



St James School

Policy: Examination Contingency Plan

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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 St James. 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.

At all times, the Examinations Officer and Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

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 (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle that may not be undertaken include:

- *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 released for them;
 - 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;
 - the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of another Exams officer within the TWMAT.

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 that may not be undertaken include:

- *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:

- The Assistant SENCO and Examinations Officer 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 may include:

- 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:

- The Examinations Officer 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 EO 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:

- The Examinations Officer 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 Examinations Officer will liaise with the Assistant SENCO and Line manager to Admin so that school staff are 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 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:

- The EO will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.
- 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. The SLT will work with the EO 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:

- The EO, 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 EO will liaise with the AB to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

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:

- SLT to manage all such incidents whilst in communication with EO to make sure all JCQ requirements are fully met.

8. 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

*In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.”

Centre actions:

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

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:

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

10. 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:

- The EO will contact the AB to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements

11. 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:

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

12. 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:

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

*information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

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/forms>

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>