

St Alban's Catholic High School



Exam Contingency Plans Policy 2023/24

Approved by Student Committee on:

Recommission Date: September 2024

Purpose of the policy

To confirm the main duties and responsibilities to be escalated should an event risks compromising St Alban's Catholic High School's ability to manage the examination process in line with the JCQ 'Instructions for conducting examinations.' It outlines the main duties and responsibilities to be followed by the person (s) assuming oversight of the examination process should the head of centre, headteacher, or exam officer be absent. In addition, this plan identifies the potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at St Alban's Catholic High School. 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. Although all awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions, our Examination Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them. This also applies to all other qualifications at St Alban's Catholic High School. The plan will be implemented in the event of national or significant local disruption to examination system. This includes, but is not limited to:

- widespread illness
- travel disruption
- bad weather
- power failures

Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency. Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards. Other adverse events which compromise our ability to manage the examination process in its full integrity are considered in our examination contingency plan. 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."*

The overarching principles of the contingency plan is to safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards. The following outcomes will form the basis of the contingency plan:

- Delivering assessment to published timetables
- Delivering results to published timeables
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, an identified Crisis Management Team meeting consisting of the Chair of governors, the CEO of the Trust (or a senior representative) , the headteacher or a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team, a member of staff with responsibility or oversight of exam administration, the business manager will be convened by St Alban's Catholic High School to agree the additional actions required.

The contingency plan is based on a number of scenarios that we believe we should prepare for. We cannot prepare for every possible eventuality, and in the vent that an unexpected situation arises we will to the JCQ 'instructions for conducting examinations.'

Communication

In the event of localised disruption, communication to teachers and students will take place through the SLT and Exams Officer following agreement with the Headteacher – where relevant communication with parents will take place through parentmail. In the event of major disruption, details of specific contingencies agreed across organisations involved in the examinations process will be confirmed on the

Ofqual website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders. This includes communication between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public. The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- Sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- Communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result
- Ensuring any messages to the public are clear and accurate

SCENARIO 1
The Exams Officer becomes ill or is absent for an extended period of the exams cycle at key periods.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
There are five key moments when the school should react with urgency if the Exams Officer is away from school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Stage of Exams: i.e. understanding what exams are being completed during that cycle, or booking invigilators. • The Entry Stage: i.e. completing entries by key dates in the cycle. • The Pre-Exams Stage: i.e. issuing timetables, booking rooms or scheduling. • The Exam Stage: i.e. day to day running of public exams. • The Post-Exams Stage: i.e. downloading results and handling remarks.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to take on the role of the Exams Officer. • The Headteacher is to direct other SLT members to take on certainly responsibilities that need to be removed from the new Exams Officer. • Admin Support is to be directed to support the new Exams Officer. • Contact should be made with other centres to provide support for the Exams Officer. • JCQ and relevant awarding bodies to be updated with the new staffing structure • Cross Trust support will be sought
WHO: Person (s) responsible
The Headteacher is to make the decision as to when an SLT member should be deployed in this fashion as it will have knock on effects on their wider roles within the school.

SCENARIO 2
The SENCo becomes ill or is absent for an extended period of the exams cycle at key periods.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
There are two key moments when the school should react with urgency if the SENCo is away from school: 1. The Planning Stage of Exams: i.e. understanding what exams are being completed during that cycle, or booking invigilators. 2. The Pre-Exams Stage: i.e. issuing timetables, booking rooms or scheduling.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to take on the role of acting SENCo. • Admin and TA Support is to be directed to support the new SENCo, especially TAs with greatest experience with the higher needs students. • Contact should be made with other centres to provide support for the SENCo. • The school may need to invest in temporary specialist support from outside agencies
WHO: Person (s) responsible
This is a decision that should be made by the SLT Line Manager of Exams in conjunction with the Headteacher. There will be times when the school can cope, but there are key moments when the Exams Officer needs the full support of the SENCo.

SCENARIO 3
A member of teaching staff is absent for a prolonged period of time when NEAs are due to be completed.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When teaching staff are absent for a prolonged period thereby affecting non-examination assessment tasks being set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled and/or internal assessment marks/work not being available for submission to awarding bodies.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to arrange cover for other members of the Department who will need step in to run NEAs. • If no member of staff can run them, the school will need to contact other schools in order to temporarily employ/reimburse a professional to run the NEAs.
WHO: Person (s) responsible
The Exams Officer and the SLT Line Manager of the Department affected are to inform the Headteacher/Deputy Head

SCENARIO 4
Disruption to the school/closure of school
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When the school cannot open as normal during the sitting of public exams.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<p>Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate. • Open for the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible. Use alternative venues (locally or at other schools) in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. • SLT to work with the Trust Executive for source suitable exam venues where possible. • Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available examinations series, if possible
WHO: Person (s) responsible
This would be an emergency whereby the Headteacher would have to call in the SLT and delegate key actions to all.

SCENARIO 5

Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations Centre actions:
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exam officer to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. • Head teacher to be informed
WHO: Person (s) responsible
The emergency exam officer

SCENARIO 6
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. EO to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Exam officer

SCENARIO 7
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EO to communicate with awarding bodies immediately • Students' marks to be submitted based on available evidence • Candidate offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Exam officer Heads of faculties

SCENARIO 9
Centre unable to distribute results as normal.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options

PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
EO and Head Teacher to assess alternative arrangements for issuing results with the regulators. Head Teacher to inform Sixth Form, College provision and other post 16 providers about delay as soon as possible.
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Exam officer Headteacher Head of sixth form

SCENARIO 9
Exam rooms shortage; lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When it is identified that there are insufficient exam rooms available to accommodate candidates for scheduled public examinations.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations in advance of all examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately. • In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available), support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced (candidates will be suitably isolated as required). • Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service; request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings. • Alternative accommodation may be used at a nearby centre and candidates transported as appropriate
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Exam officer

SCENARIO 10
Cyber attack
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
Where it is identified that a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams Officer will work with IT 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. • If the school system is significantly compromised for an exam that requires ICT for completion, the school may need to transport students to an alternative venue. • The school may need to hire support from an outside agency
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Headteacher; IT manager

SCENARIO 11

Shortage of trained invigilators.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When the Centre fails to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams (to meet expected ratios) or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days/absence on the day of an exam.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained to meet expected ratios working closely with HR teams. HR will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days (support staff); Exams Officer will coordinate requirements with HR and Exams Team SLT Line Manager to mobilise staff at short notice as needed. Staff will be directed by the Headteacher. Staff will be trained in advance.
WHO: Person (s) responsible
Exam officer; Headteacher; IT manager

SCENARIO 12
Failure of IT Systems.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When SIMS fails in the exam cycle. Key points in the cycle relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entries Submitting entries to awarding bodies. Pre-exams Exam scheduling (rooming/candidate seating etc.) Issuing candidate timetables Exam time Online examinations. Results and post-results Downloading and producing results slip
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
Exams Officer will make entries from another site direct to the awarding bodies (using awarding bodies' secure extranet sites). Exam room scheduling/timetables compiled using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables). Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies in respect of re-sitting online exams affected by system failure, or to seek an alternative solution. Results accessed directly from the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites (accessed from an alternative site if necessary).
WHO: Person (s) responsible
SLT, Line managers, Headteacher,

SCENARIO 13
Emergency Evacuation or Lockdown.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
When the exam room requires evacuation (e.g. due to fire/bomb threat) or the centre a lockdown procedure.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?

<p>Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so and seek advice.</p> <p>Refer to emergency plans and/or Health and Safety policy and exams lockdown policy, where appropriate. Invigilators to follow the emergency evacuation/lockdown procedure for examinations in accordance with agreed protocols.</p>
WHO: Person (s) responsible
SLT, Line managers, Headteacher

SCENARIO 14
A student is absent.
ACTION: When should this plan be implemented?
A child not marked as present in the register at the start of an exam.
PREVENTION: What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
<p>Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice.</p> <p>Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding any possible solutions/options to the issue.</p> <p>Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations.</p> <p>Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.</p> <p>Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.</p>
WHO: Person (s) responsible
SLT, Line managers, Headteacher,

Before examinations (Planning)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or examination officer, oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to activity prior to examinations will be escalated to the Deputy Headteacher:

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, the following JCQ publications will be referenced:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres
- Instructions for conducting examinations
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments
- Instructions for conducting coursework
- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments
- Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures
- A guide to the special consideration process

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Centre status
- Confidentiality
- Communication
- Recruitment, selection and training of staff
- Internal governance arrangements
- Delivery of qualifications
- Public liability
- Conflicts of interest

- Controlled assessments, coursework and non-examination assessments
- Security of assessment materials
- National Centre Number Register
- Centre inspections

Additional JCQ publication for reference:
Centre Inspection Service Changes

- Policies
- Specific JCQ publications for reference:
- General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)
 - Instructions for conducting examinations (section 25)
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (section 5)

- Personal data, freedom of information and copyright

Additional JCQ publication for reference:

- Information for candidates – Privacy Notice

Before examinations (Entries and Pre-exams)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or examination officer, oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to activity prior to examinations will be escalated to the Deputy Headteacher: or Assistant Headteacher in charge of 6th form.

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)
- Instructions for conducting examinations (sections 1-15)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (sections 6-8)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Entries

Additional JCQ publications for reference:

- Key dates in the examination cycle
- Guidance Notes for Transferred Candidates
- Alternative Site guidance notes
- Guidance notes for overnight supervision of candidates with a timetable variation

Centre assessed work

- Additional JCQ publication for reference:
- Guidance Notes – Centre Consortium Arrangements
- Candidate information

Additional JCQ publications for reference:

- Information for candidates documents
- Exam Room Posters

During examinations (Exam time)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or examination officer, oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to activity prior to examinations will be escalated to the Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher in charge of 6th form.

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (sections 3, 5)
- Instructions for conducting examinations (sections 16-30)
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (section 8)
- A guide to the special consideration process (sections 2-7)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Conducting examinations and assessments
Additional JCQ publication for reference: Guidance Notes – Very Late Arrival
- Malpractice
- Retention of candidates' work

After examinations (Results and Post-Results)

In the event of the absence of the head of centre or examination officer, oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to activity prior to examinations will be escalated to the Deputy Headteacher: Mr. Jerome Ateba or Assistant Headteacher: Mrs. Laura Lawrence.

To support understanding of the regulations and requirements, sections of relevant JCQ publications will be specifically referenced including:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5)

Main duties and responsibilities relate to:

- Results

Additional JCQ publication for reference:

- Release of Results notice
- Post-results services and appeals

Additional JCQ publications for reference:

- Post-Results Services: *Information and guidance to centres*
- JCQ Appeals Booklet (A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes)
- Certificates

Signed by Mr. Phil Dance, Chair of Governors:

Date:
