



Examinations Contingency Plan 2024

Recommended by:	Senior Vice Principal
Recommendation Date	18 th November 2024
Ratified by:	LAGB
Signed:	<i>J Goodman</i>
Position on the board	Chair of Governors
Ratification Date	26 th November 2024
Next Review:	November 2025
Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):	Central/School

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Gospel Oak School. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed 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 information contained in the Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland where it is stated that **“Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.”** [Preparing for disruption to examinations - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

Summary of centre and awarding body responsibilities

Examination centres are responsible for:

- Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres’ general emergency planning
- Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding bodies
- Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- Assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Awarding bodies are responsible for:

- Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- Evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exams 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 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/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-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 e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- Results and post-results access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates and the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions

- The Exams Officer is to meet fortnightly with SLT exams link so that in the event of the long-term absence the senior leadership team are aware of where the plans are at for the exams season and entries.
- There are two additional key holders for the secure cupboard as agreed by the head of centre. There are no other authorised members of staff allowed into the secure cupboard unless accompanied by the agreed keyholders.
- If the Exams Officer is able to, then they will communicate directly with the school daily either via email or telephone.
- In the event of the Exams Officer not being able to communicate with the school then the escalation process (detailed in point 15) will be implemented.
- The Exams Officer publishes deadline dates in advance for exam entries, coursework, controlled assessments, non-examination assessments and access arrangements so that the senior leadership team and SENDCO can plan to these dates.
- If the Exams Officer is absent for result days, then the Data Manager and SLT exams link will download the results and inform the senior leadership team. The senior leadership team will lead distribution of results to the students.
- The Data Manager and SLT Exams link will have access to the Exams Officer's passwords to be able to access the secure awarding body sites to be able to download results and moderator's reports.

2. SENDCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle Criteria for implementation of the plan

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 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
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions

- If the SENDCO is on extended absence, assistant SENDCO and SENDCO line manager will inform the Exams Officer of any outstanding access arrangement applications. The Exams Officer will then source an alternative qualified assessor so that the applications can be submitted before the deadline date. The SEND teams will check that the evidence is collated for the application.
- On the SEND register the SENDCO includes all the information regarding modified papers and access arrangements for each qualifying student. The SENDCO and Exams Officer meet monthly to discuss any additional changes or amendments in case of any extended SENDCO absence.

- The SENDCO and the Exams Officer meet regularly to check the access arrangements are correct within the examinations data base for students that require readers, extra time, scribes etc.
- The Exams Officer liaises with the line manager and senior leadership team, in advance of the exam season, to allocate rooms, scribes, readers and invigilators for students with access arrangements.
- The information is communicated to students and parents/carers in advance of the exam season.

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

Centre actions

- Deadlines dates for the submission of estimated entries, pre-release information, exam entries, coursework, controlled assessments and non-examination assessments are circulated to the senior leadership team, C/SALs and SENCO in advance. If a C/SAL is absent for entries or assessment submission then, where applicable; the deputy head of department or senior leadership team line manager will be able to assist the Exams Officer in completion of these tasks.

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 days of an exam

Centre actions

- The Exams Officer reviews the bank of invigilators continually throughout the year.
- The Exams Officer contacts invigilators at the start of the school year to check availability and arrange update meeting
- Early identification of the peak days from summer exam schedules
- Back-up invigilators organised where possible and if required use agency staff.
- All support staff trained using 'Exams Office' online training module to ensure a bank of trained staff
- Member of senior leadership team available on peak exam times

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 expected incident at exam time

Centre actions

- SLT to look at alternative venues (eg Tipton Sports Academy) or contact other centres.
- Contact awarding bodies

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry stage
- MIS system failure during exam preparation

- MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions

- MIS/Arbor is backed up.

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

- Centre communicates with parents/carers and students about the disruptions and provide appropriate work on the school website,
- Find alternative venue for exam classes (eg Tipton Sports Academy)

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

- Allow for delayed start time (30 minutes later than published time) and inform students of the very late arrival procedures
- Contact awarding bodies to see if exam can be taken elsewhere
- Offer candidates opportunity to sit missed exams in next available series
- Apply for 'special consideration' if candidates have completed a sufficient percentage of the assessment and the circumstances are valid

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.

Centre actions

- If possible open school for exam candidates only.
- Look for an alternate venue and contact awarding bodies for approval
- Offer candidates opportunity to sit missed exams in next available series
- Apply for special considerations
- Keep parents/carers and candidates informed.

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions

- Contact awarding bodies to request electronic papers via secure websites.
- Centre to discuss alternative delivery of papers to the centre (including collection)

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

- Contact courier helpline to arrange additional collection
- Keep papers in secure storage until collection
- Contact awarding bodies and arrange alternative courier collection with their approval.
- Take to approved Parcelforce worldwide post office, ensure log is signed.

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

- Apply for special consideration. Awarding bodies to apply mark based on performance in other papers or assessments
- Offer candidates opportunity to re-sit at next 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 to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions

- Senior leadership team to arrange alternative venue or share with another local school
- Contact candidates and parents
- Prioritise candidates with UCAS applications
- Make post-results requests using paper applications if unable to use the online services.

14. Disruption due to a cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

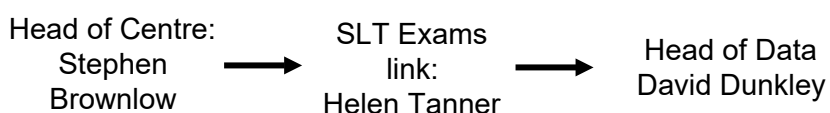
Centre is unable to access IT facilities within the school due to a ransomware or cyber-attack.

Centre actions

- The Exams Officer will first ensure there is no compromise to secure material. If there is a breach of security relevant exam boards will be notified as soon as possible.
- During the entry process, paper signed copies of entries will be retained by the exams officer; entries can be made off site using the exam board secure websites
- Exam delivery—should an attack take place during the exam series word processors not connected to the school system will be used and the work saved and printed not using the school network.
- If the exams officer faces any other issues, exam boards will be contacted and advice sought about any actions that need to be taken. All exam board extranet sites can be accessed remotely and do not need the school network.

15. Escalation Process

Should the Head of Centre be absent the responsibility will be delegated as follows:



Should the exams officer be absent for key timings or the running of exams the responsibility will be as follows:

