

# Exam contingency plan

## Key staff involved in contingency planning

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
Head of centre	Mr P Swatton (PAS)
Exams officer Line Manager (Senior Leader)	Mrs S Carapiet (SLC)
HR Officer	Mrs A Perry (ADP)
Exams officer	Mrs S Ridley (SJR)
SENCo	Mrs D Roberts (DLR)
Assistant SENCo	Mrs S Cotterill (SJC)
SLT member(s)	Mr T Smith, Mr D Carney, Mr C Wilson (CHW), Miss S Wright, Mr B Beard, Mr D Ockmore & Mr R Tomlinson

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Claverham Community College. 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.

Please note this contingency plan also policy to VCert External assessments. For all intents and purposes External assessments will hereby be referred to as Exams.

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 Claverham Community College is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2017-2018*) 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.*

## 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*

#### *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*
- ▶ *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, 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

Where possible SLT to nominate staff to support CHW in examinations officer activity.

- ▶ CHW to takeover examinations officer role during periods of extended absence with support of SLC. CHW to deliver all requirements with the support of the Exams Officer Guidance Notes created by SJR.
- ▶ Where possible PAS to nominate staff to support CHW in Examinations Officer Role.
- ▶ SLC to review invigilation team with ADP to carry out recruitment where necessary.
- ▶ SLC to assign invigilators to Examinations
- ▶ SLC to employ outside Agency (via. The Exams Office) to delivery Invigilator training program.
- ▶ Senior invigilators to support CHW on exam dates with delivery of exams.

### **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*
- ▶ *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 for to the awarding body*
- ▶ *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- ▶ *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- ▶ *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

- ▶ *SJC to undertake all actions carried out by the SENCo in relation to exams*

### **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*

*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

- ▶ All Teaching staff absences and it's affects to be overseen by PAS.
- ▶ Heads of Subject to insure all required deadlines are met. In the absence of heads of subject, Second in subject to take responsivities.

**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

- ▶ All support staff to be trained in invigilation to cover invigilation staff shortages/absences.
- ▶ Risk of shortages to be reviewed by SJR and where appropriate outside agency staff (3D recruitment) invigilation team to be deployed.

**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

- ▶ In the event that the Exam rooms are unavailable at short notice, all exams to be relocated to the sports centre.
- ▶ In the event smaller exams (access arrangement rooms) become unavailable at short notice SJR to re allocate to other classrooms across CCC's site.

**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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ MIS system failure at final entry deadline – All entries to be submitted 1 week in advance of deadline to reduce risk, changes can then be submitted manually. If MIS is down, manual entry to

be completed with assistance from other members of support staff.

- ▶ MIS system failure during exams preparation – Where this cannot be rectified in a timely fashion and a different MIS cannot be used, additional support staff to be deployed to support in manual creation of seating plans, timetables etc.
- ▶ MIS system failure at results release time. SJR to print Exam Board copies of results slips to be given to students.

## **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

- ▶ All processes of the Centre whole evacuation policy to be implemented.
- ▶ SJR to inform Exam boards as soon as possible that centre was forced to evacuate and to apply to exam board for Special Consideration to school.
- ▶ In the event of the fire alarm sounding all centre staff to follow fire evacuation policy

## **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*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exams officer with the support of senior/pastoral staff to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements.
- ▶ In the event making alternative arrangements is not possible, the exams officer to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

## **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 (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ If the college is unable to open as normal for examinations, it is the responsibility of the exams officer to inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.
- ▶ The SLT are responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from any relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open.
- ▶ Two options are available in the event the college is unable to open as normal, it is the responsibility of the senior leadership team to advise which option is more feasible.

- The colleges to open for examinations for candidates only
- The college to use the college Sports Centre.
- ▶ In the event making alternative arrangements is not possible, the exams officer to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

### **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*

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ In the event exam papers do not arrive as planned by the exam board, exams office to contact the exam board.
- ▶ Should the exam papers remain unavailable on the day of the exam, exams officer to contact the exam board and request electronic copy is issued to college for printing and distribution.

### **11. 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

- ▶ In the first instance the exams officer will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. In the meantime the exams officer will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

### **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*

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ The Exams Officer and PAS to contact the relevant Exam board for guidance of best practice and follow guidance where appropriate and agreed.

### **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*

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ If access to online services is available SJR to print Exam Board copies of results slips to be given to students.



- ▶ In the event CCC is unable to access electronic copies, SJR to contact relevant exam boards and requested printed copies for release date to then be issued to students.
- ▶ In the event CCC is unable to open the centre, results will be issued from the sports centre.

# Further guidance to inform 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, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

#### 2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

##### Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

##### In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

##### After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. 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.

#### 2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps

##### Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

##### In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

##### 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.

### **2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption**

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[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*, sections 1 and 2 <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**

### **Contingency planning**

The qualifications 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.

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.

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, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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.

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>

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iv]

*General regulations for approved centres*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on *alternative site* arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Guidance on *transferred candidate* arrangements

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries>

*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**

*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>