

St Benedict's Catholic College



Examination Contingency Procedure

Reviewed by	L Luaces-Fernandez
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St Benedict's Catholic College

Examination Contingency Procedure

Role	Name(s)
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1. Introduction and purpose of the procedure

This procedure examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the college. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on the exam process.

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

This plan also confirms the college is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2022-2023) 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 must be readily available for inspection purposes; (the examination contingency plan should also reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency). The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.” [JCQ General regulations for approved centres 5.3]

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

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

Communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response in the event of localised or more widespread disruption. This includes communication to all stakeholders, candidates, parent/carers, invigilators, college staff, examination organisations.

The Exams Officer should be the main contact in the first instance:

- Lisa Luaces-Fernandez 07875 053094
- Business Manager - Chris Brown: 07834 517811
- Vice Principal - John Callaghan: 07756 255154

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2. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Exams Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process.	Key tasks in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including: Planning Entries Pre-exams Exam Time Results and post-results	The Exams Officer keeps a month by month schedule of tasks that need to be done in the exams office. The SIMS exams manual is also available. These can be accessed by the Business Manager and other members of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for exams at any time. All key documents are kept in the shared drive and can be accessed by SLT.	Exam Officer Business Manager SLT
SENDCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle.	Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangement process within the exam cycle not undertaken including: Planning Pre-exams Exam Time	The Deputy SENDCo will closely monitor the access arrangement process in the event of the SENDCo having an extended absence. The Deputy SENDCo will liaise with centre staff regarding the identification and approval of access arrangements and collation of evidence. Specialist advice will be sought from outside agencies if the need arises.	Deputy SENDCo
Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle.	Key tasks not undertaken including: Exam entry information not provided to the Exams Officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received or late fees being incurred. Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.	The Exams Officer and Heads of Department will monitor the key tasks undertaken by teaching staff and will liaise with other centre staff regarding entry information. Awarding bodies will be notified of any potential issues as soon as possible.	Exam Officer Heads of Department
Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period.	Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.	Centre has plans in place to facilitate online learning.	SLT Teaching staff

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Centre unable to open as normal during exams period.	Centre unable to open as normal during exams period.	<p>If possible, college will remain open with a skeleton staff (including the Exams Officer or another suitably trained member of staff) to facilitate candidates sitting timetabled GCSE written exams.</p> <p>If the start of the exam is delayed candidates will be isolated and the exam board notified. Special consideration may be applied.</p> <p>If the college has to be closed for a prolonged period of time which may affect more than one exam, students may need to sit the exam at an alternative venue.</p> <p>Alternative venue details: St Thomas More's 50 Priory Street, Colchester and St Teresa's 16 Clairmont Road.</p>	Exams Officer Business Manager
Absence of Exams Officer due to illness on examination day.	<p>Exams Officer has keys to exam cupboard and is aware of the seating plans, clashes, and access arrangements/special requirements.</p> <p>Exam papers unavailable. Delayed start to the exam.</p> <p>Access arrangement students not having support/rooming during exam.</p>	<p>Business Manager has spare set of keys for exam cupboard. They will ensure examination question papers are taken over to the examination hall.</p> <p>Exams Officer prepares copies of all seating plans and access details and has them available in the exams office.</p> <p>Master plans are also maintained. Exams Officer always takes a copy home so that centre staff can be briefed accurately from home, if necessary.</p> <p>At the end of each day, the Exams Officer always prepares plans for the next day's examinations and briefs the Business Manager accordingly.</p>	Exams Officer Business Manager Principal

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Absence of Exams Officer at the time a JCQ Inspector calls.	<p>Possible disruption to start of examinations.</p> <p>Increased pressure on lead invigilators.</p> <p>Increased pressure on Business Manager.</p>	<p>Exams Officer ensures invigilators are fully briefed on examination regulations and requirements during annual training session so that they are confident in their role and responsibilities; exam signage in place; seating plans available, etc. The presence of an Inspector should not involve any additional challenges as good practice is always in place.</p> <p>Exams Officer briefs Business Manager so that they are fully aware of what the inspection entails and can make themselves available for inspection, access paperwork, policy documents, appeals processes.</p> <p>Business Manager to be responsible for taking the examination question papers over to examination hall. Inspector will monitor the process from the start of an examination.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Business Manager Principal</p>
Failure of IT systems.	<p>System failure at final entry deadline, during exams preparation or results release time.</p>	<p>Liaise with IT technicians.</p> <p>Contact the examination organisations to confirm the problems and to seek advice.</p> <p>Exams Officer can access secure websites of the exam board remotely to make results/amendments directly.</p>	<p>Exams Officer IT Technician Business Manager</p>

