

Exam
contingency
plan

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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 The Avenue Centre for Education. 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
 - Invigilation staff training is not scheduled and carried out
- *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:

ACE has an additional exams secretary and 2 further staff who are former examinations officers who can cover any absences and have access to the necessary systems to be able to take over this roll

Teaching and Learning leads can oversee the collation of exam courses, entry details and ensure that relevant exam timelines are being kept to. Pupil Progress Team and students individual Coaches can support this work and ensure that parent and students are kept informed.

The Exams Office linked SLT member is also a former Exams Officer and can action any required decisions. Invigilation training is part of Centre annual CPD and is scheduled via HR.

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:

ACE has a large Pupil Progress Team, including 2 ex-SENCO's who support the SENCO day to day and are able to cover this roll in the event of absences. Additional links are in place to access additional support from Local authority services if required.

The link SLT member for SEND is also a former SENCo and can provide additional support and supervisory guidance. The Centre Governing Body also includes a current SENCo.

Students requiring consideration of dispensations are identified via Teaching & Learning Leads and via the Pupil Progress Team and assessments are carried out by the Ace attached Educational Psychologist. This arrangements are usually overseen by SENCO / Exams Officer but can be carried out Via PPT Manager and / or link SLT.

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:

All ACE staff are used to working across phase and across subjects and can therefore provide mutual cover for all subjects in the event of occasional and shorter term absences. Additional staff can be recalled from off-site and provider based work to cover central services if appropriate.

ACE has established long term links with a number of agencies who have spent time at ACE and understand our work processes and are able to supply appropriately qualified staff to cover longer term absences.

Teaching and Learning leads can oversee the collation of data for exam entries and provide internal quality assurance that correct processes and procedures as outlined by Exam boards have been followed. All leads are experienced at supervising numerous accreditation routes and boards and have the experience to support / undertake these Exam Office functions if need be.

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:

All staff across ACE and ACE 'The Hub' have been trained to act as invigilators. The flexibility exists to reduce timetabled provision for other students in order to free up additional staff if required. Hub Services staff can be recalled into ACE to provide additional capacity if required.

Staff from Alternative Provisions who have students being entered for exams or having hosted exams at ACE also receive ACE led invigilation training and can be utilised. Many students remain on school roll and school staff could be called in where appropriate to provide additional invigilation capacity.

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:

- The Centre has a large number of rooms and spaces (especially in proportion to the number of Year 11 students) and can always adequately facilitate exams. In a critical event (site unusable) additional space has been identified at local secondary schools and within the local authority estate that can be used subject to exam board approval: the process for achieving this is known by Exams Office and SLT staff

6. 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:

The Centres Management Information Systems and all examination systems are cloud based with multiple off-site backups. In the event of catastrophic on-site system failure, a full reboot is possible within 24

hours. Ace has an ongoing contract with an ICT Support company which allows for immediate and priority response during examination season.

Exam entries can be made, processed and results retrieved via individual examination board websites and from any internet advice: relatively small numbers of students means that this would be a lengthy but practical process if required and deadlines could still be maintained with the allocation of additional experienced staff.

7. 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]

Centre actions:

ACE has a contingency plan, agreed with the local authority to allow for the relocation of the Centre to alternative sites / facilities. Yr 11 teaching is prioritised to be up and running within a maximum of 48 hours. Capacity exists for priority students to receive tutoring at home or other locations and most students, being dual registered with schools, can return full time to their base school in an emergency.

Partnership work with ALPS (as part of the wider ACE @ The Hub) means most students attend part time at alternative provision which could be extended for additional days in an emergency for either rooming only or rooming / teaching provision.

8. 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

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. [JCP scenario 2]

Centre actions:

ACE has access to a team of hospital school, medical tutors, tuition leads and outreach staff who can provide tuition and if need be (with Exam board approval) offsite supervision to allow all external examinations to continue to take place. ACE operates and is linked to a number of separate alternative provision sites and all secondary schools across the town who between them can provide alternative exam locations. Emergency alternative space has also been identified within the Council estate which could be used at short notice.

9. 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

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions:

Students who remain on school rolls can sit exams at their base school. Students who attend alternative provisions can sit exams at these provision locations. Emergency space within the council estate can also be made available. In an emergency, educational provision for non-examination students can be suspended to free up locations for exam hosting.

10. 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

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions:

Procedures are in place to record the receipt of materials in advance of the exams and to flag up where materials are missing or overdue and notify the relevant exam board. The facility exists to download, print and distribute exam papers and dispatch materials on the day as an emergency measure. Exams Office staff are aware of the procedures that have to be followed both internally and externally in this eventuality.

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]

Centre actions:

ACE has adequate secure storage to keep all exam materials secure overnight and collections are arranged daily but additional ad-hoc collections can be arranged. Additional secure storage (safe within a restricted access room) is available elsewhere within the building if ever required.

12. 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

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. [JCP scenario 6]

Centre actions:

Coursework is photocopied prior to dispatch and so replacement copies could be provided. Teacher assessments including mock exam and predicted grades are stored on line (cloud services) and so can be provided. Staff maintain their own teaching and assessment records, also increasingly stored within the MIS system. Exams Office staff are aware of the procedures for informing exam boards in the event of damaged, lost or destroyed assessment materials and JCQ procedures and processes will be followed.

13. 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

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]

Centre actions:

Results are downloaded via SIMS but can be accessed via individual exam boards from any internet device: Exams Office staff hold relevant passwords. Student contact details are held cloud based (secured) and so can be accessed and results distributed via email / post.

Causes 7-13 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

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>