# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN
## 2022/23

| Audience | Staff |
|---|---|
| Review Cycle | 1 year |
| Current Review | March 2023 |
| Next Review | March 2024 |
| Head of centre | Mrs Sandra McKenna *SMcKenna* |
| Examinations Officer | Mrs Amie Wild |
| SENCO(s) | Mrs Stacey Gregory |
| SLT member(s) | Mr Paul Bridge<br>Ms Alison Ashton |

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The Oswaldtwistle 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.

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.

This plan also confirms The Oswaldtwistle School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## 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

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role / task. This would usually be the Exams Assistant. Extra help could be called on from the Lead invigilator/SLT member with oversight of exams, currently Mr Paul Bridge.
- Extra hours should be allocated to the 'deputy' to ensure there are sufficient hours to cover the work required.
- Extra help could be sought by networking with staff from other local centres.
- Refer to the Oswaldtwistle School examination procedures for detailed instructions on policies across all examination aspects.
- Refer to The Exams Office login and JCQ website for further information.
- Relief staff to be given access to secure storage procedures, including key codes/keys for the doors, usernames and passwords for the staff network and exams secure websites.
- Always report long term absence to the Exam Boards and Mrs Sandra McKenna (Headteacher) so that they are made aware of the situation. They will be prepared to help and can be flexible with deadlines etc. in these circumstances.

## 2. ALS lead/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 (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

- SLT to nominate a 'deputy' to cover the role / task
- SLT to appoint a qualified assessor to test candidates in place of the SENCO
- Approval from exam boards and exam arrangements could be passed to the Exams Officer to administer online, with sufficient notice and planning time
- Lead Invigilator/TA to arrange student support during all exams

## 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

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

- Key dates and deadlines to be issued from the exams officer in plenty of time
- HOD's should take responsibility for any missing entries, coursework marks and any assessment marks in the absence of a member of teaching staff
- Entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can always be made at a later date to confirm final entries

## 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Check the 'freed staff' to see if there is anyone else available who has not been used from that teaching period
- Check with cover to see if there are any free staff available
- See if it is possible to amalgamate any of the access arrangement rooms to release an invigilator
- As a last resort, call upon SLT to invigilate
- Ensure that teachers allocated to invigilate are not teachers of the subject in which the exam is taking place.

## 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Seating plans completed in advance of exam and checked with cover supervisor to ensure that rooms will be clear for that exam session
- If there is an emergency on the day, rooms can be moved accordingly as long as no exam material is disrupted
- If all students are in exams at any one time, then the rooms used by that group in that period, should be free and can be booked for exams
- If no possibility of any free rooms, refer to SLT for advice

## 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 work / Using the NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber-attacks

## 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid this issue in the first place. If the entries are left to the last minute and there is an IT failure, ring the relevant exam boards to explain. (They may give an extension, this needs to be obtained in writing).
- A call should be logged immediately to BT Lancashire Services if the issue is an MIS issue or Bowker IT if it is a network/IT issue. They will then work either independently or with each other to resolve the issue. **Please note any additional charges that may be incurred.** Running backups should already be covered in the school's IT contract therefore this should not be chargeable.
- Try to access SIMS through another computer
- Complete checks ahead of the exam results days to ensure smooth running of downloads and log any issues with Bowker or BT Lancashire in plenty of time.

## 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

- Please refer to The Oswaldtwistle School's Emergency Evacuation Procedure which is located on Staff SharePoint and displayed in exam rooms

## 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

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of The Oswaldtwistle School to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- In the case of modular courses, The Oswaldtwistle School may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.
- The Oswaldtwistle School should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

## 10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption**

- Centre to invoke centre contingency plan.
- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding bodies
- Centre to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Centre to apply to the awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will **not** apply

## 11. Centre at risk of being unable 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 unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption**

- Centre to open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Centre to apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

## 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**

- In the first instance centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. The Oswaldtwistle School should **not** make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations
- If transporting from different sites that have had prior approval from the awarding bodies, these papers should be signed out from the exams office and kept in a secure lockable bag whilst transporting to and from approved sites
- Centre must ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. All exam scripts must be stored in the secure Exams storage area. If this is not accessible, then in the safe in the Main front office.

## 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**

- In the first instance centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. The Oswaldtwistle School should **not** make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations
- If transporting from different sites that have had prior approval from the awarding bodies, these papers should be signed out from the exams office and kept in a secure lockable bag whilst transporting to and from approved sites
- Centre must ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. All exam scripts must be stored in the secure Exams Safe in the secure Exams Storage room. If this is not accessible, then in the safe in the Main front office.

## 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

- Notify awarding body immediately
- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding bodies, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

## 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

- The Oswaldtwistle School should plan to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- The Oswaldtwistle School should plan to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- The Oswaldtwistle School should share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.

(Facilitation of post results services:

- The Oswaldtwistle School should plan to make post results requests at an alternative location
- The Oswaldtwistle School to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible)