**EXAMINATIONS CONTINGENCY PLAN**

**POLICY**

**2023-24**

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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 Charles Darwin School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on the exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*  This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to *“have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer or others be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”*

# Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

Cases of Covid-19 may affect school site, Pupils and School Staff resulting in partial closure or extended periods of absences or self-isolation.

### Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle are not undertaken, these may include

* **Planning**
* data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
* 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, 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
* the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

* SLT (LKe) to appoint a suitable Deputy Examinations Officer (SHa)as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the Examinations Officer remit.
* Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to SLT and members of the exam team and to keep policies and procedures up to date

### 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
* 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

* (LKe)SLT to liaise with LD Department and select a suitable Deputy SENCo (Swi/MFo) as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the SENCo remit.
* Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to SLT
* Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are always up to date

### Head of Centre/Line manager for exams extended absence at key points in the cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

* Support and guidance on the examinations process.

Centre Actions

* Appoint a member of the senior leadership team (MBo/RKe) to provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series.

### Heads of Department 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

* SLT (LKe) to ensure departmental continuity by requesting an alternative member of the department takes responsibility for the actions above.

### 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:

* Examinations Officer to maintain a list of suitable candidates.
* Examinations Officer to ensure that capacity is never exceeded on any one day.
* Examinations Officer to review training procedures regularly and put in place additional training as required
* Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Exams Day Contingency Plan is in place (Appendix 1)
* Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place (Appendix 2)

### 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 unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions:

* Pre-planning at all stages is essential.
* Examinations Officer to continually review all stages of the process.
* Examinations Officer to liaise with STo/LKe to identify alternative venue for emergency accommodation.
* Emergency Evacuation plan should be in place (Appendix 2)

### Cyber-Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

* MIS system unavailable at final entry deadline
* MIS system unavailable during exams preparation
* MIS system unavailable at results time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

* Entries and preparation to be done as soon as possible to avoid problems due to cyber-attack
* IT department to be aware of the importance of exams data.
* IT department to be aware and have safeguards in place to minimise risk and guard against cyber-attack
* Examinations officer to contact exam boards if needed and inform of cyber-attack. Alternative methods of obtaining and distribution of results to be provided by exam boards.

### 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
* MIS System failure due to cyber attack

Centre actions:

* Entries and Preparation to be made in advance to avoid late problems due to IT failure
* IT department to be aware of importance of Examination data.
* Examinations Officer to contact all Examination Boards (see Appendix 1 for telephone numbers) for alternative route for dissemination of results.
* IT department to be aware of possibilities for Cyber attack and to minimise risk.

### 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 centre to communicate with parents, carers, and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
* Centre to investigate alternatives for students with imminent exams.
* Examinations Officer to advise the Examination Boards as appropriate.
* Remote teaching and learning systems to be used for all year groups.
* In very extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.
* National Covid-19 extraordinary plans for examination series may need to be put in place by the Government.

### Candidates at risk of being 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 centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers, and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
* Options that enable candidates to take their examinations may include moving the start time for all candidates.
* Rules for late arrivals may be needed to be put into actions (JCQ)
* Candidates who are unable to sit the examination may meet the criteria for special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons.
* Centre to liaise with Exam Boards to sit exams at a different venue in extremis.
* Awarding bodies contingency day at the end of the summer examination season may be used in the event of national or local disruption to examinations
* Should a significant number of candidates need to be isolated due to sickness then seek alternative accommodation within the Centre, invigilation cover and advise the lead first aider.
* If appropriate apply for special consideration for those affected to the appropriate Exam Boards.
* National Covid-19 extraordinary plans for examination series may need to be put in place by the Government.

### 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:

Centre actions:

* The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
* Arrange with Exam Boards for alternative means of receiving papers either electronically or alternative courier.
* Examinations Officer to ensure papers are kept securely until needed.

### Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

Centre may be at risk of being unable to open due to extreme weather or infection rates and other factors putting candidates and staff at risk.

Centre Actions:

* The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe to hold examinations at the centre lies with the head of centre.
* Head of centre must take advice or follow instructions from relevant local or national agencies
* Examination boards must be informed.
* If examinations are severely disrupted the exam board regulators have issued a contingency plan, additional support and guidance is available from examination boards.
* Special consideration may be available if candidates meet the criteria.

### 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 centre to communicate with relevant Exam Boards at the outset to resolve the issue.
* Alternative transport should only be used with the agreement of the relevant Exam Boards.
* Scripts must be stored securely until such time transport is confirmed.

### Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

* Large scale damage to/destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Centre actions:

* It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to pupils and their parents or carers.
* The Exam Boards may generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other evidence, as defined by the Exam Boards and the regulators.
* It may be necessary for the candidates to retake the assessment at the next available opportunity.

### Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

* Centre is unable to access the centre or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions:

* Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
* Arrange to access results at an alternative site. (Biggin Hill Primary School)
* Inform staff, pupils, and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.

# Appendix 1: Exams Day Contingency plan

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Exam Item**  | **Location/ Holders Name**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Keys to Secure Storage for exam papers and exam stationery  | LCl/Arl keyholders  Code needed | LCl  |
| Exams Office – Centre Timetable   | Timetable widely published  | LCl  |
| Seating plans   | In exam trays.  | Invigilators  |
| Exam cards / setting out of exam rooms / notices etc.  | On desk. Attendance sheets in exam cupboard in plastic wallets. Notices in Exams office | Cards produced by LCl/ArlSet up by invigilators  |
| Invigilators   | LCl/ARl to organise  |  LCl |
| Access Arrangements (incl. Cover sheets)  | LCl/ASWi/MFo  | LCl |
| Script envelopes / Examiner address labels  | In drawers by door  | LCl |
| Exam clashes   | Resolved on individual Timetables  |  LCl |
| Collection of scripts   | Invigilators  | Invigilators  |
| Collation of scripts  | Invigilators Checked off on official attendance registers Official attendance sheets completed before posting  | Invigilators / LCl  |
| Completion of proof of posting form / posting scripts  | ParcelForce folder | LCl  |
| **Awarding Bodies** WJEC AQA OCR OCRPearsonLIBF | Telephone02920 265 000 0800 197 7162 01223 553 998 02476 85150908444 632 535 01227 828234 | emailinfo@wjec.co.ukeos@aqa.org.ukgeneral.qualifications@ocr.org.ukvocational.qualifications@ocr.org.ukexamsofficers@pearson.comfcexams@libf.ac.uk |

# Appendix 2: IN A FIRE ALARM (or similar emergency)

1. **STOP** candidates writing and advise them to close their answer booklets. Make a note of the time and how long the exam has been going on**.**
2. Candidates should be advised to close answer booklets/combined question and answer booklets**.**
3. **GYM/MAIN HALL/SPORTS HALL LEAVE SCRIPTS IN PLACE** **but collect the** **seating plan/attendance register.** Candidates **MUST** remain in silence. If required to leave the building using the fire exit doors one invigilator goes outside first, then leads the pupils in an orderly manner to assemble on the Astroturf and wait for a member of Staff to arrive.
4. **MEETINGS/CLASSROOM** small exams: scripts and Question papers may be removed by the invigilator and kept secure if this seems appropriate. Collect the seating plan/attendance and supervise pupils evacuation of the building with an invigilator and assemble on the Astroturf at the rear of the school.

**SILENCE MUST BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN CANDIDATES AT ALL TIMES**

1. Any bags and personal belongings must be left, remind pupils that they are under exam conditions and could be disqualified if they breach these. One invigilator should take the attendance register and seating plan along with a pen to take a register and ensure all pupils are accounted for.
2. **RETURN TO EXAM AFTER EMERGENCY:** When candidates are able to resume their seats, ensure that they draw a horizontal line across their script at the point where the work was interrupted**.**
3. **Change the finish times stated on the board to enable them to have the full amount of time remaining.**
4. Report must be sent to the awarding body. Ensure the Examinations Officer has full details of the timings of the emergency and the action taken using the exam incident log (appendix 3)

Exams extension: 246, 235,

# Appendix 3: Exam Room Incident Log

This incident log is for the exams officer or invigilator(s) to use to record any irregularities that may happen in the exam room at the point of occurrence.

*All irregularities* **must** *be recorded.*

*An exam room incident log should be used to record any irregularities.* [JCQ ICE 19]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Exam** | **Room** | **Start** | **Finish** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Invigilators** |
|  |
|  |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time**  | **Incident description**  |
|   |         Recorded by:  |
|   |          Recorded by:  |

After the exam(s) in this room have concluded, incidents recorded here will inform required follow-up actions or reports to awarding bodies. The incident log will be affixed to the seating plan, and a copy of the attendance register(s), for this exam room session.

# 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*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/jointcontingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northernireland](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

### JCQ

*General regulations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations> Guidance on *alternative site arrangements* <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>  *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations> *A guide to the special consideration process* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

### 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-lostdue-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: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scriptsguide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide)

*GOV.UK Coronavirus information*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>