Stockport School

Examination Contingency Plan
2023-24

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 Stockport School. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

At all times, the Examinations Officer and the Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual 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* in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations**

- This plan also confirms Stockport School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2022-23) 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 where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. 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.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that Stockport School has a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. **Exam Officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle.**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- o Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- o Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- o Sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained

Entries

- o Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- o Candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- o Awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams

- o Invigilators are not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
- o Exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- o Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- o Exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
- o Internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

Exam time

- o Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- o Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special conditions
- o Candidate scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- o Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Results and post-results

- o Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- o The facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Trained colleagues to assume roles as above under the guidance of appropriate member of the SLT and support from the rest of the SLT
- Contacting neighbouring secondary schools to request Exam Officer support where appropriate

2. SENCO extended absence at a critical stage of 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
  - o Candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
  - o Centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the *Equality Act 2010*
  - o Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated
- Pre-Exams
  - o Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body

- o Centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- o Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- o staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- Exam Time
  - o Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre actions:

- The Assistant SENCO to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of Teaching Assistants and SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required.

3. **Teaching Staff extended absence at a critical stage 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:

- Other subject staff to assume making workload and prioritising of assessments for external award, to be directed by the Director of Study
- The Examinations Officer to liaise with the Director of Study and/or SLT, if appropriate, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the Examinations Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received

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

School Staff trained to be emergency invigilators

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and periodically update to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion

- The Examinations Officer will seek help from the appropriately invigilator trained emergency school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days

5. Exam Rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exam Officer and Cover Manager 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:

- The Examinations Officer with the Cover Manager will organise rooming for examinations well in advance of examination window, 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 Examinations Officer and the Cover Manager will work with SLT at all times during such emergencies.
- In the event of no rooms being available we have an agreement with Stockport Grammar School (which is across the road from Stockport School) to be able to use their school and they can use our school if they have no rooms available

6. Failure of IT systems and/or Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Cyber Attack has been identified and may compromise any aspect of delivery of examinations

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body. At all times during the system failure the Examinations Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- **In the event of a cyber attack the Examinations Officer will work with the IT department and SLT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Bodies to seek further guidance. SLT will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies**

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- SLT to manage all such incidents and follow JCQ policy on arrangements

8. Disruption to 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:

- Students will access on-line teaching with a subject-led package for independent learning to ensure full coverage of the curriculum
- Students will access school's Firefly portal where teaching staff will have uploaded work to be completed and also have hard copies of resources to mitigate any technology issue.

9. Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements/special consideration and liable with the SLT to take appropriate action. With priority on any safety implications, and exploring all options to enable candidates to take their examinations.

10. Centre may not be 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 may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Liaise with the local authority for alternative provision. Priority on any safety implications, and exploring all options to enable candidates to take their examinations.
- Liaise with Exam Boards once alternative provision has been found to obtain agreement.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Examinations Officer / SLT would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions by closing off Reprographics to all staff apart from those involved in the copying of the papers and the papers would then be stored in the secure store room until the exam was to take place.

- Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Organisations to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements
- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, Stockport School should seek advice from awarding organisations and we would not make our own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- for any examinations where Stockport School make their own arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- The Exam Officer will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

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.

Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given
- The Exam Boards will 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 organisations candidates, may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.)

14. **Centre Unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post result 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:

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given
- Distribution of results:

- o Stockport School to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
  - o Stockport School to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
  - o Stockport School to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.)
- Facilitation of post results services:
  - o Stockport School to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
  - o Stockport School to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

All scenarios, information etc taken from the Joint Continency Plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Review:

This Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the Examinations Policy

Last Review: September 2023
Next Review: September 2024

Further guidance to inform and implement continency planning

Ofqual

Joint continency 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/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted)

JCQ

Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Instructions for Conducting Examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

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