



Exam Contingency Plan
2023-24

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by	
Exams Manager	
Date of next review	September 2024

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at SJB. 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 the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the **JCQ notice Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

This plan also confirms SJB compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** 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. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

Possible causes of 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*

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

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

- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- *confidential 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, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Assistant Examinations Officer to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

2. HOC/SLT with responsibility for overseeing exams absence during key points in the exam cycle

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In the event of the Head of Centre or member of SLT with responsibility for overseeing exam being absent the EO will liaise with the Deputy Head who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series
- Deputy Head will ensure centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO
- Deputy Head will ensure sure that a teacher, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, is not an invigilator during an examination

3. ALS lead 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*
- *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- *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*

- *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Teaching Assistants, Examinations Officer and Assistant Examinations Officer to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required.

4. 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

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

Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Examinations Officer to liaise with acting Head of Department and/or SLT, if necessary, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the EO will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

5. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Assistant Examinations Officer and Examinations 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.

6. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EO will organise rooming for examinations ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.
- 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 SLT will work with the EO at all times during such emergencies

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

MIS system failure due to Cyber attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Examinations Manager, in consultation with SLT and IT Manager, will decide the best and most effective process to ensure entries are made to the Awarding Bodies
- Examinations Manager will be flexible in their working pattern to ensure exams preparation is completed
- Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Bodies
- Examinations Manager will at all times during the system failure liaise with the Awarding Bodies to minimise disruption and costs incurred
- IT Manager to ensure the school's ICT systems are secure and protected against viruses and malware
- IT Manager to ensure there are blocks to potentially dangerous sites, and where possible, preventing the downloading of potentially dangerous files
- School's network is protected by anti-virus software and the anti-virus solution is configured so updates will occur when an Internet connection is available
- Make awarding bodies aware of a possible Centre cyber attack

8.Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to deal with all such incidents and EO will keep AB's aware of all such situations.

9.Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT will ensure that remote learning is in place where necessary and EO will keep them aware of all options regarding sitting units in different seasons if appropriate.

10.Candidates at risk of being able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.
- For any Covid related absence SLT/EO will follow SJB Covid policy and refer to Dfe guidelines where appropriate. EO will apply for special consideration if AB criteria has been met.

11.Centre at risk of being able to open as normal during the examination period

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre at risk of being able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO will liaise with SLT to facilitate students taking exams at another centre within Xavier MAT if possible.
- SJB to follow Dfe guidelines in respect of any Covid related disruption and SLT/EO to refer to school Covid contingency policy guidelines.

12.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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO to liaise with AB's to obtain electronic papers or see if rescheduling is necessary.

13.Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO to liaise with AB's to seek advice on how to proceed. Papers should be locked in secure storage area until they can be collected.

14.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

Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT to ensure that appropriate assessment evidence is kept secure in case AB's require documentation to award marks.

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

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT & EO to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation. Results will be made available online.
- EO to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location and/or facilitate electronic post results requests.

Further guidance to inform procedures 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>

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings:

<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/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

Dispatch of exam scripts guide – Contingency Planning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>

JCQ

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

Guidance on access arrangements and special consideration

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>