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Cyber-attack	Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery	<p>Liaise with the IT Technicians. Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack.</p> <p>Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed-up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system/Ensuring protection of the candidates' work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack.</p> <p>Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work / Using the NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber-attacks.</p>	Exams Officer IT Technician Business Manager
Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	Ratio of invigilators to candidates could be impacted.	Regular recruitment of invigilators. Support Staff that are trained as invigilators will be able to cover.	Exams Officer Business Manager

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.	<p>Exams Officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning.</p> <p>Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days.</p> <p>Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time.</p> <p>Candidates unable to take their examination in the exam centre.</p>	<p>Timetable changes may be necessary to ensure appropriate rooming in place.</p> <p>Find alternative venue, or re-room, if possible.</p> <p>Exams Officer makes the necessary arrangements to allow the examination to take place in an alternative venue, if necessary. Exams Officer to make all the necessary arrangements for a late start, liaising with examination boards accordingly.</p> <p>Business Manager to consider closure of the area, if necessary.</p> <p>Exam organisation notified and advice taken.</p> <p>Candidates kept well informed and able to take the examination.</p> <p>Regulations not compromised and the integrity of examination maintained.</p> <p>Exams Officer completes the necessary alternative venue paperwork, as necessary.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Business Manager Site Team Principal</p>
Sickness bug.	<p>Number of candidates unable to attend the centre to take a scheduled examination.</p>	<p>Exams Officer will need to contact awarding organisation to apply for special consideration for candidates too ill to take their exam, as scheduled. Candidates must have met the minimum requirements.</p> <p>Exams Officer to liaise with parent/carers to confirm action taken.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Business Manager Principal</p>

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
<p>Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown).</p>	<p>Examination rooms need to be evacuated.</p> <p>Safety of candidates compromised.</p> <p>Examination answer scripts in danger of being damaged or security compromised.</p>	<p>Exams Officer to assess if we need to evacuate the sports hall or other exam room (if incident is away from the exam venue itself). If fire elsewhere in college, the exam may continue as long as the exam area is safe.</p> <p>Exams Officer to ensure that invigilators and examination team well briefed in fire procedures.</p> <p>Students fully aware of evacuation processes and are instructed clearly throughout the evacuation process. They must line up, in silence, in a separate area away from other students. Students must be supervised at all times.</p> <p>Invigilator will note time exam stopped, and later restarted; duration of interruption, etc. New restart time and finish times must be displayed when students are able to get back to the exam hall.</p> <p>Parent/carers kept informed. Examination boards advised of situation by Exams Officer and Exams Officer later applies for special consideration, as appropriate. All details of timings must be passed to the Exams Officer for the report to the examination boards.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Business Manager Invigilators Site Team SLT</p>

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Student taken ill during exam.	Possible disruption to other candidates.	<p>Invigilators aware of procedures when dealing with a candidate who is unwell. Always seek advice from the Exams Officer during an examination. Contact the Medical Room Assistant, if worried, otherwise allow candidate a rest break, fresh air (supervised).</p> <p>Try and get the student to continue with the exam, adding time to the end of normal time, as appropriate.</p> <p>Exams Officer to apply for special consideration.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Medical Room Assistant Invigilators Pastoral</p>
Student has a panic attack during examination.	Disruption to examination and possible disruption to other candidates.	<p>Exams Officer briefs invigilators in dealing with students who are anxious in examinations. Pastoral leads should also make Exams Officer aware of students who might be particularly vulnerable. Exams Officer may accommodate such students in a separate room to make them more comfortable.</p> <p>During an examination, a student who is anxious and panics should be allowed to get some fresh air and take some time to fully recover. Medical Room Assistant should be called if panic attack severe. Exams Officer should be notified immediately to assist and to help reassure the student. Pastoral lead may also be called.</p> <p>Exams Officer to re-start the student with their exam once they are ready to do so. Additional time will be added at the end of normal time so that the student has the full time for the paper. A report will be taken and parent/carers advised, as appropriate.</p> <p>Exams Officer to apply for special consideration.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Invigilators Medical Room Assistant Pastoral Team</p>

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Student caught cheating/being disruptive during examination.	Possible disruption to other candidates.	<p>Exams Officer ensures that invigilators briefed in the processes of malpractice/poor behaviour. They will warn the candidate and make a report.</p> <p>Exams Officer must be notified immediately during an examination to support the processes.</p> <p>If malpractice involved, this will be reported to awarding organisation by the Exams Officer/Principal using the Malpractice procedures.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Business Manager Principal Invigilators Pastoral Leads</p>
Student late for an examination.	Delay to the start of that candidate's examination. Possible disruption to other candidates.	<p>Attendance Officer to be notified of any absences from the examination as soon as possible so that home can be called to check where candidate is.</p> <p>Exams Officer ensures invigilators are fully aware of the regulations around exam lateness.</p> <p>Student may take an examination late at the centre's discretion – if the student is more than one hour late, this is classified as 'very late' and the Exams Officer has to report this to the examination organisation. The student is warned that his/her paper may not be marked. Exams Officer clarifies why the student is late and will complete form for the examination organisation.</p> <p>The examination organisation will not award a mark for the examination if the integrity of the examination has been compromised.</p>	<p>Exams Officer Attendance Officer SLT Business Manager Invigilators</p>

