



Examination Contingency Plan 2023-2024

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which provides guidance in the publication what schools, colleges, and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that: Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”

SLT: Head teacher, Deputy head.

HOD: Head of department

AB: Awarding bodies

EO: Examination officer

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- ▶ annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- ▶ annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- ▶ sufficient invigilators not recruited

Entries

- ▶ awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- ▶ candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- ▶ awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams

- ▶ invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
- ▶ exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- ▶ candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- ▶ exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
- ▶ internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

Exam time

- ▶ exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- ▶ required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- ▶ candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies

Results and post-results

- ▶ access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- ▶ the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ In a period of extended absence the SLT will nominate a 'deputy' to take responsibility for carrying out the duties of the Exams Officer and would work in consultation with the Head of the Exams Centre (currently Fouzia Butt). Appropriate back-filling of responsibilities would then be decided upon by the Head of the Centre.
- ▶ Exam Boards to be kept informed of the situation at all stages
- ▶ Invigilator information can be accessed through Exam Officers files, Admin to arrange training and carry out DBS checks if needed.
- ▶ Exam Board websites to be accessed by staff and candidates re exam dates, deadlines etc.
- ▶ Exam's Officer emails to be deferred to Deputy so that Exam Boards emails re early/estimated entries etc. deadlines can be met
- ▶ Deputy to arrange booking of rooms throughout exam series.
- ▶ SENCO to arrange extra time informing SLT and invigilators of candidates' names and entitlements
- ▶ Deadlines for internal assessments and samples of work to be prepared by HOD for each subject and given to administration staff to post adhering to deadlines.
- ▶ SLT to carry out assemblies to inform candidates of exam procedures, timetables etc
- ▶ SLT to oversee dispatches of scripts to Exam Boards aided by experienced Invigilators
- ▶ SLT to oversee reports and requests to awarding bodies
- ▶ SLT to oversee the dispatch of results to candidates ensuring that access to results are available
- ▶ SLT to oversee the facilitation of the post results services

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- ▶ candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- ▶ centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- ▶ evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-exams

- ▶ approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- ▶ centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- ▶ modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline

Exam time

- ▶ access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Senior Leadership Team (SLT), working with the Exams Officer to arrange administration of access arrangements (perhaps involving external agencies and professionals) and keep awarding bodies informed of arrangements
- ▶ SLT to arrange staff training to support access arrangement candidates
- ▶ SLT/Exams Officer to ensure access arrangement candidate support for exam rooms

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received.

Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies

Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled

Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking

Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ SLT to work with Exams Officer to ensure deadlines are reached. At all times keeping, the finance manager informed to minimise costs incurred.
- ▶ SLT/Exams Officer to work with other subject staff to meet deadlines re internal assessment marks and candidates' work to be submitted

4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams

Invigilator shortage on peak exam days

Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exams Officer to ensure appropriate number of invigilators are trained to cover all exams and backups available at short notice
- ▶ Arrange regular training sessions
- ▶ Exams Officer to liaise with finance manager re support staff available if necessary (supervised by senior invigilator)
- ▶ The school retains a pool of approximately 3 invigilators.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning

Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days

Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Most exams will be conducted in the MAIN HALL.
- ▶ If required the school can be closed for other years to ensure GCSE exam runs smoothly.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

System failure at final entry deadline and during exams preparation.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The school endeavours to minimise any ICT disruption via resilient design and preventative maintenance.
- ▶ In the event of an issue this would be dealt with the ICT support team (headed by Dr Richard Reed) who test and update the systems on a regular basis. Where such failure impacted on scheduled exams, steps would be taken to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.
- ▶ At all times during the system failure the exams officer will liaise with the Awarding Bodies to minimise disruption and costs incurred

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

If a lockdown is required during the exam/when candidates are in the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

Invigilators will:

- ▶ Tell candidates to stop writing immediately and turn their papers over.
- ▶ collect the attendance register
- ▶ make a note of time when the examination was suspended
- ▶ Instruct candidates to remain silent, leave all examination materials on their desks and hide under exam desk where safe/possible, communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' mode).
- ▶ lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds
- ▶ switch off all lights
- ▶ lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the examination room

Remaining protocol:

- ▶ (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room.
- ▶ Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately
- ▶ The head of centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services.
- ▶ If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following centre policy, the exams officer (or invigilators in the absence of the exams officer) will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure
- ▶ The exams officer will collect all examination papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding bodies.

Ending a lockdown:

- ▶ The lockdown will be ended by either
 - the sound of a defined alarm or
 - the identification/authorisation of Emergency Service officers/SLT/head of centre entering the exam room.
- ▶ A specific word or phrase may be used to confirm that the instruction to end the lockdown is genuine
Invigilators will undertake a head count/register and confirm attendance with the exams officer/SLT 6

- ▶ Where applicable and if advised to do so by SLT/ head of centre, and following JCQ guidelines, if there is sufficient time remaining, candidates may restart their examination

Invigilators will then:

- ▶ ask candidates to return to their desks, remind them they are under exam conditions and allow a settling down period
- ▶ recalculate the revised finish time(s) to allow for the full exam time
- ▶ tell the candidates to turn their papers over and re-start their exam to amend the revised finish time(s) on display to candidates
- ▶ note how long the lockdown lasted on the exam room incident log (to later inform a report to the awarding bodies and where relevant, any centre-wide lockdown recording form/log)

The exams officer will then:

- ▶ provide a report of the incident for awarding bodies (via the special consideration process or as advised by awarding bodies)
- ▶ safely/securely store all collected exam papers and materials pending awarding body advice/guidance

Where applicable/possible/available, SLT/exams officer will

- ▶ negotiate any alternative exam sittings with the awarding bodies
- ▶ offer, arrange and provide support services to staff and candidates

At the earliest opportunity, SLT/head of centre will prepare a communication to parents/carers advising them of events (including relevant actions and outcomes)

Where possible, exams staff and candidates will be invited to attend an assembly lead by the head of centre to discuss the lockdown and offer ongoing support

If this is not possible, communications will be provided via a centre text/email/newsletter and information uploaded to the centre website

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ SLT to manage such incidents
- ▶ Exams Officer to contact relevant awarding bodies to discuss alternative arrangements
- ▶ Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to issue

9. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

- ▶ Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take the appropriate action
- ▶ Centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to issue

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exams Officer to communicate with awarding body for alternative delivery of papers
- ▶ Papers could be printed from awarding body website and photocopied

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exams Officer to store the completed scripts in secure storage until alternative transport is arranged
- ▶ Exams Officer to keep awarding body informed of situation

12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Head teacher/EO to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding body and act upon their advice
- ▶ Head teacher to communicate with students and their parents or carers

13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exams Officer to contact the awarding body and notify them of such incidents and act upon their advice

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions/teaching-time-lostdue-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scriptsguide>