



Westbridge Academy

Exams Contingency

Policy 2024-2025



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1. Aims

This plan aims to:

- Examine potential risks and issues that could disrupt the management and administration of exams or assessments
- Mitigate the impact of disruptions to exam/assessment administration and to candidates, by providing actions or procedures to follow

2. Legislation and guidance

This plan complies with the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ) general regulations for approved centres, which require all centres to have an up to date and written examination contingency plan.

It's also based on:

- Ofqual's guidance on contingency planning
- JCQ's guidance on preparing for disruption to examinations and guidance for centres on cyber security

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Head of centre

The head of centre is Emily Duque.

They are responsible for making sure that:

- A written examination contingency plan/examinations policy is in place, and covers all aspects of exam/assessment administration
- Staff are aware of these plans
- There are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts (see section 4)

3.2 Senior designated contact(s)

The senior designated contact(s) must be available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results-related during the summer holidays. These are Head of Centre (Emily Duque), Deputy CEO (Lucy Collins) and Head Teacher (Carey Fish).

3.3 Examinations officer

The examinations officer is a distinct/separate role to the head of centre and is responsible for:

- Appointing and training a member of staff as an examinations assistant who can take over their responsibilities in the event of their absence

3.4 Staff and invigilators

Staff and invigilators involved in the centre's exam/assessment process are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the contingency plan.

4. Cyber security arrangements

Exam/assessment planning includes appropriate preventive measure against issues relating to cyber security, for example, candidates' work is backed up on 2 separate devices, including 1 off-site back-up.

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- Providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- Providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts
- Enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- Updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery options
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems, in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the [JCQ guidance for centres on cyber security](#). (authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements)
- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

5. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Deputy CEO and Trust Head Teacher every year in the autumn term. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trust board.

6. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Assessment policy
- Parkside exams policy
- Westbridge exams policy
- Data protection policy
- RT Staff Handbook – Schedule 15 ICT & Communications Policy

7. Contingency plan

7.1 Alternative site(s)

If examinations/assessments cannot be conducted at the centre's registered address, the alternative sites are:

- Parkside Academy (291 Spring Road, Ipswich, IP4 5ND)
- St. Christopher's Academy (103a Renfrew Road, Ipswich, IP4 3HG)
- Raedwald Trust Office (76 Montgomery Road, Ipswich, IP2 8QE)
- Albany Academy (Airfield Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7PJ)
- Alderwood Academy (Raeburn Road, Ipswich, IP3 0EW)
- First Base Ipswich (Raeburn Road, Ipswich, IP3 0EW)
- Westbridge Academy (London Road, Ipswich, IP1 2HE)

7.2 Scenarios

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam/assessment, due to the centre being closed for an extended period	When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek advice from relevant awarding organisations and the JCQ • Communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this • Have a contingency plan to facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both • Prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations/assessments shortly • Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations/assessment in the next available series • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents, carers and candidates 	AJ/AL
The head of centre is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle*	If the head of centre is absent due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances and unable to perform key tasks required for the management and administration of examinations/assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly and follow its instructions • Designated member of the Trust Leadership team will deputise for the head of centre 	AJ
Exams officer is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle*	If the exams officer is absent due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances and unable to perform key tasks required for the management and administration of examinations/assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly and follow its instructions • The examinations assistant will deputise for the exams officer 	CEO
SENCO is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle*	If the SENCO is absent due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances and unable to perform key tasks required for the management and administration of examinations/assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly and follow its instructions • Exams officer to work with the Deputy CEO and Trust Head Teacher to put access arrangements in place 	LC/CF

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Candidates are unable to take examinations/assessments because of a crisis, but the centre remains open	If candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations/assessments as normal, e.g. due to a sickness bug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset, to make them aware of the issue ➤ Liaise with these candidates to identify whether the examination/assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with relevant awarding organisations ➤ Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue ➤ Offer candidates an opportunity to sit examinations/assessments missed at the next available series, if possible ➤ Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates, where they've met the minimum requirements 	LC/CF/AL
Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period*	If the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations/assessments, e.g. it's forced to close due to a fire or flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible ➤ Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate ➤ Head of centre will decide whether the centre is safe to open, based on advice or instructions from relevant local or national agencies. Consider whether to open for examinations/assessments and candidates only, if possible ➤ Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations ➤ Communicate any changes to plans with parents, carers and candidates ➤ Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they've met the minimum requirements ➤ Offer candidates an opportunity to sit examinations/assessments missed at the next available series, if possible 	CEO/LC/CF

