EXAMS CONTINGENCY PLAN

This policy applies to all secondary schools within the Lionheart Educational Trust

Approved by the Trust

October 2024 – October 2025

Contents

Aims

The aims of this plan are:

- To examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the examination/assessment process, such as

  o the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle

  o The potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable

  o The naming of an an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.

  o Potential issues with the centre's IT systems

  o The centre must ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks. (GR 3.17-19)

- To mitigate the impact of disruptions by providing actions or procedures to follow.

- To ensure that in the event of key staff not having arrived at the centre by 7:45am on the day of exams the contingency plan is put into operation and the designated staff take the lead.

Legislation and guidance

This plan complies with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) General Regulations for Approved Centres, which require all exam centres to have a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which cover all aspects of examination administration.

This plan is also informed by the Ofqual 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', the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Responsibilities

Head of Centre

The head of centre will ensure that a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy is in place which covers all aspects of examination/assessment process.

- The head of centre will ensure at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

- The head of centre will a response to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue. (GR 5.3)

Staff and invigilators

Staff and invigilators involved in the centre's exam process are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the contingency plan.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year in the autumn term, or well in advance of each exam series. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Contingency plan

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process and actions that should be taken are detailed in the table below:

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
Exams officer absence (short term or extended absence) at key points in the exam cycle	In the event that the Exams Officer is absence from work in the immediate short term at key points in the exam cycle, or is absence long term. Key points in the cycle relate to: ● **Planning stage** *Collation of qualification details* *Recruitment of invigilators* ● **Entries** *Submitting entries to awarding bodies* *Awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred* ● **Pre-exams** *Exam scheduling (rooms/invigilators etc.)* *Issuing candidate timetables* *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** *Exam operations (running the exams)*	SLT member temporarily directed by the Head of Centre to assume responsibility for all aspects of the examination process supported by members of the central trust data and exams team as required. Seek support and guidance from other exams officers (at other centres) within the trust. Head of centre to allocate or appoint additional support staff to the exams team as appropriate.	Head of Centre to direct other staff members and contact trust exams/data team for additional support.

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
	● **Results and post-results** *Downloading/issuing candidate results* *Dealing with post-result queries/requests*		

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
Exams officer has conflict of interest during the examination cycle	In the event that the Exams Officer declares a conflict of interest for the examination cycle covering the entire cycle Key points in the cycle relate to: ● **Planning stage** *Collation of qualification details* *Recruitment of invigilators* ● **Entries** *Submitting entries to awarding bodies* *Awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred* ● **Pre-exams** *Exam scheduling (rooms/invigilators etc.)* *Issuing candidate timetables* *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** *Exam operations (running the exams)* ● **Results and post-results** *Downloading/issuing candidate results* *Dealing with post-result queries/requests*	SLT member with responsibility for exams directed by the Head of Centre to ensure appropriate measures are in place to mitigate risk to the examination cycle. Awarding bodies must have been informed of Exam Officer conflict of Interest ahead of entries/registrations being made. Head of centre to allocate or appoint additional support staff to the exams team as appropriate.	Head of Centre to direct other staff members and contact trust exams/data team for additional support.

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	In the event that the SENCo is absence from work at key points in the exam cycle. Key points in the cycle relate to: ● **Planning stage** *Candidate testing for access arrangements* *centre fails to recognise its duties towards* *disabled candidates as defined under the terms of* *the Equality Act 2010* *Evidence of need gathering* ● **Pre-exams** *Approval for access arrangements (applications)* *modified paper ordered in line with deadlines* *Staff facilitator training* *Centre-delegated arrangements put in place* ● **Exam time** *Access arrangement candidate support*	Teaching Assistants and Exams Officer to work with the Exams Team SLT Line Manager and SENCo SLT Line Manager to identify candidates where applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments may be required and make arrangements for testing and applications. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required to assist in this process of access arrangement testing. Seek support from other SENCos within the trust as appropriate.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer
Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	When teaching staff are absent for a prolonged period thereby affecting non-examination assessment tasks 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*	Head of centre to employ suitable supply/temporary staff to cover staff absence in the short term ensuring that required assessment tasks are completed. Subject specialists/Directors of learning from the trust to support teaching and learning activities in the absence of the subject teacher and aid in the completion of all assessment activities.	Head of Centre

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
	• *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 (including controlled assessment and coursework) 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*		
Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period	When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.	Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ. Communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
		Facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both; Head of centre and SLT to work with the trust leadership group to facilitate alternative arrangements (within the trust or in collaboration with other centres) to minimise the impact of lost learning and teaching time. Prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations shortly. Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.	
Invigilators shortage; lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	When the centre failures to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams (to meet expected ratios) or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days/absence on the day of an exam.	Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained to meet expected ratios working closely with HR teams. HR will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days (support staff); Exams Officer will coordinate requirements with HR and Exams Team SLT Line Manager to mobilise staff at short notice as needed. Staff will be directed by the Head of Centre. Staff will be trained in advance using the central trust provided training materials.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Exam rooms shortage; 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	Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations in advance of all examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
	• Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days • Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time	In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available), support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced (candidates will be suitably isolated as required). Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service; request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings. Alternative accommodation may be used at a nearby centre (most likely within the trust) and candidates transported as appropriate.	
Cyber attack	Where it is identified that a cyber attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations	Exams Officer will work with IT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance. Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies. The head of centre will ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by: a) providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret; b) providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts; c) enabling additional security settings wherever possible;	Exam Officer & Director of IT

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
		d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed;	
		e) setting up secure account recovery options;	
		f) reviewing and managing connected applications;	
		g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required;	
		h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security:	
		https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations	
		Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.	
		i) reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body. (GR 3.21)	
Failure of IT systems	Criteria for implementation of the plan IT system corruption affecting candidates' work MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation MIS/IT system failure at results release time Key points in the cycle relate to:	Centres will ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Centres will implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks. (GR 3.19)	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
	● **Entries** *Submitting entries to awarding bodies* ● **Pre-exams** *Exam scheduling (rooming/candidate seating etc.)* *Issuing candidate timetables* ● **Exam time** *Online examinations* ● **Results and post-results** *Downloading and producing results slips*	Exams Officer will make entries from another site direct to the awarding bodies (using awarding bodies' secure extranet sites). Exam room scheduling/timetables complied using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables). Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies in respect of re-sitting online exams affected by system failure, or to seek an alternative solution. Results accessed directly from the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites (accessed from an alternative site if necessary).	
Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams	The centre will invoke its emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure. Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so and seek advice. Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy/lockdown policy, where appropriate.	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
		Invigilators to follow the emergency evacuation/lockdown procedure for examinations in accordance with agreed protocols.	
Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	Where candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.	Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice/follow their guidance. Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding any possible solutions/options to the issue. Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. Centres to have provided Appendix to this document confirming alternative rooming arrangements in place Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series. Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period	In the event that the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, e.g. a fire at the centre forces it to close, or other unforeseen emergency.	Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice. Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate.	Head of Centre & SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
		Open for the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible. Use alternative venues (locally or within the trust) in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. Centres to have provided Appendix to this document confirming alternative site arrangements in place Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available examinations series, if possible.	
Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence. .	Seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection. Only make alternative arrangements after approval from awarding organisation and make sure papers are securely stored until collection. .	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations	Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. Arrange with exam boards for alternative means of receiving papers, e.g. electronically or alternative courier	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, e.g. a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts, or where completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.	Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s), candidates and their parents or carers. Seek advice from awarding organisations on their procedures for dealing with such issues. Where partial assessments can be recovered these will be made available where appropriate. Procedures to recover/re-complete work (e.g. IT data reconstruction for electronic work) will be employed where relevant.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer
Centre is unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services	In the event that the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.	Contact awarding organisations about alternative options. Make arrangements to access resultsat an alternative site. Make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue. Share facilities with other schools/colleges if possible. Informa candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services.	SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer & Exam Officer

Scenario	When to implement	Actions / Mitigation	Person(s) responsible
Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absent (**Escalation process**)	In the event that the Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absent during the key points in the exam cycle.	Executive principal/senior leader from the trust alerted to staff absence and relief staff appointed and deployed from other sites as required. Support to be provided from the central trust exams/data team as needed to ensure the examinations process continues seamlessly.	Other SLT member to contact the trust executive team.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

JCQ guidance:

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies 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.

The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Ofqual guidance

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

Further guidance

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

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 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
https://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:

1. More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK

2. Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement

3. Offline backups in an online world

4. Backing up your data

5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security

6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it

7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK

Staff with responsibility for exam procedures

Beauchamp City Sixth Form

Position in School	Staff
Head of Centre	Catherine Bartholomew
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Dan Burke
Exam Officer	Aziza Raidhan
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Catherine Bartholomew
SEND Coordinator	Ismahane Messahel
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Kathryn Judge

Beauchamp College

Position in School	Staff
Head of Centre	Kath Kelly
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Gary Mellor
Exam Officer	Sal Lail
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Jim Ardley
SEND Coordinator	Belinda Howell
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Shelley Bass, Alice King

Castle Rock School

Role	Staff
Head of Centre	Roma Dhameja
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Phil Cooling
Exam Officer	Emma Knaggs
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Roma Dhameja
SEND Coordinator	Amy Bowles
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Roma Dhameja

Cedars Academy

Role	Staff
Head of Centre	Laura Sanchez
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Hayley Pugh
Exam Officer	Susan Panczak
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Luke Marvell
SEND Coordinator	Emma Brewster
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	James Rolfe, Dave Allard, Dan Thomas,

Humphrey Perkins School

Position in School	Staff
Head of Centre	Jenny Piper-Gale
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Rikki Khakhar
Exam Officer	Allison Poulton
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Matthew Rofe
SEND Coordinator	Karen Bradley
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Della Bartram

Judgemeadow Community College

Role	Staff
Head of Centre	Alex Grainge
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Sally Howgate
Exam Officer	Rafia Mastoor
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Sally Howgate
SEND Coordinator	Jasdeep Singh
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Emma Andrews

Newbridge School

Position in School	Staff
Head of Centre	Michael Gamble
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Michael Gamble
Exam Officer	Leila Tillotson-Roberts
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Sophie Maine
SEND Coordinator	Sophie Marlow
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Thomas Barr, Mick Rowbottom, Rebecca Knaggs

Martin High School

Role	Staff
Head of Centre	Laura Sanchez
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Timothy Hackett
Exam Officer	Chloe Hollis
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Kevin Seaward
SEND Coordinator	Emma Rudkin
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	

Mercia Academy

Role	Staff
Head of Centre	Jackie Cooper
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Jackie Cooper
Exam Officer	Nick Holmes
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Kelly Lundman
SEND Coordinator	Katie Westwood
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	

Sir Jonathan North College

Position in School	Staff
Head of Centre	James McKenna
SLT Line Manager for Exam Officer	Carl Hartley
Exam Officer	Amrita Ali
SLT Line Manager for SEND Coordinator	Claire Greaves
SEND Coordinator	Nic Coton
Other SLT member with contingency exam responsibility	Steve Reynard

Lionheart Educational Trust

Role	Staff
Chief Operating Officer	Ben Jackson
Director of Data & Exams	Richard Heppell