Exam Contingency Plan

Contents

Key Staff

Role	Name
Headteacher/Head of Centre	Mrs Alice Corrigan
Deputy Headteacher	Mr Jon Attwood
Office Manager	Caroline Perry
Exams Officer	Mrs Suzie Lingard
SENCO	Mrs Karen Fiddler
Assistant SENCO	Ms Jan Cooper

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at The Rural Enterprise Academy (TREA). 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.

This plan also confirms TREA's compliance with JCQ's Preparing for disruption to examinations policy

- 'All centres must have 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 owing to an unforeseen emergency such as a power outage.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency plan.
Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Exams 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 – 'bible' & Information collection forms.
    - 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.
    - approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body.
    - centre-delegated arrangements not put in place.

- 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
- Exams assistant to undertake any tasks required. SLT to assist where required and awarding bodies to be contacted for advice if necessary.

SENCO/Assistant 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
  - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline.

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

- Subject teacher/Exams Officer to liaise with Head of department and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. If this is not possible, the Exams Officer will liaise with the awarding bodies and act upon advice received.

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

- Exams Officer will review invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion. If there is a lack of invigilators SLT to be informed.
- School staff will be trained and ready for invigilation duties at short notice and at peak times if required.

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

- Exams Officer will organise exams rooms to be used prior to exam season, ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, SLT and EXAMS OFFICER will work together to ensure that sufficient staff are available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised, whilst alternative rooming is sourced.

Alternative venue details: Rodbaston College, Rodbaston, Penkridge, Stafford, ST19 5PG

Cyber-attack
Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery.
- The Exams Officer will work with SLT and the IT manager, to make immediate contact with the Awarding Bodies to seek further guidance and support. SLT will work with the Exams Officer to act as determined by the relevant awarding bodies.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
- Back-ups are taken daily of the MIS and the data is stored offline
- The systems for restoring the data are reliable and robust
- The school will contact the police and Action Fraud
- The school will contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- The school will inform the Department for Education

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

- The Exams Officer, in consultation with SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the awarding bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body secure sites. At all times during the system failure the Exams Officer will liaise with the Awarding Body to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

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 candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer will liaise with Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

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

- SLT to manage all such incidents. Candidates will be taught remotely.

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

- The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

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 due 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

- The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

Alternative venue details: Rodbaston College, Rodbaston, Penkridge, Stafford, ST19 5PG.

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

- Exams Officer to liaise with awarding organisations to get electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Exams Officer to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Awarding Bodies 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 would consider scheduling the examination on an alternative date.

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

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, the Exams Officer will contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body.
- For any examinations where we make our own collection arrangements, Exams Officer will investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations.
- Exams Officer to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

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 bodies.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer will contact the awarding bodies to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

<u>Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services (Including, in the event of the Centre being unavailable on results day due to an unforeseen emergency)</u>

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

- 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

- Exams Officer will liaise with SLT to decide to access the results/post-results services at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, or to send them electronically if appropriate. The Exams Officer will contact the awarding body to notify them where appropriate.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

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

- 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

Disruption to assessments or exams

- JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans
- JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- 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.

Wider communications

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Regulation 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.

JCQ

- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/4-5-1-Joint-Contingency-Plan-April-2019.pdf
- JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Notice_to_Centres-The_pExams Officerple_present_23_FINAL.pdf
- 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: Exam and assessment disruption; www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings
- Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to all UK schools. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review National Cyber Security Centre advice following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

- More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK
- Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
- Offline backups in an online world
- Backing up your data
- Practical resources to help improve your cyber security
- Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
- School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK