir

Examination Boards

The Rivers Academy West London uses the following exam boards:

- OCR - https://ocr.org.uk/
- AQA - https://www.aqa.org.uk/
- Pearson/Edexcel - https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html
- WJEC - https://www.wjec.co.uk/

Dates:

Summer 2025 exam series will be a full series of GCE A Level / AS / GCSE / Cambridge Nationals /BTECS in all subjects

- BTEC exams start April 2026
- GCE AS and A-level start on Monday 11th May
- GCSE written examinations start on Thursday 7th May

Contingency Days Summer 2025:

There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2026 exam timetable – the **morning of Tuesday 24 June 2025**. Students must remain available for exams throughout the summer session, which typically runs from early May to late June. Candidates and their parents/carers should check the official JCQ website or the specific exam timetable provided by their awarding body for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

Summer 2026 Results:

- GCE AS and A-level results/Level 3 BTEC results day – Thursday 13th August 2026
- GCSE/Level 2 BTEC results day – Thursday 20th August 2026

In advance of your Examinations

Statement of Entry:

- Please check that you have been entered for the correct exams and correct Tier (Maths, MFL & Science)
- You must check that your **personal details** are correct so that the correct details appear on your certificates (**date of birth, spelling of names**)
- It is a requirement that your registered legal name be used
- Contact the Exams Officer if anything needs correcting as soon as possible

Timetables

Make sure you know the dates and times of your examinations. **If you miss a Public Examination, you cannot take that paper at another time.** Your timetable is your proof that you have been entered for an exam. If you notice any errors, please contact the Exams Officer immediately.

Unless notified otherwise:

• Morning exams start at 9.00 am
• Afternoon exams start at **1:00 pm** (if exams are more than 1 hour 30 mins) / **1.30 pm** start for exams that are less than 1 hour 30 mins)

Examination Clashes

What to do if you identify you have two or more exam papers timetabled at the same time (a timetable clash). The Exams Officer will have already identified this and will be planning how to resolve the clash for you. Typical arrangements will be:

- False clash – where the boards schedule two papers in the same subject to be taken together – for example, MFL Listening and Reading.
- Back to Back Clash – where there are two different subjects scheduled at the same These will be held in the same session depending on the length of each exam.
- Session change – where there are two different subjects and the total time is greater than three hours one subject may be moved to the other session on the same day

You will receive written notification of the arrangements and you may be asked to make an appointment to see the Exams Officer to discuss the exam day.

Non- Examination Assessment

NEA's are assessments which take place outside of the written examination series
They include:

- Language Orals
- Practical units: Food
- Performance: Music
- Art
- DT
- BTECS

The Rivers Academy West London will notify you of your examination entries and the dates and times of your examinations/assessments. You will be told if your work will be marked by your teacher or by the exam board. If your teacher has marked your work, you have the right to request a breakdown of the marks and to appeal the mark given if you feel that the specification assessment criteria has not been applied fairly. You will be given a schedule of the deadlines for enquiries and who to address your questions to.

Examination Days

Equipment
Make sure you all have your own equipment. In an emergency, it may be possible to borrow limited items from the invigilators. Your pencil case must be **clear**, and all contents must always be visible to the invigilator. You must bring the following with you:

- minimum of 2 pens – black only
- 2 HB pencils
- Ruler (marked with millimetres)
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser

For certain exams you will also need the following:

- Compasses
- Protractor
- Calculator (**without the lid**)
- Coloured pencil crayons
- Highlighters

Pens should be **black ballpoint** or ink pens. **Erasable pens and gel pens are not permitted** as these may be erased by the scanning process. Correction pens/fluids are **NOT** allowed. Highlighters **MUST NOT** be used in your answers but may be used on question papers.

Calculators must be:	**Calculators must not:**
○ 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.	• 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.
The candidate is responsible for the following: ○ the calculator's power supply; ○ the calculator's working condition; ○ clearing anything stored in the calculator.	

