

St Richard's Catholic College

EXAMINATIONS CONTINGENCY PLAN



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: January 2020

Chair of Governors: _____

The Governing Body will review the policy in: January 2021

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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 St Richard's Catholic College, by outlining actions and procedures to be followed in case of disruption. It is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

At all times, the Examinations Officer, Head of Centre and Leadership and Management Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the **Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**.

This plan also confirms St Richard's Catholic College is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2019-2020*) that the centre *has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.*

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process

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 moderator
- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- 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:

Head of Centre to assume responsibility for the above tasks working with the support of the Leadership and Management Team and in consultation with the Examinations Administrator. Two former staff members with Exam Officer experience identified to provide cover.

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
 - *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- Pre-exams
 - approval for access arrangements not applied for to the Awarding Body
 - *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
 - 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:

SENCo Administrator, Examinations Officer and the Teaching Assistants to work with the Leadership and Management Team to identify pupils where application for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required. The former SENCo is available to test and provide support, if needed from March 2018.

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
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the Awarding Body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking

Centre actions:

The Exams Officer to liaise with the acting Subject Leader and/or Line Manager, if necessary, to ensure all deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the Exams Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam
- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams

Centre actions:

The Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion. A pool of emergency invigilators is retained and reviewed twice yearly.

Where minor absences occur, Teaching Assistants are to cover invigilation.

5. Exams 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:

Exams are accommodated in the Sports Hall, Dance Hall and standard size classrooms.

The Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays, ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately. Liaison with the Curriculum timetabler (GM) will occur.

In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. The Leadership and Management Team will work with the Exams Officer at all times during such emergencies.

6. Failure of ICT 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:

ICT failures would be dealt with by the ICT services team. Failing this the Exams Officer, in consultation with the Head of Centre and Leadership and Management team, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body. At all times during the system failure the Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

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 pupils miss teaching and learning, St Richards Catholic College will ensure pupils are still fully prepared for examinations. Extra study sessions will be provided. In the case of modular courses, candidates will be advised that examinations will be sat in an alternative series.

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

Centre actions:

The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the Head of Centre and Leadership and Management Team to take appropriate action. Alternate options would be explored such as moving exams to an available external location.

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:

Action would be dependent on the cause. The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the Head of Centre and Leadership and Management Team to take appropriate action. If disruption involves one candidate, normal special consideration procedures would be actioned.

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 Exams Officer will contact Awarding Bodies to provide the centre with electronic access to examination papers, via a secure external network. The Exams Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. Measures will be put in place by the ICT Services team, to ensure this is carried out correctly.

(Awarding Bodies will provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, Awarding Bodies are to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date)

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:

Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, The Exams Officer will seek advice from awarding organisations. St Richards Catholic College will not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the Awarding Organisation. For any examinations St Richard's Catholic College make their own arrangements for transportation, alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for

Conducting Examinations will be explored. St Richard's Catholic College will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

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:

The Exams Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given. A folder of candidates' work is retained if required.

13. Centre unable to distribute marks as normal or facilitate post results services

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:

Distribution of results: The Exams Officer will make arrangements to access results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant Awarding Bodies. The Exams Officer to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site, in agreement with Awarding Bodies.

Facilitation of post results services: The Exams Officer to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location. The Exams Officer to contact the relevant Awarding Bodies if electronic post results requests are not possible

14. Exams disrupted due to emergency evacuation (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- In the event of emergency evacuation of an exams room for events such as:
 - Fire/Fire Alarm
 - Bomb Alert
 - Any other emergency that requires an evacuation of the examinations room

Centre actions

The centre has in place a policy for the evacuation of exam rooms, in accordance with JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), and a Lock Down Policy for Exams.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance...

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

3.2 In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's ['Centre emergency evacuation procedure'](#).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

4.3 After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)
- [FAB's guidance on special considerations](#)

6. Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) in England, the [Department of Education](#) in Northern Ireland and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

7. Widespread national disruption

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public

announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the ***Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted***, (updated 23 January 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

JCQ

15.1 The qualification regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that Exams Officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant Awarding Body/bodies.

15.3 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. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 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.

15.5 The awarding bodies have designated Wednesday 24 June 2020 as a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the highly unlikely event that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2020, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and the DfE to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the contingency day on 24 June 2020. Centres will be alerted if it was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling of examinations will always rest with the Awarding Body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the Awarding Body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2019-2020* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, **Contingency planning**]

JCQ *Joint Contingency Plan* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents>

General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance notes on *alternative site* arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Guidance notes concerning transferred candidates <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-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

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/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>

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

Wales

School closures – examinations <https://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations>

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

School closures <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures>

St Richard's Catholic College

Emergency evacuation procedure for examinations

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 (**in order to ensure all candidates are present**).
- 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 of the action taken, and send to the relevant Awarding Body.

In addition to the JCQ ICE Regulations the following centre specific procedures are in place:

- In the event of the alarm sounding everyone within the exam room must evacuate immediately, regardless of the cause.
- Candidates should be asked to stand behind their chairs

- Gymnasium procedure:
 - Invigilators should divide into two groups
 - Use both exits at the rear of the Gymnasium
 - Group 1, rows A-E. Use the right hand exit, leading out between the music rooms and dance studio. Proceed to the Year 8/9 playground.
 - Group 2, rows F-J. Use the left hand exit. Proceed down the back drive, turn right, re-enter the main school gates, and proceed to the Year 8/9 playground.
- Dance Studio procedure:
 - Lead candidates from the studio, proceed to the year 8/9 playground.

- Invigilators should then await further instruction from the Exams Officer or members of the Leadership and Management team.

- Candidates on access arrangements should be escorted to the Year 8/9 playground.

- Candidates must remain silent and under exam conditions.

- Other staff (e.g. non-form staff) will help with supervision