

EXAMINATIONS CONTINGENCY PLAN

Last Reviewed: March 2023



Joint Council for
Qualifications

**Produced on behalf of: AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC Notice to
Centres – examination contingency plan/examinations policy
(For the attention of heads of centre, senior leaders and examination
officers)**

For the academic year 2015/16, and **with effect from the June 2016
examination series onwards**, all centres **must** have an examination
contingency plan/examinations policy on file for inspection.

The examination contingency plan/examinations policy should cover all aspects of examination administration. It will allow senior leaders to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration and any adverse impact on students, should the examinations officer be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle.

In order to reduce bureaucracy and burden for schools and colleges a particular format or template will not be specified. We believe that senior leaders within schools and colleges are best placed to determine their own examination contingency plan/examinations policy.

The Joint contingency plan for the examinations system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which can be downloaded from Ofqual's website, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>) is a good starting point. It will provide a framework for senior leaders to build and shape a plan/policy in light of their local circumstances.

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 Ken Stimpson Community 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.”

CAUSES OF POTENTIAL DISRUPTION TO THE EXAM PROCESS

1. EXAM OFFICER EXTENDED ABSENCE AT KEY POINTS IN THE EXAM PROCESS

- 1.1 The Exams Office is structured with an Exams Officer, an Exams and Assessment Assistant and overseen by an Assistant Principal.
- 1.2 In a period of extended absence the Exams and Assessment Assistant would take responsibility for carrying out the duties of the Exams Officer and would work in consultation with the Assistant Principal. Appropriate back-filling of

responsibilities would then be decided upon by the Assistant Principal. In the unlikely eventuality of both the Exam Officer and Exams and Assessment Assistant, the Assistant Principal line managing exams would fulfill the role, with appropriate administrative support.

- 1.3 All members of the invigilating team regularly receive training and colleagues involved in the administration of key processes are trained on how to carry out processes and who to contact in extremis.

2. SENCO EXTENDED ABSENCE AT KEY POINTS IN THE EXAM CYCLE

- 2.1 In the event of the extended absence of the SENCO, appropriate back-filling of responsibilities would be decided upon by the Principal who is the Head of Centre.

3. HEAD OF FACULTY ABSENCE AT KEY POINTS IN THE EXAM CYCLE

- 3.1 In the event of a period of extended absence of a Head of Faculty, the Deputy Head of Faculty or Subject Leader will step up, assisted by their Leadership Team link. If there is no Second in Faculty, then the Leadership Team link will take responsibility for examination matters.

4. TEACHING STAFF EXTENDED ABSENCE AT KEY POINTS IN THE EXAM CYCLE

- 4.1 In the event of a period of extended absence of a member of the teaching staff, the Head of Faculty / Subject Leader would arrange teaching cover from within the staff team and/or the wider staffing establishment at the School. The Leadership Team Link and Principal must be informed of any interim arrangements put in place within subject areas.
- 4.2 New staff providing cover would be briefed as part of their induction process on arrangements for assessment and examinations. Their practice in terms of assessments would be monitored by the Head of Faculty.

5. INVIGILATORS - LACK OF APPROPRIATELY TRAINED INVIGILATORS OR INVIGILATOR ABSENCE

- 5.1 New invigilators undergo training by the Exams Officer and complete a period of shadowing, following appointment. This includes a full DBS check, safeguarding training and awareness of the Prevent strategy. They are permitted to work independently once they, and the Exams Officer are happy that they are competent and confident in processes and procedures. Annual training sessions are held in October for all invigilators in order to refresh their knowledge and communicate JCQ regulation changes and update local information. The School retains a pool of approximately 20 invigilators. When invigilators resign/retire from the pool, recruitment procedures are begun. Within the wider School staff, colleagues are required to assist during main exam sessions (mainly whole year examinations) and are trained by the Exams Officer with regard to their responsibilities and duties. Minor absence issues (such as an invigilator calling in sick) are covered by a member of the Exams team or attempts are made to contact another invigilator from the pool.

6. EXAM ROOMS - LACK OF APPROPRIATE ROOMS OR MAIN VENUES UNAVAILABLE AT SHORT NOTICE

- 6.1 The majority of exams are accommodated in the Assembly Hall, Dance Studios, Sports Hall, IT Room 3L06 and small Post 16 classrooms / ICT suites and the exam team works closely in order to utilise rooms effectively.

7. FAILURE OF ICT SYSTEMS

- 7.1 The School endeavors to minimise any ICT disruption via resilient design and preventative maintenance. In the event of an issue this would be dealt with the IT Services Team 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.

8. CENTRE UNABLE TO OPEN AS NORMAL DURING THE EXAMS PERIOD

- 8.1 In the event of the Centre not being able to open as normal, appropriate communication with the relevant Awarding Bodies would be undertaken by the Exams Officer and alternative options would be explored such as moving exams to an external location (such as other local schools) and appropriate transport arrangements would be made. All arrangements would be agreed with the Awarding Body before being put in place. In such instances, details would be communicated to candidates via the school's website, email and text facilities. Staff involved in exams (including invigilators) would be contacted by email, telephone and text.

9. CANDIDATES UNABLE TO TAKE EXAMINATIONS BECAUSE OF A CRISIS – CENTRE REMAINS OPEN

- 8.2 Response is dependent on the type of issue. If a candidate is able to sit the exam but cannot attend the Centre due to a crisis, appropriate communication with the relevant Awarding Bodies would be undertaken by the Exams Officer and alternative options would be explored (home, hospital, alternative Centre etc.). Where possible school staff will collect students missing from the start of a public examination and attempt to bring them into school prior to the published JCQ start time (or within the permissible late start time) for that particular examination. These students are kept under supervision and not allowed access to mobile devices. Appropriate use of Special Consideration policies would be applied should the candidate/candidates be unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances and where alternative arrangements could not be made or are not agreed by the Awarding Body.

10. DISRUPTION TO THE TRANSPORTATION OF COMPLETED EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

- 10.1 All scripts are returned using the designated dispatch methods prescribed by the Awarding Body concerned. Where this becomes unavailable or inappropriate, the Awarding Body will be contacted to discuss suitable alternatives.

11. ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE TO BE MARKED OR NOT SUBMITTED ON TIME

- 11.1 In the event of large scale damage or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked, the Exam Officer would notify the Awarding Body immediately for advice and further instructions. Student marks would be submitted based on appropriate evidence and candidates would be given the opportunity to retake in a subsequent series. Candidate coursework / NEAs should be kept securely within the school. All coursework / NEAs should be marked in a timely manner. Work must be handed directly to a member of the Exams team prior to the examination board deadline. Work will be 'signed in' by a member of the Exams team and a record of this kept. Work should not be submitted out of hours.

12. CENTRE UNABLE TO DISTRIBUTE RESULTS AS NORMAL

- 12.1 The Centre distributes the results 'as normal' via collection by learner. Where learners do not collect results in person, these will be kept securely in school until the start of the new year, where they are made available for collection by the student. Results will only be given to a parent/carer with a signed letter from the student.

FURTHER GUIDANCE TO INFORM AND IMPLEMENT CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Ofqual

Joint Contingency Plan in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/16235/1/2012-12-11-joint-contingency-plan-november-2012.pdf>

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-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts guide - Contingency planning

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

JCQ

Guidance on *alternative site arrangements* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office>

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

Guidance on *access arrangements and special consideration*

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