Calculators
Check with your teacher well in advance of the examination date that yours conforms to regulations. Calculators with a memory function should be cleared before entering the exam room.

Malpractice
You are encouraged to read the 'Information for candidates' which is shown at the end of this handbook. Please note that to break any of the examination rules or regulations could lead to disqualification from all subjects. The school must report any breach of regulations to the exam board.

JCQ provides information regarding what constitutes malpractice, the following is not an exhaustive list and other instances of malpractice may be identified and considered by the awarding bodies at their discretion:

- 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
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language)

Items in the Exam room

Watches
All watches are banned from the exam venues.

Food and Drink
No food is to be taken into the exam room. Water bottles are permitted and **MUST** be clear and have a spill proof lid. There must be no labelling or writing on the bottle.

Medication
This should be clearly labelled with your name and candidate number and handed to the invigilator before the start of the exam.

Attendance at Examinations
You are responsible for checking your timetable and arriving at school on the day and at the correct time

- You must be wearing full uniform
- 6th form candidates are not permitted to wear hoodies and will be asked to remove them.
- You must have the correct equipment
- You must arrive 45 minutes prior to the start of the exam and register in the Library. Line up outside in the Art quad and wait until you are invited to enter the exam room.

Late arrivals
A candidate who arrives after the start of the examination may be allowed to enter the examination room and sit the examination. This is entirely up to the discretion of the head of centre. If you are permitted to sit the examination, then the exam board will be informed and they will decide whether to accept the script.
A candidate will be considered very late if he/she arrives:

- a) more than one hour after the awarding body's published starting time for an examination which lasts one hour or more, i.e. after 10.00am for a morning examination or after 2.30pm for an afternoon examination.
- b) after the awarding body's published finishing time for an examination that lasts less than one hour.

If you are likely to be late you must:
1. Immediately telephone the school giving your name, year, reason for lateness, and anticipated time of arrival.
2. If you arrive before the scheduled start time of the examination go immediately to the Examination Room.
3. If you arrive at, or after the scheduled start time of the examination please wait in reception and you will be met and escorted to the examination room. If you are travelling with parents/carers, please ask them to stay with you until you are met. Please do not use your mobile phone after the scheduled start time for the examination.

Invigilation Team
The Trust employs a team of fully trained Exam Invigilators. These are school staff and should be treated with the same respect as teachers.

JCQ regulations require students to always listen to and follow their instructions.

Exam Rules

Do's ✓

Clear Bottles with pull up sports top.

Clear Pencil case

Remember to arrive at the exam hall 10 - 15 mins before your exam starts.

Don't ✗

No covered bottles

No Covered Pencil Case

No watches

No Mobile Phones No Earbuds or AirPods

No Smart Glasses

In the examination room

- You must enter the examination room in silence.
- Do not write **anything** on your examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Listen carefully to instructions and notices read out by the invigilators – there may be amendments to the exam paper that you need to know about.
- Check you have the correct question paper – check the subject, paper, and tier of entry
- Read all instructions carefully
- If a subject has a choice of questions, ensure you put the QUESTION NUMBER in the space indicated (otherwise it may not be marked!).
- Your registered legal name must be used on your examination papers.
- If you drop something on the floor do NOT pick it up - please put your hand up clearly and an invigilator will come to you.
- You will not be allowed to leave the examination room early. If you have finished the paper use any time remaining to check over your answers and that you have completed your details correctly.
- When told to do so, stop writing immediately.
- At the end of the examination all work must be handed in – remember to cross out any rough work.
- Invigilators will collect your exam papers and other examination material before you leave the room. Absolute silence must be maintained during this time. Remember you are still under examination conditions until you have left the room/building.
- Question papers, answer booklets and additional paper must NOT be taken from the exam room.
- Remain seated in silence until told to leave the examination room.
- Please leave the room in silence and show consideration for other candidates who may still be working. Please be aware that other rooms may be in use and be silent.