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
A number of students late for an exam as bus broken down (or other transport issues delaying students from getting to an exam on time).	Delay to the start of the examination. Possible disruption to other candidates.	Attendance Officer to be kept updated and to liaise with (and reassure) parent/carers. Exams Officer to monitor and seek advice from exam boards – if students are going to be delayed more than one hour, Exams Officer will liaise with exam boards and Principal to decide if someone needs to get to the students to supervise. If integrity of examination compromised, students will miss examination and Exams Officer will seek special consideration.	Attendance Officer Exams Officer Principal Business Manager
Invigilator is unwell on day of examination/is not able to come into centre.	Possible disruption to start of the examination if not enough invigilators available.	Exams Officer to make arrangements to cover the invigilator's absence, ensuring compliance with examination organisation's regulations. Re-deploy staff, as appropriate. Exams Officer to make sure suitable staff on hand to support examinations, as appropriate.	Exams Officer Invigilators Business Manager
Wrong exam papers delivered to exam centre.	Candidates unable to start their examination.	Exams Officer to contact awarding organisation to seek advice and to request the examination paper electronically, using the examination organisation's secure facilities. Early checking so that problems can be resolved well in advance of examination taking place. Exams Officer to brief the invigilators and ensure candidates kept under secure conditions while the papers are being copied. Reprographics on standby during the examination period to deal with emergencies of this kind.	Exams Officer Business Manager Invigilators Reprographics

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Not enough examination question papers delivered to centre.	Examination delayed. Delays unsettling for candidates.	Exams Officer maintains check on receipt of examination questions papers into centre and warns examination organisation if short of papers or if papers for a session have not arrived. Checks should be done by Exams Officer as examination questions papers are delivered. Exams Officer to ensure all examination papers are received well before the examinations commences.	Exams Officer Receptionist Business Manager Reprographics
Wrong tier of paper in exam envelope of a modified exam question paper.	Delay and disruption to access student.	Exams Officer to notify the examination organisation immediately to request the correct examination question paper. Paper will be downloaded electronically by the examination organisation. Candidate given some fresh air, supervised, while awaiting the new paper. Important for the candidate to remain calm. Exams Officer will apply for special consideration.	Exams Officer Invigilators
Normal collection of examination scripts delayed.	Scripts should be despatched at the end of each day by parcel force service.	Seek advice from awarding organisation. Also seek advice from parcel force service to see if another courier can pick up the examination scripts. Exams Officer to ensure examination scripts are stored securely overnight in safe if pick up not possible.	Exams Officer

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Criteria for Implementation of the Plan	Impact and Outcome	Recommended Actions	Person Responsible
Exams Officer is ill on the day results are released to centres.	<p>Downloading of results delayed.</p> <p>Students will not receive their results on time.</p>	<p>Exams Officer must ensure Business Manager fully briefed on the steps to be taken to download examination results so that there are no delays for the candidates receiving their results on results day.</p> <p>Exams Officer may be able to sort out download from home, if possible.</p>	<p>Exams Officer</p> <p>Business Manager</p>
Venue unavailable on results day.	<p>Downloading of results delayed.</p> <p>Students will not receive results on time.</p>	<p>Organise alternative venue – share facilities with other centres or use public buildings.</p> <p>Download results from awarding bodies' websites if unable to log in remotely to college IT systems.</p> <p>Alternative venue details: St Thomas More's 50 Priory Street, Colchester and St Teresa's 16 Clairmont Road.</p>	<p>Exams Officer</p> <p>Business Manager</p>

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

Awarding Organisations are responsible for:	Examination Centres are responsible for:
	Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of the centre's general emergency planning.
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations in a timely manner.	Preparing candidates for examinations.
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations.
	Ensuring, as appropriate, 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.
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving for alternative examination arrangements.	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations.
Evaluating and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements.	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.
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work.	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates.	The distribution of examination results to candidates.
Making a post results service available to centres.	Offering a post results service for candidates.

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4. General contingency guidance

- **Emergency planning and response** (www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings) from the Department for Education in England
- **Handling strike action in schools** (www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools) from the Department for Education in England
- **School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools** from the Department for Education in England (www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)
- **Exceptional closure days** (www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **Checklist - exceptional closure of schools** (www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- **School terms and school closures** from NI Direct (www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures)
- **Police guidance** from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats (www.protectuk.police.uk)