

EXAMINATION CONTINGENCY PLAN

Head Teacher	Anita Spires
Chair of Governors	Katherine Russell
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Purpose of the plan

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

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by information contained in the Joint Contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in 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 and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms Beechwood School 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 where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle.

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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that BEECHWOOD SCHOOL has a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only and responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which 4 Exams Contingency Plan

might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process

1. Exams officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam 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 collect information on qualifications and awarding body specification being delivered.
- Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key days and deadlines.
- Sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained.

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/assessments.

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 assessments marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators.

Exam time

- Exams/assessments not undertaken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- Candidates' scripts not despatched as required 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

- The Exams Officers' line manager is led by a member of SLT. In the event of the Exams Officer being absent. SLT will ensure that the duties are covered by others in the team and members of the SLT, SLT will undertake the role of the Exams Officer with assistance of the Senior Invigilator.
- Senior invigilator to liaise with SLT regarding invigilation.
- Spare keys are located in the key pad safe along with the key pad security code for the secure exam's storage/archive room. Which can be found in the Examinations Officers/Data Managers office. The Data Manager has the security key pad number.
- Safe number holder to check prior to each exam session.

2 SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

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 arrangements requirements.
- centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- Evidence of need to Criteria for Implementation of the Plan
- support normal way of working not collated.
- Pre-exams
- Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body.
- Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet the external deadline.
- Staff providing support to access arrangements not allocated and trained.

Exam time

- Access arrangements candidate support not arranged for exam rooms.

Centre actions:

- The absence of the SENDCO would be led by the SENCOs' line manager and a by Deputy SENCo to take on roles and responsibilities of SENCo;
- SENCo line manager to arrange regular meetings with Deputy SENCo to offer support and practical help; Deputy SENCo to liaise with other SENCOs

3 Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken include:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Exams Officer on time, resulting in pre-release information not being received.
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- 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 of other penalty fees being charge by awarding bodies.
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines.
- 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

Centre actions:

- The extended absence of any teaching staff, will be managed by the second in charge liaising with SLT, Examinations Officer and remaining teaching.
- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Curriculum leaders should take responsibility for any missing entries, coursework marks and any assessment marks in the absence of a member of teaching staff.

- Entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can always be made at a later date to confirm final entries.

4 Invigilators – Lack of Appropriately Trained Invigilators or Invigilator Absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams.
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days.
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam.

Centre actions:

- The School contacts an agency who provide trained invigilators, or alternative the School employs LSA staff who can manage the invigilation of exams under the instruction of the Chief Invigilator or a member of the Continuity Team.
- Exams Officer to schedule at least one invigilator over the minimum ratio requirement for all external examinations.

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 the exams timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exams days.
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time.

Centre actions:

- In an emergency the Sports Hall could be utilised for examination purposes. Liaise with other schools in the area. Contact Exam Board for advice.
- Herschel Grammar School (sports Centre) is an alternative centre (during exams/ results days)
Berkshire, Northampton Ave, Slough SL1 3BW
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Communication details: Year level leader / admins will contact candidates by emails and/or by telephone, to inform them of the changes.
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (After the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration
- IT Support should be on call from the morning of an exam day in case laptops are required to be moved and set up in an alternative venue; SENCO to be on call from the morning of an exam to assess a new venue for suitability of access arrangements and action adjustments if necessary.

6 Failure of the 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:

- Liaise with IT support in school. Contact the exam board for advice and use IT facilities at another school.
- Send final entries to Exam boards at least one week before final entry deadline, to give time to sort out any MIS system failure, or entries can be completed on exam board websites; Loss of student NEA work, grades recorded, etc., can be restored via IT backups; Results sheets can be printed externally from exam board websites at results release time if required.

7 Disruption of Teaching Time – 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:

- The school will communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and an alternate venue will be used.

8 Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan

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

Centre actions:

- The centre will communicate with the relevant organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issues.
- Find alternative accommodation to sit the exam.
- Offer the candidates an opportunity to sit any examination missed at the next available series, if possible.
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirement.
- Approach other schools to use their facilities to conduct the exams.

9 Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

Centre actions:

- Find alternative accommodation.
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of

an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

- Offer the candidates an opportunity to sit any examination missed at the next available series, if possible.
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirement.
- Herschel Grammar School (sports Centre) is an alternative centre (during exams/ results days)
Berkshire, Northampton Ave, Slough SL1 3BW
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Communication details: Year level leader / admins will contact candidates by emails and/or by telephone, to inform them of the changes.
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (After the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration
- IT Support should be on call from the morning of an exam day in case laptops are required to be moved and set up in an alternative venue; SENCO to be on call from the morning of an exam to assess a new venue for suitability of access arrangements and action adjustments if necessary.

10 Disruption in the Distribution of Examinations Papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of the examination scripts to the centre in advance of the examinations.

Centre actions:

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.

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:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations.
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

12 Assessment Evidence is not Available to be Marked**Criteria or implementation of the plan**

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

Centre actions:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body.
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

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 facilitate post reports services.

Centre advice:

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice.
- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body.
- Herschel Grammar School is an alternative centre (results days)
Berkshire, Northampton Ave, Slough SL1 3BW
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to about the new venue.
- Communication details: Year level leader / admins will contact candidates by emails and/or by telephone, to inform them of the changes.
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue.
- make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post-results requests are not possible

14 Cyber Security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

The Department for Education and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been made aware of an increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections affecting the education sector recently.

Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by: ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training.

The training must include:

- the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
- keeping all account details strictly confidential;
- the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access; • how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
- an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;...
- the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

JCQ Policies - TAHS Exam Contingency Plan 7 It is important that senior leaders in education settings understand the nature of the threat and the potential for ransomware to cause considerable damage to their institutions in terms of lost data and access to critical services.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system is affected by a cyber-attack

Centre actions:

- Network Manager/IT department to back up data
- The backups are held offline
- Systems for restoring services and recovering data from the backups are tested and reliable
- IT department to make available some standalone laptops set up for exam conditions, for use by students who need a word processor to complete their exams. Laptops to later be directly connected to a printer to print out the exam work.
- In the event of an attack the Centre will enact the 'Incident Management Plan'
- Contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- Contact the local law enforcement and Action Fraud
- Inform the DfE by emailing: securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

15 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria:

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special considerations.