Exam Room

Where you will sit in the exam room

Your examination seating plans will be posted on the exam days outside the hall for GCSE students early morning and early afternoon. A Level seating plan will be available in the sixth form block. The seating plan is subject to change so it is important that you check your seat number and room on the morning of your exam.

Every exam room is set out the same as below…

FRONT:

A1	B1	C1	D…
A2	B2	C2	
A3	B3	C3	
4…			

Where your personal belongings will be stored during your exam

Bags and coats will be stored in the ART Quad, unauthorised materials including switched off mobile phones **Must** be handed into an invigilator on entering the exam venues.

What happens if you become ill during the exam or need to leave the room
Toilet breaks are permitted but please ensure you go before you enter the room. Unless there is a genuine situation then toilet breaks will not be permitted within the **first 15 minutes** or the **last 15 minutes** of the exam. You will lose any time that you take. If you feel unwell during the exam, raise your hand and an Invigilator will help. If you need to leave the room, you will be escorted by the Invigilator. You will receive the full time when you return to the room.

Candidate Absence
If you are unable to attend an exam it is essential you telephone the school first thing in the morning attendance 0208 890 0245.

Please do not leave a message on the school answer machine as this may not be collected until after the start of your examination. Please speak directly with reception/attendance or email dbooth@spacestudiowestlondon.org. You must provide the Exams Officer with a note from your doctor detailing the reason for non- attendance as there may be an opportunity to apply for special consideration to the exam board. If you feel you are still able to attend but are not feeling 100% then we can assess the situation and move you to a different seating location. It is always better to attempt the exam if you can.

Results
Exam results are issued during the second and third week of August. These results are 'provisional' and is not your final certificate. Under normal arrangements, you are invited to come into school from 9.00 am to receive your Statement of Results. Teaching and pastoral staff will be available to offer support and guidance. The dates and arrangements are published on the school website.
If you know you will not be available to collect your own statement of results, then please provide either:

- A stamped address envelope – A5 size. Your results will be posted on the student's results day.
- A written letter of consent detailing who will collect your results on your behalf. The person collecting may be required to show their ID and the copy of the consent letter.

Post-results services
Details of the services available will be available on the school website, this includes access to scripts, reviews of results and appeals procedures. Here you will be informed about the deadlines, fees, and charges for the services. Outcomes of the post-results services will be emailed to the student, so it is essential that a correct forwarding email is provided if you are no longer a student at The Rivers Academy West London. If you wish to understand your results or have a question about your results, then please contact your subject teacher in the first instance.

Certificates
GCE AS/A-level - Certificates will usually be ready last week of term before Christmas.
GCSE – Certificates will usually be ready last week of term before Christmas.
Certificates are not released prior to the pre-arranged dates.
Certificates not collected are retained for 12 months and can be collected by candidates or their pre-authorised representative. After this time, you will need to contact the awarding body to purchase a replacement, this will be at your own expense.

Emergency Evacuation / Lockdown
Evacuation Fire Bell - Hall: You will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will then be escorted through the fire door and lined up in row order on the grassed area and await instructions. Once all clear you will be escorted row by row back to the hall to restart your exam.

Lockdown – Hall: If we are in lockdown you will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will be escorted row by row to the back of the stage behind the curtains and await instructions, once all clear you will be escorted back to your rows to restart the exam.
Evacuation Fire Bell – Girls Gym: You will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times and do not

communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will then be escorted through the fire door and lined up in row order on the grassed area in front of the gyms and await instructions. Once all clear you will be escorted row by row back to the hall to restart your exam.

Lockdown – Girls Gym: If we are in lockdown you will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will be escorted row by row to the large cupboard at the back of the gym and await instructions, once all clear you will be escorted back to your rows to restart the exam.

Evacuation 3A: You will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times and do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will then be escorted through the reception and lined up in row order on the grassed area in front of the gyms and await instructions. Once all clear you will be escorted row by row back to the hall to restart your exam.

Lockdown - 3A: You will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times and do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will then be escorted through to the kitchen. Once all clear you will be escorted back to 3A to restart your exam.

