Queen's Croft High School

Exams Contingency Plan

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KEY PERSONNEL IN EXAMS PROCESS

Head of Centre (30241)	Sam Wood (Co-Headteacher)
SLT Exams Lead	Emma Longdon (Business Manager)
Exams Officer (30241)	Maxine Morton (Exams Officer)
Exams Administrator (30241)	Maxine Morton (Exams Officer) (Contingency: Lisa Blakemore and Nuala Hodgkiss)
SENDCo	Emma Staples

Any potential disruption would be discussed with Primitas Learning Partnership to seek advice on alternative arrangements.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process. 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.* (See file). 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 are not undertaken, these may 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 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 eg. 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:

- The SLT Lead and Exams Officer are trained in all aspects of the Examinations Officer job and they will follow the procedures and practices within the Examinations Officer remit. Assistance from Senior Leadership Team and the Office Administrators as required.
- Examinations Officer to ensure examination cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times.

2. SENDCo 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:

- Co-Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will follow procedures and practices within the SENDCo remit.
- Examinations Officer to ensure examination cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times

3. **Subject Lead extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

Criteria for the 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:

- Subject Leads to ensure teaching staff are familiar with processes and complete and send requested information before deadline.
- SLT to undertake or delegate responsilibity to other staff.

4. **Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions:

- Examinations Officer to ensure all relevant staff are trained.
- Examinations Officer to review training procedures regularly and put in place additional training as required.
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Examinations Day Contingency Plan is in place (Appendix 1).
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place (Appendix 2)
- Examinations Officer to ensure an Incident Log is in place (Appendix 3).

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:

- Pre-planning at all stages is essential.
- Examinations Officer to continually review all stages of the process.
- Gymnasium to be first option as alternative venue for emergency accommodation.
- Emergency Evacuation plan should be in place (Appendix 2)
- Should Centre be unable to secure alternative rooms, Primitas Learning Partenership will be contacted to find availablilty at other local schools, with The Friary being the first preferred option.

6. **Cyber Attack**

   Criteria for implementation of the plan

   Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer will work with IT Technician (PLP) and Link2ICT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance.
- Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies.

7. **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:

- Exams Officer to contact IT Technician or Link2ICT
- Examinations Officer to contact all Examination Boards (see Appendix 1 for telephone numbers) for alternative route for dissemination of results.

8. **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. (via website / SMS / twitter).

- Alternative venues to prioritise for students with imminent exams. These venues will be either The Friary School or Henry Chadwick School as first preference with the option of other Partnership schools as needed.
- Examinations Officer to advise the Examination Boards as appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.

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 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 to liaise with Exam Boards to sit exams at a different venue.
- Should a significant number of candidates need to be isolated due to sickness, use the Gym and request a member of the trained medical staff to be on hand.
- Apply for Special Consideration for those affected to the appropriate examination boards.

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

Centre actions:

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

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:

- 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 Examination Boards.
- Scripts must be stored securely until such time transport is confirmed.

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:

- It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre (Headteacher) to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students 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.

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 contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- Arrange to access results at an alternative site.
- Inform staff, students and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.

14. Centre resillience

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to conduct unable to go ahead at a national level

Centre actions:

- Teachers will ensure that at least one set of mocks in exam conditions are undertaken and retained with sufficient other alternative methods of awarding grades, such as teacher assessed grades (TAGs).
- Teachers should plan assessment opportunities in line with their usual assessment approaches – where possible, these should be in the first half of the academic year.
- Students should be assessed under exam-like conditions and, wherever possible, at the same time or using different materials at different times.
- Assessment materials should be as useful as possible for students preparing to take summer exams – similar to full or parts of exam papers.
- Students should be assessed on a wide range of content.

- Total time spent assessing students should not normally exceed the total time students would spend taking exams for the relevant qualification, plus any time spent on non-exam assessment.
- Students must be told before each assessment their performance would be used as part of evidence to determine a teacher assessed grade.
- Reasonable adjustments: the same adjustments made for disabled students taking exams in the summer should be applied, where possible, to assessments.
- Special consideration: if a student's performance was affected by an event such as illness or family bereavement, the teacher should mark the assessment as normal but record the issues so they can be taken into account later.
- Teachers should mark in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance but be aware that the grade boundaries from Autumn 2020, 2021 and Summer 2022 reflect the grading arrangements in place during the pandemic, which were more lenient.
- Students should not resit assessments for the purpose of evidence collection.
- Teachers may tell the student the grade at which their performance in the assessment indicates they have performed.
- Student work must be retained by the centre – digitally or physically.
- Students may be given a copy or the original of their work.
- Students should be supported to complete their non-exam assessment (NEA) wherever possible.

