EXAM CONTINGENCY POLICY

NAMED PERSON:	Mr Richard Peel Deputy Headteacher

Last Review Date:	September 2026
Review Cycle:	1 Year
Next Review Date:	September 2027

Mr Andy Crossey **Chairman of Governing Body**
Signed: A.D. Crossey
Date: September 2026

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Abbreviations used in this document
Head of centre	**HT (AMC)**
Exams officer line manager Assistant Headteacher – Progress & Attainment)	**AHT – P&A (PTO)**
Exams officer	**EO (SML)**
SEN & Learning Support Manager	**SEN-LSM (JBR)**
Learning Support Deputy Manager	**LSDM (JYA)**
Senior Leadership Team	**SLT**
Assistant Headteacher - SENDCO	**AHT-SENCO (PLO)**
Curriculum/Subject Leaders	**CLs**
The Royal Latin School	**RLS**
SIMS Manager	**SMAN (CBR)**

Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process at The Buckingham 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms The Buckingham School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section3.16-3.17, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2024-25*) 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 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;"*

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 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***
  - Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
  - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
  - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
  - 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 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

<u>Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:</u>

- Thorough sharing of practice by EO to AHT:P&A & SMAN during Term 2 to improve knowledge of procedures
- Key information also shared with SMAN and invigilators as part of further training
- Further advice sort from RLS (centre 52131) EO during absence period

2. Learning Support Manager and/or 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 from the awarding body
  - centre delegated arrangements not put in place
  - 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:

- Planning information shared from SEN-LSM to AHT-SENCO, LSDM & EO
- Key training and information shared with AHT-SENCO and LSDM

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 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:

- EO to liaise with 2nd in dept./SLT link

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:

- Ensure recruitment is done in good time to ensure invigilators are in trained and in place
- Use of LSA (previously trained for access arrangements)
- Sharing of colleagues from RLS (Check DBSs and not to lead exams/be on own/small exam)

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:

- Use of Youth and/or Community centres and liaison with RLS over any available space
- EO to notify staff/learners/parent/carers

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*
- *Cyber-Attack / Ransomware outbreak detected on the IT systems*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Ensure two back-up devices (at least one laptop outside of school) is regularly updated
- Ensure availability of tech support staff during key dates
- The EO will immediately utilise an encrypted, completely off-network mobile data hotspot via a dedicated secondary device to bypass the school network. If portal access is entirely compromised, the EO will immediately contact the relevant awarding body's emergency helpline to arrange secure alternative electronic delivery (eg. Via a secure alternative email or direct transfer to an off-site trusted centre such as RLS). IT support will isolate the examination administration devices from the main school network to protect exam-related streams.

7. 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 see emergency evacuation from exams policy**

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Liaise with RLS over available space
- SLT discussion with Youth/Community Centres management teams and primary feeders for use of space
- Priority given to exam classes/years to open available parts of the building
- Work set electronically
- Regular contact and update to parent/carers/learners

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- First day calling procedure to ascertain students which may be affected
- Information shared to parent/carers/learners from EO via student office
- EO to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- SLT to communicate with parent/carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- AHT-Data and dept. exam SLT link, to ensure procedure to complete outstanding evidence is completed

10.Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- EO to inform awarding organisation(s) of which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible
- Liaise with RLS over available space
- Discussion with Youth/Community Centres management teams and primary feeders for use of space
- Priority given to exam classes/years to open available parts of the building

11. Candidates unable to sit exams due to invigilator absence caused by infectious diseases – centre still open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *Candidates are unable to sit exams due to invigilator absence caused by an infectious disease*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Year 11 and 13 staff to be used to invigilate exams in subjects where they have not been involved in the delivery of the curriculum.
- Admin staff / technicians / site team / lunchtime supervisors to be given invigilator training in advance so that they can be used in an emergency.
- Selected year groups to be sent home to free up teaching staff who could then be used to invigilate exams

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:

- EO to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery options
- EO to notify AHT- P&A link if relevant

13.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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- EO to communicate with awarding body at the outset
- EO to liaise with appointed courier

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- CL responsible must notify EO and AHT – P&A immediately
- EO /AHT-P&A to communicate immediately to the relevant awarding organisations
- AHT-P&A to communicate to students and their parent/carers
- Regular update to learners and parent/carers
- CL and linked SLT to arrange procedure to recover/re-complete work where relevant

15.Centre unable to distribute results as normal (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:

- EO to notify awarding bodies
- EO to give A2C access to SMAN who has remote access to system and can download results
- Liaise with RLS over available space/results services
- Discussion with Youth/Community Centres management teams and primary feeders for use of space
- If necessary as a last resort, results can be emailed directly to students

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

You should also discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- If the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event, outside of the student's control.

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.#

3.2 In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure'.
- Communicate with parent/carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

- Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

4. Steps the awarding organisation should take

4.1 Exam planning

Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.

Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

4.2 In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

4.3 After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

5. If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- JCQ's guidance on special considerations
- FAB's guidance on special considerations

6. Wider communications

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The Department for Education in England, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Central Applications Office (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

7. Widespread national disruption

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

*[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted**, (updated 07 May 2024 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland-schools-and-collegues-shuld-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted*

JCQ

The qualification regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

Further information may be found at: 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

15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parent/carers and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a date TBC as a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

Centres must therefore remind candidates that they must remain available until the designated date should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan.

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2024-25*

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations_2024_Print-1.pdf

Chapter 15

Contingency planning

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

Guidance on *Alternative Site* arrangements and *Transferred Candidate* arrangements

Accessed through secure login to the Centre Admin Portal (CAP) or through the JCQ training site https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/exams-officer-training/

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

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/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

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

Statutory guidance on school closures https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

Wales

School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

School closures https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures