



# EXAM 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 Rotherham Aspire. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked 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 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 be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”

## 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 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
- The facilitation of the post-results services

### Centre actions:

- Exam time line created for assessment office staff
- JCQ key dates document saved on network
- Shadowing/training of staff on timetabling, invigilation arrangements
- SL for assessment and exams to take a lead on exam admin

## 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 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:

- Lead TA for exam access to carryout testing as usual and SEN admin to process applications but a
- SENCO from the learning trust would be asked to sign off official paperwork
- Lead TA for exams to allocate and assign TA's for candidate support.
- Exams officer/Lead TA for exams to train any new staff

### **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:

- Second in department/SLT link to provide information on estimates/final exam entries/internal assessment marks

### **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:

- Ensure that there is an appropriate bank of invigilation staff based on estimate entries/trial exam info
- Advise invigilators may be called on at last minute to cover
- Employ invigilation staff from an external agency

## **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 unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions:

- Use of the sports hall or local community centre if main hall is unavailable.

## **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:

- If MIS system failure occurred then entries would be submitted online using secure exam board sites
- If MIS failure occurred during exam prep time then manual seating plans and timetables would be issued
- If MIS failure occurred at results release time then results would be downloaded via the boards secure sites.

## **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
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

Centre actions:

- Prioritise candidate who have exams soon
- Have contingency plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both
- Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series

## **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
- 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.

Centre actions:

- Identify whether an alternate venue would be suitable
- If possible offer opportunity to sit exam in next season
- Apply to awarding bodies for special consideration providing they have met the requirements

## **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
- A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions:

- Open for exam candidates only if possible
- Use alternate venue in agreement with JCQ guidance
- Apply for awarding body special consideration
- Offer opportunity to resit in another exam season if possible

## **10. 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
- The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.

Centre actions:

- Print off electronic copies of exam papers sent by awarding bodies and store under secure conditions

## **11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts
- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

Centre actions:

- Seek advice from awarding bodies
- Do not make own arrangements for transportation without prior approval from awarding bodies



## **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
- It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers.

Centre actions:

- Awarding organisations generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators
- Candidates retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible

## **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
- Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.

Centre actions:

- Make arrangements to access results at an alternate site
- Share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible.

## **Causes 7-13**

All scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to 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

<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>

### **JCQ**

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

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>

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>

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>