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption to the centre's IT systems*	If a critical failure of the centre's IT systems significantly impacts the administration of exams, e.g. in the event of a cyber attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate measures to protect candidates work from corruption/cyber attacks (see section 4) • Contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly and follow its instructions (if digital communications aren't available, make contact by other means, e.g. phone call) • Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open • Identify whether the exam/assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of question papers/assessment materials to the alternative venue • Where accommodation is limited, prioritise pupils whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam/assessment when planned • Communicate with pupils, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue • Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam/assessment timetable 	AL/LD
Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	If there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out from the awarding organisation if they're able to organise an alternative courier and time to deliver hard copies • If the above isn't possible, organise receipt of electronic access to papers via a secure external network • Have plans in place to ensure the school is able to receive, make and store papers under secure conditions • As a last resort, the awarding organisation may consider rescheduling the examination 	AL/CF/LC

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your examinations are part of the national ‘yellow label service’ or where your awarding organisation arranges collections, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection • Only make alternative arrangements after approval from the awarding organisation • Ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection • If your centre makes its own transportation arrangements, investigate alternative arrangements that comply with the <u>JCQ’s instructions for conducting examinations</u> 	LC/CF/AL
Assessment evidence isn’t available to be marked	In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked – e.g. a fire or flood at the centre destroys completed examination scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation, candidates and their parents or carers • Where possible, the awarding organisation will generate candidate marks based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement • Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series 	CEO/LC/CF
Centre is unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post-results services*	If the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services – e.g. due to failure of IT systems or a cyber attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact awarding organisations about alternative options (if digital communications aren’t available, make contact by other means, e.g. phone call) • Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site • Share facilities with other schools/colleges if possible • Co-ordinate access to post-results services from an alternative site ➤ Contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post-results requests are not possible 	CF/LC/LD

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
In-year pupil admissions: January onwards	When pupils are admitted to the academy during the academic year late in January or thereafter which may fall after examination entry deadlines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and assess new pupils' qualification and exam requirements through their prior school records and assessments. ➤ Liaise with the previous or current home school at admission to ensure timely registrations for required exam entries. ➤ Arrange access arrangements if applicable, based on existing evidence. ➤ Provide induction for pupils regarding exam expectations, rules and timetables. ➤ Communicate with parents/carers to confirm exam arrangements. 	LC/CF
Lack of appropriate exam rooms	When designated exam rooms are unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and book alternative rooms within the school or trust premises; raise with exams officer as soon as known. ➤ If alternative room is not available at exam centre, Head of Centre and exams officer to make alternative site application. Processes for alternative site exam administration to be followed per JCQ guidance. ➤ Ensure alternative rooms meet JCQ requirements (e.g. spacing, signage, quiet environment). ➤ Communicate changes to staff, pupils and parents as soon as possible. 	LC/CF/CEO
Lack of appropriately trained invigilators	When there is a shortage of trained invigilators during the exam series due to illness, staff turnover or other reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilise wider trained staff from across the Trust who can act as invigilators in emergencies. Shortages should be identified as early as possible by the Head of Centre and raised directly with the Exams officer and Deputy CEO and Trust Head Teacher. ➤ Arrange for a fast-track training session to prepare available staff, if required. ➤ Notify JCQ and request guidance if the shortage cannot be resolved internally. ➤ Head of Centre to maintain a record of staffing adjustments and any correspondence with JCQ. 	LC/CF/CEO

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)	In an emergency such as fire alarm activation or a lockdown occurs during an exam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow the centre's emergency evacuation or lockdown policy. ➤ Ensure all exam papers and materials are secured. ➤ Maintain supervision of pupils at all times to prevent breaches of JCQ regulations. ➤ Record the time of interruption and adjust the end time of the exam as required. ➤ Notify the exam board immediately and submit a special consideration request, if necessary. ➤ Debrief students post-incident and ensure pastoral support is provided (if appropriate). 	HoC/AL
Home school pupil entry for wrong examination series or entry not completed	When a pupil entered by their home school has an incorrect entry or is not registered for the correct examination series.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cross-check entries with home school leader records and correct discrepancies promptly. ➤ Contact the home school examinations officer to confirm the correct entries, prior to the examination series, and ensure they have gained approval for any changes. ➤ Communicate with the exam board, if appropriate, to amend entries, ensuring deadlines are met. ➤ Inform the pupil and parents/carers of the resolution and provide the student with an updated timetable. 	LC/CF