Appendix 1

Exams Day Contingency plan

Exam Item	**Location/ Holders Name**	**Responsibility**
Keys to Secure Storage for exam papers and exam stationery	MM & SW are main key holders. MM/LB/NH holds spare set.	SW/EL
Exams Office – Centre Timetable	Management drive School Website Timetable widely published	MM
Seating plans	Held by MM in Exam Secure Room and on MDrive	MM
Exam cards / setting out of exam rooms / notices etc.	Held by MM in Main Office during exam season. In Secure Storage at other times.	MM
Invigilators	Head of Key Stage to Organise	RH/JB
Access Arrangements (incl. Cover sheets)	SENDCo to organise and administer. Copies held in file in Secure Storage. MM to use information to populate seating plans.	ES
Script envelopes/Examiner address labels	In Secure Storage	MM
Exam clashes	Instructions given to Invigilators at the start of the exam	MM
Collection of scripts	Invigilators	Lead Invigilator

Collation of scripts	MM to check against official attendance registers and the official attendance sheets completed before posting	MM
Completion of proof of posting form / posting scripts	Complete the Exam Dispatch log. Keep in exams office until Parcel force arrive	MM
Awarding Bodies WJEC AQA OCR Pearson NOCN	**Tel no:** 02920 265 000 0800 197 7162 01223 553 998 08444 632 535 0300 999 1177	

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

Wales

School closures: examinations gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days
Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School - exceptional closure of schools
www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK
2. Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
3. Offline backups in an online world
4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK

Appendix 2

Policy for Severe Disruption/Evacuation during External Examinations

Possible Causes

- Unreasonable noise disruption
- Fire/Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

1. Unreasonable noise disruption

In the event of a severe disruption in an externally set examination, invigilators are advised to stop the examination, tell the candidates to close their answer books, make a note of the time and summon help (Examinations Officer/Senior Leadership Team/ Main Office/Co-headteacher) to sort out the problem.

Examination room conditions must be maintained.

When the disruption has been resolved the candidates can resume their examination and the time taken to resolve the issue added on at the end of the examinations. The candidates must be supervised at all times and thus the break in the examination can be regarded as 'a supervised rest break'.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted.
The Examinations Officer to make Examining Bodies aware of the disruption if necessary.

2. Fire/Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

In the event of a fire alarm or bomb alert sounding (or any other emergency situation arising) during an examination, the first priority of the invigilators is to preserve life. The next priority is to ensure the security of the examination.

The invigilator should summon assistance, if there is time and it is appropriate, via the Examinations Officer who will confirm if immediate evacuation is necessary and the School Office who will call the Senior Leadership Team. A decision will be made as to whether a full evacuation is necessary.

If the emergency is over quickly, the candidates should resume the examination. A careful note of the time of resumption must be noted and the full time allocated for the examination given to complete the examination, ignoring the interruption.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted and a special consideration form will be filled in so as not to disadvantage the candidates.

3. Procedure for Emergency Evacuation from an Examination

If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the lead invigilator should then stop the examination taking a note of the time and evacuate the building by row and in silence. The candidates must leave all examination papers, scripts and writing equipment behind, and in accordance with the school emergency evacuation procedures. The candidates should remain supervised and in silence throughout the emergency. Several other members of staff will be needed to help police this.

In the event of an emergency requiring candidates to evacuate buildings during an examination the evacuation areas should be used but the candidates must be kept at a distance and in silence from the main body of pupils.

At all times, invigilators must act in accordance with section 16 of the 'Instructions for conducting examination' booklet. They should also summon assistance immediately an emergency arises. Silence should be maintained during the time the candidates are outside the examination room.

Section 16 of 'Instructions for conducting examination' booklet states:

The invigilator must take the following action in an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert.

- Stop the candidates from writing.
- Collect the attendance register and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination.
- Make a full report of the incident and the action taken (Appendix 3) and send to the relevant awarding body

Appendix 3

Exam Room Incident Log

An incident log and Exam Room Checklist similar to the ones below will be issued by the exams officer to each room invigilator(s) to use to record any irregularities that may happen in the exam room at the point of occurrence.

