



Bishop Challoner Catholic College

Exam contingency plan 2025/26

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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 Bishop Challoner Catholic College. 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 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;”

Causes of potential 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 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 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 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:

- Examination Timeline for Procedures – outlining tasks throughout the year
- SLT to nominate a ‘deputy’ to cover a role/task (G.Hetherington/South Network/Agency Cover)
- Buddying up; networking with staff from a local centre; sharing expertise with a local centre e.g. Wheelers Lane/Swanshurst & Queensbridge. (South Network Examination Group)

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

Pre-exams

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- 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:

- SLT to arrange employment of the services of an approved assessor for the period of assessment of the cohort. (R Hampson to arrange external assessor in Rachel’s absences)
- Exams Officer to perform administration for pre-exams and exam time arrangements.

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

Centre actions:

- SLT to arrange a “deputy” within the faculty concerned at the earliest opportunity. They would take up all the necessary roles within the faculty to ensure the above all occur

4. 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:

- Exams Officer/SLT to keep abreast of the planning, hiring, training etc of all invigilators at least 2 months prior to the recruitment phase. On the day of the exams, if there is an invigilator shortage, SLT would have to be deployed to cover for absence.

5. 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:

- Liaise with local primary school (St Dunstan's Junior & Infants) to make use of their large assembly hall / large classrooms

6. Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
 - 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
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation

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

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer access directly secure online aspects of individual awarding bodies' website to complete the tasks remotely.

8. 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:

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

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:

- SLT to liaise with local primary school (St Dunstan's Junior & Infants) to make use of their large assembly hall / large classrooms
- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

10. 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 centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- SLT to liaise with local primary school (St Dunstan's Junior & Infants 0121 464 4648) to make use of their large assembly hall / large classrooms

11. 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 centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- Centre would act upon advice offered by JCQ.

12. 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:

- Scripts to be stored in exam safe.
- Only 3 people (members of school staff) have the access to the Examination Office & Secure cabinet. LH, JC, GH
- Exams Officer's office must be locked when unoccupied.
- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.

13. 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 reduce this risk, active scripts remain on site for the absolutely minimum time.
- It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers.

14. 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:

- Contact to be made immediately to the awarding bodies about alternative options.
- Use St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School for distribution of results on the exam morning.

Further guidance to inform 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/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/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

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/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: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

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

Date of next review

Oct 2024