LD Area

Evacuation Fire Bell - LD: You will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will then be escorted through the fire door and lined up in row order in the staff car park and await instructions. Once all clear you will be escorted row by row back to LD to restart your exam.

Lockdown – LD: If we are in lockdown you will be asked to close your exam papers and remain in silence at all times do not communicate with any other students, this will be classed as malpractice. You will be locked inside the class rooms and to sit under the exam desks and await instructions, once all clear you will be escorted back to your rows to restart the exam.

Sunday								
Saturday								
Friday								
Thursday								
Wednesday								
Tuesday								
Monday								
Times								

Monday	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*	*Saturday*	*Sunday*
				1	**2**	**3**
4 ***Bank Holiday***	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**
18	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**
25 ***Start of half term break***	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29** ***End of half term break***	**30**	**31**

June 2026: Examination/Revision Timetable

Monday	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*	*Saturday*	*Sunday*

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
15	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
22	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**
29	**30**					

Exam preparation: tips and techniques

Your study area, is it...	▪ Well lit? ▪ Comfortable but not *too* comfortable?

	▪ Ventilated? ▪ Quiet (if possible)? ▪ Without distractions?
Avoid stress, know what to expect…	▪ Understand the logic of your work. ▪ Make sure you have summarized your key topics.
Give yourself permission to relax….	▪ Take some slow deep breaths. ▪ Go for a short walk. ▪ Dance around the room to one track of a favourite CD. ▪ Work out for three minutes. ▪ Listen to *calm* music. ▪ Have a long *relaxing* bath. ▪ Talk to a friend for an agreed amount of time.
Avoid cramming…	▪ It does not work as well as *regular … spaced … review.*
Avoid wasting time…	▪ Get settled, have all materials to hand. ▪ Define the task, write down an objective. ▪ Break time into manageable chunks. ▪ Establish a routine: 45 minutes study, 5 – 10 minute break. ▪ Manage your breaks, avoid distractions.
Sleeping…	▪ In the weeks before an exam aim for a regular sleep pattern ▪ The night before, keep it the same. Don't stay up all night in a panic!
Revision itself, use…	▪ Mind maps and revision cards. ▪ Mnemonics. ▪ Body parts to remember.
The night before…	▪ Have a good night's sleep, following the regular pattern that you have established – not too early or late to bed. ▪ You should stop doing any work one hour before going to bed, this gives you the right amount of time to relax and wind down before sleeping. ▪ Don't panic! Read a book, meditate, control your breathing and just relax! ▪ Pack all your equipment in your bag.
Breakfast…	▪ Have a healthy balanced breakfast. ▪ ***Do*** eat something, for example, cereal or fruit.
Make sure you get to the exam early…	▪ Before you set off from home, relax and imagine walking calmly to the exam hall and successfully completing the exam. If you see it and believe it, it is more likely to come true.
The exam starts, check the format….	▪ What is compulsory? What is optional? ▪ How many questions do you need to answer? ▪ Do the questions indicate how many marks are awarded to your

	answers? This often tells you how much detail you should include. ▪ Make sure the length of your answers are appropriate to the marks that you can get for them. ▪ Don't assume anything!
Allow reading time, five minutes at the start to…	▪ Work out what questions you will answer. ▪ Look for *key words* and *main ideas* that you recognise and feel comfortable with. ▪ Ask *what* is really being asked? *What* are they testing me on in this question? ▪ Allocate time that you will spend on each answer or section. ▪ Highlight the questions you are going to answer. ▪ Remember – *five minutes reading at first helps avoid fears of floundering.*
Plan your answers…	▪ Underline key words in the question – this will help you break down the question and check you have answered all parts of it. ▪ Work out what concepts the question is referring to. ▪ Draw out your *mind map* that relates to that concept. ▪ This should provide you with a basic plan for your answer – amend it to suit the question, cut out anything irrelevant, add in anything important that isn't already there. ▪ This should only take you five minutes, and then relax because you know what you're going to write, so get writing! ▪ Don't be afraid to write on the paper – you might want to underline words in a question or make very quick notes.
Answering questions…	▪ Decide which question you'll start with; you might like to pick the easiest first to establish a rhythm and build your confidence. ▪ Make sure you do the compulsory questions. ▪ If you are running out of time, complete your questions in the form of notes. ▪ If your mind goes completely blank or you feel really stressed and can't think clearly – try some deep breathing exercises.
Remember to take a ***bottle of water*** (*all labels removed!)* into the exam with you. **No metal containers**	

