

Exam
contingency
plan

2017/18

Completed by Exams Manager	Approved by SLT
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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 **Pedmore Technology College**. 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:

- The Headteacher and Leadership team are to ensure that trained, knowledgeable staff are available to keep the exams office running smoothly throughout any part of the examination cycle without accruing late fees and disadvantaging students. Should the need arises they would seek advice from the examination boards and JCQ.

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:

- The Headteacher and Leadership team are to ensure that fully trained staff are in post to ensure there is no disadvantaging to students. Should the need arise they would seek advice from the local authority.
- Should the need arise the exams manager would seek advice from the examination boards to support the Headteacher and Leadership team

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:

- The Headteacher and Leadership team are to ensure that trained staff are in post to ensure there is no disadvantaging to students.
- Should the need arise the Exams Manager would seek advice from the examination boards.

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:

- Exams Manager to ensure that there is a full complement of staff to support the exam process plus additional trained staff within the school who can be called on in the event of invigilator absence due to illness or peak exam days

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:

- Exams Manager to liaise with head teacher and line manager to ensure sufficient and appropriate room arrangements are in place.

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:

- Exams manager to contact Examination boards

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:

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Exams Manager will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.
- The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the Centre to open lies with the Headteacher. The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the College is able to open. If possible the College will open for examinations and examination candidates only.
- Alternatively the College may use other venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)

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

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.
- The Centre may use other venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)

9. Emergency alert where an evacuation of the building is necessary e.g fire alarm, bomb scare or flooding.

Centre actions:

- Remove candidates to redefined evacuation area reminding them they are still under exam conditions

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- the length of time that has passed since the official start time
- whether the minimum time for remaining in the examination has passed to maintain the integrity of the examination
- the amount of time left to complete the examination(s)
- whether there is sufficient time to complete the examinations before another session starts
- whether continuing the examination take candidates over the session limit of 3 hours, taking particular care to consider candidates with access arrangements which include extra time.

The Head of Centre, or their nominated deputy, should decide whether it is appropriate to continue the session using the criteria set out above. In making this decision, the Head of Centre, or their nominated deputy, must be satisfied that communication between candidates has not taken place outside of the examination room. **Only if completely satisfied that no communication whatsoever has taken place must candidates be allowed to continue the examination.**

If the session is to be abandoned, this will be either:

- because of consideration of the criteria above;
- because re-entry to the premises cannot be secured; or
- because the risk of communication between candidates, which would invalidate the examination, cannot be eliminated.

If the examination has to be abandoned:

- The Examinations Officer should take the first opportunity to contact the exam board and then seek to apply for Special Consideration for all the candidates affected.
- Partially completed papers should be sent to the exam board as usual, unless the exam board has specifically requested that papers should not be submitted.

10. 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

Centre actions:

- The centre would inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible and that examinations will be taken at agreed our designated centre Redhill School.
- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset, the agreed designated centre and invigilators to make them aware of the issue.
- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates informing them of the alternative site.
- The Centre will share facilities with Redhill School.
- The Centre will take their own invigilation team, SLT and extra staff will be on hand to support the settling of the students at the alternative site.

11. 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.

12. 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 awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

13. 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.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- A school or college is closed and therefore candidates are not able to visit to find out their results

Centre actions:

- make arrangements to access results at an alternative site
- share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible
- Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options
- Candidates receive results in a timely way

15. Awarding organisations are unable to offer post results services

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- In the event that awarding organisations are not able to provide post results services, with centres and candidates unable to access services such as enquiries about results and appeals.

Centre actions:

- make arrangements to provide post results services for centres and candidates through alternative methods (eg paper, Excel spreadsheets, traditional re-marking)

16. Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

Awarding organisations are responsible for:

- Offering advice regarding communication with candidates, parents and carers
- Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining or approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- Evaluating and declining or approving requests for special consideration
- Marking, moderating and grading candidate work
- Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates
- Advising UCAS and CAO about any delays that may impact on their deadlines
- Making a post results service available

Examination centres are responsible for:

- Communicating with candidates, parents and carers
- Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of general emergency planning
- Preparing candidates for examinations
- Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
- Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions
- Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open
- Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations
- Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations
- Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers
- The distribution of examination results to candidates
- Offering a post results service

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/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

<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-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-scripts-guide>