



Castle Tower School
Examination Contingency Plan

Contents

Purpose of the plan	2
Possible causes of disruption to the exam process	3
1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)	3
2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	4
3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	4
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	5
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice ...	5
6. Failure of IT systems	5
7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	6
8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period	6
9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	6
10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period	6
11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	7
12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	7
13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	7
14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal	7
Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning	8-11

Purpose of the plan

Pupils at Castle Tower School do not currently sit any written exams. This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Castle Tower School if exams are sat in the future. There are also important points which need to be considered around the submission of ELQ coursework.

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 Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which provides guidance in the publication what schools, colleges, and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.

This plan also confirms Castle Tower School 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.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

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
- 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.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Mr A. Ford is also registered as an Exams Officer to allow him to access all the relevant information, therefore should there be any extended absence there will be someone to complete the relevant tasks at the different stages of the examination process. This will be enhanced by good planning and entries and preparations made early.

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
- 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 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
- In the event that the SENCo has an extended absence, the relevant planning and arrangements will be prepared by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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

Other teachers in the team will be able to advise on entries needed. This may be the subject leader or other subject specialists.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Extra invigilators can be called on the day of an exam to provide emergency cover.

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

Sufficient and early planning for use of rooms; lessons may be moved in order to accommodate rooms that are suitable for exams. Both the central hall and PE hall can be used if necessary.

Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- System failure at final entry deadline
- System failure during exams preparation
- System failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Cannot log onto the network: initial diagnosis by IT Technician and IT Manager to determine the scope and scale of the problem. If not an internal problem then a call will be made to external server support by the IT Manager. Exam board will be notified.

Sims will not load: initial diagnosis by IT Manager to discover the scope and scale of the problem. Internal issues will be resolved immediately, if not an internal issue then call will be made to SIMS support.

Internet connection has broken: Call the Internet Service Provider to report the issue. We have no influence on this type of problems and generally this should not impact the candidates from completing an exam unless ICT. In which case the issue will be reported to the exam board.

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

Please see separate document

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Early preparation for exam series, to ensure that teaching and learning prepares candidates for the exams. Extra classes may be set-up to allow for missed work to be completed. SLT to research the use of another centre. Candidates who are unable to attend for an extended period, will be identified with the exam boards and special consideration requests made.

The exams officer will inform SLT of key dates for external assessments and any information given to exam boards in relation to these dates. If any dates are changed for any reason then the exam board and JCQ must be informed.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The Exams Officer will liaise with HOC in order for arrangements to be decided. The exams officer will contact the relevant exam boards and complete any necessary documentation such as special consideration.

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 (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Initial risk assessment of school site, if emergency is localised within the school then another area of the school might be used. Otherwise HOC will decide on alternative arrangements. Security of exams papers and other JCQ regulations would have to be considered. Exams officers will contact the exam boards with arrangements or to seek further advice.

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

Exams officers to monitor and check receipt of exam papers, in advance of exam dates, if papers have not been received at least one week prior to the exam date, they will make HOC aware and contact the exam board.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Exams Officers to contact Parcel Force and report delay, ensure papers are held in a secure location until collected. If a delay occurs over a weekend or over half-term it will be ensured that the papers are held securely. Access to area will be by key holders only – Exams Officer and HOC.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

HOC to be made aware of incident and parents and exam boards will be notified.

Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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

In the event that there has been an IT failure or another incident resulting in distribution problems, advice will be obtained by the exam boards. Information will be shared with relevant parties.

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...

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

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 the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. 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.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to 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 a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

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.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[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, sections 1 and 2

<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

Contingency planning

The qualifications 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.

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.

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.

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.

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>

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations

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

General regulations for approved centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms> Guidance on transferred candidate arrangements <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries> 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>

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