EXAMINATION COMMAND WORDS

Command word	What you have to do in your answer.	Handy hints to help.
Calculate	Use the numbers given in the question to work out the answer.	Always show your working out and include units
Compare	Describe the similarities and/or differences between two things in the question.	Use comparative words such as 'however,' 'whereas,' 'but,' or 'on the other hand.'
Complete	Answers should be written in the spaces provided e.g. in a table, a graph or in spaces in sentences.	Sometimes the words will come from a list given to you. Always check if you can use the same word twice.
Describe	Give a description of something – what it is it like?	Try to use subject specific words.
Discuss	Consider all the issues raised in the question. Show what you know about them.	After you have done this, you may need to come to a judgement on which is best and why.
Evaluate	Describe the advantages and disadvantages of something.	Use comparative words like 'better than,' 'more than,' 'less than,' 'quicker,' 'more expensive.'
Explain	Give the reasons why or how something has happened.	Use linking words like so,' 'therefore,' 'because,' 'due to,' 'since,' 'this means that.'
Justify	Give your reasons why you believe something.	Use linking words like so,' 'therefore,' 'because,' 'due to,' 'since,' 'this means that.'
List	You only need to write the correct answers with no explanation needed.	Always check how many things need to be in your list and make sure you 'beat' that number with your list.
Outline	Only give the main key facts about the topic.	Check how many marks this question is worth. It is likely to be a small number of marks so you only need a short answer and you won't need to go into too much detail.
State / give / name.	Simply give the answer. Only a short answer is required unless the questions asks for a further explanation.	Always check how many things you have to state / give / name. If it says 'state two…' then make sure you give at least two or you will lose easy marks.
Suggest	You need to apply what you know and come to the answer that you think is correct.	Useful words are 'may,' 'might,' 'could' and 'I think that.'
Use the information in the paragraph / diagram / graph / table to…	The answer must be based on the information you have been given in the question.	Unless the question says otherwise, you don't need to use any other knowledge than what has been given to you in the question.

Contrast connectives

- However
- On the other hand
- Conversely
- In contrast

Addition connectives

- Also
- Furthermore
- Moreover
- In addition

Cause and effect

- Because
- Therefore
- Consequently
- As a result of…

Comparing

- Similar(ly)
- Likewise
- As with…
- Equally

Apendices

Appendix 1
Information for candidates for written examinations

Appendix 2
Warning to Candidates

Appendix 3
Unauthorised items Poster

RESULTS COLLECTION REQUEST

Complete this form if you want someone else to collect your results

For the attention of the Examination Office.

I authorise the person named below to collect my GCSE / A LEVEL / BTEC / CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL (please circle) exam results on my behalf.

Name of Person Collecting Results: _____

Type of ID that will be provided by Person Collecting Results: _____

Pupil Name: _____

Pupil Signature: _____

Date: _____

RESULTS EMAIL REQUEST

Complete this form if you want your results emailed to an address that is **NOT** your school email address.

If you want your results emailed to your personal email address complete this form
but you do need to let us know at mhamblin@rivers-aspirations.org

For the attention of the Examination Office.

Please email my GCSE / A LEVEL / BTEC / CAMBRIDGE NATIONALS (please circle) to the following email address(es)

Email address 1_____

Email address 2_____

Email address 3_____

Student Name: _____

Pupil Signature: _____

Date: _____