



Stretford
Grammar School
Aspirat primo fortuna labori

Examination Contingency Policy

Ratified by Governors: 2020



Member of staff with overall responsibility: Examinations Officer

Governing Body Sub-Committee with reviewing responsibility: Standards and Curriculum

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Glossary of terms

AB: Awarding Body e.g. AQA and other exam boards

EO: Examinations Officer at Stretford Grammar School

JCQ: Joint Council for Qualifications

SENDCo: Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator

SLT: Senior Leadership Team at Stretford Grammar School i.e. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, Business Manager.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Stretford Grammar School. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

At all times, the Examinations Officer and Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

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 Stretford Grammar School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2020-21*) 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 examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.*

Causes of potential 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
 - students 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
 - invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
 - students not briefed on exam timetables and Awarding Body information for students
 - confidential exam/assessment materials and students' work not stored under required secure conditions

- internal assessment marks and samples of students' 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
 - students' scripts not dispatched as required to Awarding Bodies
- *Results and post-results*
 - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to students
 - the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to assume responsibility for the above tasks.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

2. ALS lead / SENDCo 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*
 - students 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 students not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
 - access arrangement student support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the position is filled should absence have the potential to disrupt exam preparation.
- The Teaching Assistants and Examinations Officer to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required and plan accordingly ahead of the summer series. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required.
- Exams Officer and SENDCo to ensure access arrangements are in place for the Spring Term of Year 10 for all applicable students.

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:*
 - *students 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 students' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer to liaise with Curriculum Leaders and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the EO will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

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:

- The Examinations Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- The EO will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

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 expected incident at exam time*

Centre actions:

- The EO will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan accordingly.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced. The SLT will work with the EO at all times during such unexpected incidents.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

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:

- The EO, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the AB. At all times during the system failure the EO will liaise with the AB to minimise disruption, costs incurred and arrange alternative methods of information exchange.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

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

- Stretford Grammar School has a policy ([SGS Emergency Evacuation Procedure Policy 2020-21.docx](#)) in the event of an emergency evacuation of the exam room.

8. 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 students 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:

- SLT to manage all such incidents.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

9. Centre unable to open as normal during the examination 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

**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 students who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.*

Centre actions:

- If possible, open only for examination candidates.
- The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.
- See pages 7-8 sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).
- See pages 19-21 section 5.3 of the school Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP).

10. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Students are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions:

- Procedures for absence outlined to students in an examination booklet given each year.
- The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT, student(s), parent(s) to take appropriate action (find an alternative venue/ advise on the next opportunity to take the exam/ apply for special consideration) as required.

11. 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

- (Awarding organisations will provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Stretford Grammar School will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. Awarding organisations will provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date).

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- The EO will contact the AB to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative delivery arrangements.

13. 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 organisations

Centre actions:

- The EO will contact the AB immediately to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

14. 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 students, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions:

- The EO will contact the AB to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.
- The Headteacher to notify transition colleges, students and parents as soon as possible.

*information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

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 and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- Guidance for schools Covid-19 from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series from the Department for Education in England
- Action for FE Colleges from the Department for Education in England
- Public health guidance to support autumn exams from the Department for Education
- Education and childcare: coronavirus from Welsh Government
- Covid-19 - guidance for school and educational settings from Department of Education in Northern Ireland

1.2 General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools from the Department for Education in England
- Exceptional closure days from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- Checklist - exceptional closure of schools from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- School closures from NI Direct
- Opening schools in extremely bad weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- Procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

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 if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation 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

See also:

- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

3. Steps you should take

3.1 Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment 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

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 your centre is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure.
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

3.3 After the exam

1. 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.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. 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

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. 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

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 to the taking of examinations / assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national 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.

We will update this page as necessary should national disruption occur with any further relevant links.

(Ofqual guidance extract above 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 01 October 2020) <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>)

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

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 Counter Terrorism Security Office

Procedures for handling bomb threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats

15.1 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, parents 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 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2021. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-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 significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2021, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2020-2021 <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning) General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

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