



Exam Contingency Plan 2021/22

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Stephen Locke	
Date of next review	Oct 2022

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
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Exams Manager line manager (Senior leader)	Stephen Locke
Exams Manager	Sarah Graves
SENCo	Jane Elcome
Senior leader(s)	

Contents

Key staff involved in contingency planning	2
Contents	3
Purpose of the plan.....	4
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process	4
1. Exams Manager extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)	4
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	5
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	5
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	6
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	6
6. Failure of IT systems	6
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down).....	7
8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period	7
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open.....	7
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period	7
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.....	7
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts.....	8
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	8
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	8
Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning.....	9
Ofqual	9
JCQ.....	9
GOV.UK.....	9
National Counter Terrorism Security Office	99

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Pate's Grammar School. 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 Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan also confirms Pate's Grammar School's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams Manager 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
- confidential 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

- Exams Assistant to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

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
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Teaching Assistants, Exams Manager and Exams Assistant to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required

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 Manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received

Final entry information not provided to the Exams Manager 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

- The Examinations Manager to liaise with acting Head of Department and/or SLT, if necessary, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the EM will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

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

- The Exams Manager will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- The Exams Manager will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams Manager 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

- The Exams Manager will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays, ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. SLT will work with the EM at all times during such emergencies.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EM, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the AB. At all times during the system failure the EM will liaise with the AB to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- Any cyber attack will be reported to the NCSC and the school will contact local law enforcement and Action Fraud. We will also inform the the DfE by emailing: sector.securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

- The school additionally subscribes to the Cyber Essentials government backed certification scheme.

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

- Exams Manager will liaise with AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to manage all such incidents.

9. 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

- The EM will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EM will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

11. 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 Manager will liaise with ABs to get electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. EM will liaise with IT Department to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. ABs would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, the Exams Manager will seek advice from awarding organisations before arranging any transportation. If there are any examinations where we make our own arrangements for transportation, the EM will investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations. All examination papers will be securely stored until they are dispatched.

13. 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

Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Exams Manager will contact the AB to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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

- The Exams Manager will liaise with SLT to make arrangements to access the results/post-results services at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, or to send them electronically if appropriate. The EM will contact the AB to notify them where appropriate.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- [Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Action for FE Colleges](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education
- [Education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

General contingency guidance

- [Emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [Exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [Checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [School closures](#) from NI Direct
- [Opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [Procedures for handling bomb threats](#) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for Conducting Examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19)
www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

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>

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Checklist for managing bomb threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats