



The Fernwood School

High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All"

Examination Contingency Plan

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Senior Leader i/c Examinations and the Examinations Officer

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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 exams process at The Fernwood 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 act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCO is absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. 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.
- ✿ 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 exam results affecting the distribution of results to candidates.
 - ✦ The facilitation of the post-results services.

Centre actions:

- ✦ Exams officer to have documented procedures manual(s) in place (senior leadership team to be aware of where these are stored for future reference).
- ✦ Senior leadership team to nominate a 'deputy' to cover a role/task.
- ✦ Staff development sessions; briefing sessions.
- ✦ Exams officer networking with staff from local area.

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:

- ✦ SLT to arrange employment of the services of an approved assessor for the period of assessment of the cohort.
- ✦ Exams officer to perform administration for pre-exams and exam time arrangements.



- Senior leadership team to nominate a 'deputy' to cover role/task should the exams officer be absent for a prolonged period of time.

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:

- Senior leadership team to arrange a "deputy" within the faculty concerned at the earliest opportunity. They would take up all the necessary roles within the faculty to ensure the above all occur.

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:

- Exams officer to keep abreast of the planning, hiring, training etc of all invigilators at least 2 months prior to the recruitment phase. On the day of the exams, if there is an invigilator shortage, the senior leadership team would have to be deployed to cover for absence.

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 e.g. flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable.

Centre actions:

- Liaise with Fernwood Junior School to make use of their large assembly hall / large classrooms.



6. Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Where it is identified that a cyber attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of exams.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ Exams officer, head of centre and a senior leadership team member for exams will work with IT to make contact with the relevant awarding bodies to seek further guidance.
- ✿ Senior leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required by the awarding bodies.
- ✿ The Fernwood School follows guidance as set out in JCQ Guidance for Centres on Cyber Security November 2023 revised July 2025

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Cyber Attack*
- ✿ *MIS system failure at final entry deadline.*
- ✿ *MIS system failure during exams preparation.*
- ✿ *MIS system failure at results release time.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ Exams officer, Head of Centre and SLT member for exams will work with the IT department to make contact with the relevant awarding bodies to seek further guidance.
- ✿ Senior leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required by the awarding bodies.
- ✿ Exams officer access directly secure online aspects of individual awarding bodies' website to complete the tasks remotely.

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:

- ✿ The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students by internal text and email system, about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this - Joint Contingency Plan (JCP).



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 exam centre to take exams as normal.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ SLT to activate the school's JCP.
- ✿ 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 using the internal text and email system.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled exam.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ Centre to invoke centre contingency plan. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre.
- ✿ If the JCP has been activated, exam boards concerned would be contacted immediately and advice obtained acted upon. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue using the internal text and email system.

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Disruption to the distribution of exam papers to the centre in advance of exams.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers (JCP scenario 2).
- ✿ Centre would act upon advice offered by JCQ.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed exam scripts.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ Scripts to be stored in exam safe.
- ✿ Exam safe keys stored in their own key safe secured to the wall of the exams officer's office. Only two people (members of school staff) have the access code to this key safe; DS and JL.



- ✿ Exams officer's office must be locked when unoccupied.
- ✿ Where exams are part of the national 'yellow label' service centre to seek advice from awarding bodies.

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ✿ *Large scale damage to or destruction of completed exam scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.*
- ✿ *Completed exam scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding bodies.*

Centre actions:

- ✿ To reduce this risk, active scripts remain on site for the absolute minimum time.
- ✿ 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).

14. 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:

- ✿ Contact to be made immediately to the awarding bodies about alternative options.
- ✿ Use Fernwood Junior School's large hall for distribution of results on the exam morning.

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>



APPENDIX 1

Resilience and Contingency Arrangements

Summary

The Fernwood School will provide resilience in the exam system in the unlikely event that the government determines that exams are not able to go ahead. **These arrangements are not designed to be used to award grades in circumstances where there has been localised disruption to teaching and learning.**

The Fernwood School ensures all candidates sit mock exams in formal exam conditions before their formal exams, and that their papers are retained. By doing this we ensure that we have alternative evidence of student performance to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs).

The evidence gathered will be sufficient in that The Fernwood School feels confident that all evidence is an appropriate assessment of the knowledge, understanding and skills of the student. We complete assessments in the first half of the academic year to create greater resilience in the face of unforeseen events.

Conditions under which candidates should be assessed

Teachers will assess their students to provide them with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in ways that cover the assessment objectives for the qualification.

Students should be assessed under exam-like conditions wherever possible. For example, students:

- ✿ Should not know the questions in the assessment beforehand.
- ✿ Should work independently and without assistance (except where access arrangements apply).
- ✿ Should not have access to notes or books.
- ✿ Should be supervised during the assessment, although external invigilation is not needed.
- ✿ Should be assessed under timed conditions.

Where possible, we shall assess all our students using the same material at the same time or using different materials at different times.

Assessment Materials

The assessment material will be as useful as possible for our students preparing to take their summer exams. Materials will be similar to full or parts of the exam papers they are preparing to take in the summer and will be based on exam board materials.



Marking

Teachers will mark the assessments in line with published exam board mark schemes and guidance where appropriate. Senior leaders/faculty leaders will support staff to mark work for the same qualification to the same standard.

Retention of Work

Students work, either the original or a copy, must always be retained by the centre. This will be either physically or digitally.

Student Awareness

It is made clear to our students that it is expected that exams will go ahead as per normal. Our students are made aware that all assessment evidence collected and retained would be used to determine grades only in the event that formal exams do not run.

Correspondence and information will be sent to all parents.