

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 Larkmead 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.

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*
 - candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
 - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
 - 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 to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role / task. This would usually be the Exams Assistant. Extra help could be called on from the Lead Invigilator, currently Ros Bygrave.
 - Extra Hours should be allocated to the deputy to ensure there are sufficient hours to cover the work required.

- Extra help could be sought by networking with staff from other local centres.
- Refer to www.theexamsoffice.org for detailed instructions on all exam procedures. (A Valuable source of information)
- Relief staff to be given access to secure storage procedures, including key codes for the doors, usernames and passwords for the staff network and exams websites
- Always report long term absence to the Exam Boards and Sue Donkersly (Scomis) so they are aware of the situation. They are quite often prepared to help and can be flexible with deadlines etc in these circumstances.

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:

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role / task.
- SLT to appoint qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the SENCo.
- Approval from exam boards and exam arrangements could be passed to the Exams Office – with sufficient warning and planning time.
- Lead TA to arrange student support during all exams.

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:

- HOF's/ HOD's should take responsibility for any missing entries, coursework marks and any assessment marks in the absence of a member of teaching staff.
- Entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can always be made at a later date to confirm final entries.

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:

- First check availability of other invigilators who said they were available for that slot.
- Check 'freed staff' to see if there is anyone else available who has not been used from that teaching period. (Summer season - Daily staff timetables will be in the red Summer Timetable file)
- Check with cover to see if they have any free staff.
- See if it is possible to amalgamate any of the access arrangement rooms to release an invigilator.
- As a last resort, call upon DOL's or SLT to invigilate.

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:

- A Clear rooming plan for exams should be determined at the beginning of the Academic year.
2015 – 2016 Default exam rooms - Gym, Rooms 37, 16, 17, 7 & 8
- Room bookings must be made early enough in advance to ensure there are sufficient rooms for exam students.
- If there is an emergency on the day, the free room calendar must be checked first and moves made accordingly.
- If all students are in exams at any one time, then the rooms used by that Year group in that period, should be free and can be booked for exams.
- If no possibility of any free rooms, refer to SLT for advice.

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:

- All Exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid this issue in the first place. If the entries are left to the last minute and there is an IT failure, firstly ring the relevant exam boards to explain (They may give you an extension, but get that in writing).
- Try to access SIMS through another computer i.e. from home, or another SIMS user - John Mason School.
- Check that the IT department are aware of the exam results days to ensure smooth running of downloads.

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:

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- In the case of modular courses, Larkmead School may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.
- Centre should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

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:

- Centre to open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

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:

- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centre to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centre to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will **not** apply.

10. Exam Papers not arrived in time / Students issued with wrong exam papers.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to sit exam due to wrong paper being delivered.
- Examination papers not delivered to school on time.

Centre actions:

- Centre will check all exam papers upon arrival in school and will alert the appropriate Awarding Bodies of any discrepancies.
- If this happens on the day of the exam, contact the Exam Boards immediately. Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.

- Awarding organisations to fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible.
- The Examinations Officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored 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

Centre actions:

- In the first instance centres to seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. Larkmead School should **not** to make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- Centre must ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. All exams scripts must be stored in the secure Exams Office. If this is not accessible, then in the safe in the Main Front Office.

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:

- Notify Awarding Bodies immediately.
- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- Candidates to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.

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:

- Centre to notify Awarding Bodies
- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site (Possible to access from home)
- Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible. (Must be a Scomis centre – try John Mason School)

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>