EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN POLICY

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Date adopted	**June 2017**
Signed by chair of Teaching & Learning committee	
Member of staff responsible for monitoring	**Deputy Headteacher**
Review frequency	**Annual**

Date	Changes made	Agreed by	Authorised for use by	Date of review

Exam contingency plan

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 Northfield 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 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:

- We feel confident that contingency procedures are in place.
- As far as **data collection** is concerned H of C will be able to allocate task to another member of admin staff and supervise the progress.
- The same applies to **entries.** The 'system manager' will be able to undertake the task or to advise any member of admin staff how to carry out the task.
- **Pre-exams** cooperation from a number of staff under the leadership of the H of C will ensure cover is taking place e.g. the front office (room allocation), SLT to inform students (assemblies), secure storage (front office/caretaker), timely reminder to subject leaders who will therefore enter their own marks and request support of another member of team to double check the process. All subject leaders have an account with the Awarding board they are using and would be able to seek advice from their subject specialists.
- **Exam time** two reliable, experienced invigilators have agreed to step in to ensure smooth running of exams. These invigilators receive extra training (shadowing, experience of all different types of examinations, knowledge of the premises, admin staff and basic procedures). In addition they will benefit from front office, H of C and other local EXO support (as a result of the links forged through local networking support group)
- **Results/post results.** If needs be the 'system manager' is able to download results from A2C. Office manager is aware of all procedures for production of statements of results. All procedures re post results are well documented and updated year upon year and front office staff are involved in the dissemination of all information needed by students as well as organising the logistics of results day.

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:

- **Panning,** assessments are done by external assessor and the bookings made following referrals therefore assessments will take place.
- **Pre-exams and exams.** The exams officer has been the driving force behind all access arrangements for a number of years. With the emphasis being on the SENCo to lead on that front his office together with the support of the exams officer is now capable to cover any exams related issues should there be a need to do so due to SENCo extended absence. With applications done on line and the close working relationship between the exam office and SENCo office the students' needs (within the exams context) will be taken care of. The exams officer has always worked in close liaison with SENCo and therefore continuity is ensured. As far as the signing of form 8 By the SENCo we will seek advice from the JCQ and follow their instructions.

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 request for entries are made well in advanced and supported by numerous reminders and checks that major errors would arise. The existing staff structure (supported by an actively involved line management system), means that there will always be someone available to perform these tasks.

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:

- Plans and procedures are in place to recruit twice a year and to deliver formal initial training sessions as well as 2 'update' sessions for existing invigilators and TAs cover the above scenario.
- Furthermore, contingency arrangements to call in invigilators on stand-by and /or to use trained admin. bank staff are also in place. If all fails we will rely of teachers from

another subject that the one being examined to fill in any major shortage of invigilators.

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

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- *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*

<u>Centre actions:</u>

- Due to the use of our sports hall (holding up to 200 students) and our assembly hall we haven't had serious issues. Regardless of the situation the running of exams in the right conditions will always prevail over other existing rooming arrangements.

6. Failure of IT systems

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- *MIS system failure at final entry deadline*
- *MIS system failure during exams preparation*
- *MIS system failure at results release time*

<u>Centre actions:</u>

- As an Examination Officer I make sure that all entries are always sent well in advance of the Boards' deadlines in order to avoid such incident. If the situation arises that I was unable to send entries as our systems or the A2C weren't responding over a long period of time I would have the time to inform the Boards of the situation and seek a resolution (being able to provide evidence that deadlines were respected by the centre).
- The above approach also applies to any preparation work involving deadlines therefore giving us a chance to have everything in place well before due dates and allowing for systems failures.
- On results day the system manager is present on the premises to sort out major issues with our MIS. I have, on occasion, downloaded our results from each awarding board and printed their statements of results when our MIS failed us!

7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- 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]

<u>Centre actions:</u>

- Please see our contingency policy and DofE advice on severe weather.

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

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: See contingency plan (weather).

The centre will be in contact with all students concerned.

Where possible students will be collected, experienced invigilators who live within 'walking distance from the centre will ensure the smooth running of the exams to those candidates who attend.

The examination boards will be informed

The scripts will be securely kept until such time parcel Force can safely collect.

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:

- As above.
- Hopefully, with the JCQ approval we may be able to take our students to another centre (Students being under constant supervision all through the incident).

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:

- As described. However, the awarding boards despatch script s early enough for us to receive, check and query any 'missing' papers. Projected date of exams scripts are communicated to the centre and are early enough for EXO to check on their whereabouts if necessary and to avoid such a situation. In extreme case we will seek permission from the board to have a paper sent to us electronically and permission to print the number of copies required to go ahead with the exam as planned by the JCQ

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:

- EXO will contact parcel force and reorganise a collection.

- Untill collection the scripts will remain in secure storage (either the front office safe or the exams secure storage room).
- If need be the Awarding board will be kept informed and a formal complaint to Parcel Force will be lodged.