Exam room incident log

This log is for exams officer (EO) and invigilator(s) use to record any irregularities[1] that may take place in the exam room at the point of occurrence

Exam day	Date			Session ☑		Exam room
	DD	MM	YYYY	AM	PM	

Exam(s) taking place in this room

Awarding body	Subject title	Paper number

☐ **For EO use only**

If an incident relates to a matter that must be reported as follow up to the awarding body (e.g.very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration) ☑ to confirm submission of report to awarding body

Time	Incident description and any actions (taken by EO and/or invigilator) at the point of occurrence
	Incident recorded by: ☐
	Incident recorded by: ☐
	Incident recorded by: ☐
	Incident recorded by: ☐
	Incident recorded by: ☐

After the exam(s) in this room has (have) concluded, incidents recorded here will inform any required follow-up actions/reports to awarding bodies. This log will be affixed to signed copies of the **seating plan, attendance register**(s) and **exam room checklist** for this exam room session.

[1] Irregularities are unplanned incidents that could impact on the integrity and security of the exam, breach the rules and regulations or affect the conditions that enable candidates to achieve their potential. Examples include: candidate late/very late arrival; suspected malpractice (candidate, centre staff); emergency evacuation; candidate illness/distress/need to leave the exam room temporarily (e.g. requiring a toilet break); disturbance inside/outside the exam room; unauthorised persons entering the exam room etc.

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Exam room checklist

Exam day	Date			Session ☑		Exam room
	DD	MM	YYYY	**AM**	**PM**	

Exam(s) taking place in this room and **question paper packets check**
The exams officer (*or authorised member of staff) removes the required sealed question paper packets from secure storage on the timetabled date and session of the exam(s). If there is a need to split any question paper packets, packets must be opened in the secure room. Where there is no valid need to split, question paper packets must be opened in the designated exam room. **The day, date, time, subject, unit/component (and tier of entry if appropriate) must be checked immediately before a question paper packet is opened.**

Awarding body	Subject title	Paper number	First* check (name, signature. role)	Second check (name, signature. role)

Exam room requirements ☑ to indicate checked/confirmed	☑
Room conditions: (appropriate conditions for taking the exam) heating, lighting, ventilation, level of noise (whether internal or external, intermittent or continuous) (ICE 11)	
Display material: which might be helpful to the exam subject(s) not visible to candidates (ICE 11)	
Clock(s): (analogue and/or digital) (all synchronised) showing the actual time and clearly visible to candidates from any seated point in room (ICE 11)	
JCQ Warning to candidates poster and **JCQ Unauthorised items poster:** displayed as an A3 poster (or projected in a way for all candidates to see) in a prominent place outside exam room (ICE 11)	
Centre number and **Date:** displayed and clearly visible to all candidates (ICE 11)	
Subject title(s) and **Paper number(s):** displayed and clearly visible to all candidates (ICE 11)	
Start and **Finish times (actual):** (for all exam papers) displayed and clearly visible to all candidates (ICE 11) ☑ to confirm this when the **actual** times have been displayed when the exam(s) starts »	
Seating arrangements: distance in all directions minimum 1.25 metres centre to centre candidates' chairs (for non-standard exam room layout - candidates seated far enough apart so that their work cannot be seen by/contact cannot be made with other candidates); invigilator(s) able to observe each candidate in the exam room at all times (ICE 11,12)	
Seating plan provided: showing the exact position of each candidate in the exam room (where applicable) Candidates with access arrangements identified on plan (ICE 11) ☑ to confirm any **actual** changes just before or during exam(s) have been noted on the plan »	
JCQ ICE: (hard/electronic copy) available in main exam room(s) (ICE 12) (Invigilator in non-main room fully familiar with ICE)	
Invigilator ratio: meets/exceeds the requirement for the size of cohort at least 1:30 timetabled written exam (ICE 12)	
Sole invigilator: has means of summoning help (without leaving room or disturbing candidates) (ICE 12) (**If this is a mobile phone it is on silent mode**)	
Identity of all candidates: appropriate arrangements in place for invigilators to carry out adequate checks (ICE 16)	
Exam room incident log provided: to record any incidents/irregularities during the exam(s) (ICE 20)	

Invigilators present in this room should sign this checklist, providing confirmation of the **invigilation arrangements** and **exam room conditions** in place. Comments should be provided if any of the above exam room requirements are not met (ticked).

Invigilator name(s) & signature(s)	Comments

After the exam(s) in this room, this checklist will be affixed to signed copies of the **seating plan** and **attendance register(s).** Together with the **exam room incident log** this creates a **full record** of the conduct of the exam(s) and the exam room arrangements

In case of query by an awarding body, this information will be kept on file **until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later** (ICE 12)

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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

This policy has been reviewed against the JCQ 2025/26 publications: General Regulations (GR), Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA), Instructions for Conducting NEA, A Guide to the Special Consideration Process, Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures (SMPP), and AI Use in Assessments.