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:

- As described above

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:

- EXO will contact Awarding Boards and inform Head of Centre. EXO and the centre admin staff will inform students and families and also inform them of new arrangements once those have been confirmed.

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*

The centre Examination Officer has, over the years, forged a close working relationship with local schools. In addition, experienced, local and long standing invigilators have agreed to step in in case of crisis. Special briefing sessions, shadowing and access to procedures are taking place on a regular basis to give them both the tools and the confidence to run an exam day if the need arises.

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

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Timetabling			
Controlled assessment schedule clashes with other activities	Plan/establish priorities well ahead (e.g. at the start of the academic year)	Plan dates in consultation with school calendar – negotiate with other parties	Tristan Powell
Too many controlled assessments close together across GCSE subjects	Plan controlled assessments so they are spaced over the duration of the course	Spa ce controlled assessments to allow candidates some time between them	Tristan Powell
Accommodation			
Insufficient space in classrooms for candidates	Once the size of the cohort is known at the start of the year, flag instances where regular classroom space may not be suitable to conduct controlled assessments	Use more than one classroom or multiple sittings where necessary	Tristan Powell
Insufficient facilities for all candidates	Careful planning ahead and booking of rooms / centre facilities		Tristan Powell

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Downloading awarding body set tasks			
IT system unavailable on day of assessment	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date in all cases	Book IT equipment well ahead and download tasks before scheduled date of assessment	June White
Teaching staff unable to access task details	Test secure access rights ahead of controlled assessment schedule every year and every session	Ensure teaching staff have access rights for the correct area of awarding body secure extranet sites well ahead of the controlled assessment schedule	Tristan Powell
Loss of task details in transmission	Download tasks well ahead of scheduled assessment date	Contact awarding body and ask for replacement task; download again	June White
Absent candidates			
Candidates absent for all or part of assessment (various reasons)	Plan alternative session(s) for candidates		Anne Brown

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Control levels for task taking			
The assessment is undertaken under incorrect level of control (time, resources, supervision and collaboration)	Ensure teaching staff know what level is applicable and understand what is involved. Provide training if required	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Tristan Powell
Supervision			
Student study diary/plan not provided or completed*	Ensure teaching staff are aware of the need for study diary/plans to be completed early in course	Ensure candidates start, continue and complete study diary/plans that are signed after every session	Tristan Powell
Teaching staff do not understand that the supervision of controlled assessments is their responsibility	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the nature of controlled assessments and their role in supervising assessments		Tristan Powell
A suitable supervisor has not been arranged for an assessment where teaching staff are **not** supervising	A suitable supervisor must be arranged for any controlled assessment session where a teacher is not supervising, in line with the awarding body's specification		Tristan Powell

* Not all GCSE controlled assessments will require the completion of a study diary or study plans

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Task setting			
Teaching staff fail to correctly set tasks	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the task setting arrangements as defined in the awarding body's specification**	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Tristan Powell
Assessments have not been moderated in line with the awarding body's specification	Check specification and plan required moderation appropriately	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Tristan Powell
Security of materials			
Assessment tasks not kept secure before assessment	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the importance of task security	Contact the awarding body to request/obtain different assessment tasks	Tristan Powell
Candidates' work not kept secure during or after assessment	Define the appropriate level of security, in line with the awarding body's requirements, for each department as necessary	Seek guidance from the awarding body	Tristan Powell
Insufficient or insecure storage space	Look at provision for suitable storage at the start of the GCSE course	Find alternative storage within the centre	Tristan Powell

** All tasks whether set by the awarding body or the centre **must** be developed in line with the requirements of the specification.

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Deadlines			
Deadlines not met by candidates	Ensure all candidates are briefed on deadlines and the penalties for not meeting them	Mark what candidates have produced by the deadline Seek guidance from awarding body on further action	Tristan Powell
Deadlines for marking and/or paperwork not met by teaching staff	Ensure teaching staff are given clear deadlines (prior to the awarding body deadline) to complete marking/paperwork (Marks can then be processed and submitted ahead of awarding body deadlines)	Seek guidance from awarding body	Tristan Powell
Authentication			
Candidate fails to sign authentication form	Ensure all candidates have authentication forms to sign Ensure that the authentication form is securely attached to their work when it is completed and handed in for marking	Find candidate and ensure authentication form is signed	Tristan Powell
Teaching staff fail to complete authentication forms or leave before completing the authentication process	Ensure teaching staff fully understand the importance of authentication forms and the requirement of a signature	Return the authentication form to the teacher for signature Ensure authentication forms are signed as work is marked	Tristan Powell

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	*Action*	
Marking			
Teaching staff interpret marking descriptions incorrectly	Ensure appropriate training and practicing of marking Plan for sampling of marking during the practice phase	Arrange for re-marking Consult the awarding body's specification for appropriate procedures	Tristan Powell
Centre does not run the standardisation activity as required by the awarding body	Plan against the awarding body's requirements for standardisation, i.e. when and how this activity must be conducted	Check with the awarding body whether a later standardisation event can be arranged	Tristan Powell