

Examinations Contingency Plan

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 Medeshamstede Academy. 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 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.*”

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 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
 - access arrangements are not in place/planned for during the exam, this impacts staffing and rooming. The specialist assessor has not conducted his assessment and the Exams Officer has not submitted an application by the within the timescale.
 - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- *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
 - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms
- *Results and post-results*
 - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates

- the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre Actions:

The Secondary Phase Leader (PL) and the Deputy Principal (DP) have the sufficient knowledge of the process to ensure that the examinations function continues to be performed.

- The annual data collection exercise at our centre is conducted by the EO using a proforma. In this situation the PL could inform the boards of the information.
- Accounts are set up for all online services that the PL/DP will need to use in the EO's absence. eAQA, The Exams Office, SIMS, Edexcel online, Gateway, NCFE, OCR, ASDAN.
- The annual exams plan is in place to highlight actions by required dates, and is distributed to all secondary staff and SLT involved in exams.
- The centre has subscribed to The Exams Office and their tools can be accessed by the PL/DP to support with all aspects of the exams function.
- A planning meeting is held at the beginning of the academic year with the EO/PL/DP/SENDCo to highlight required access arrangement applications in order to inform the specialist assessors workload and deadlines.
- The key documents published by the JCQ are accessible to SLT – kept in the exams file in the school office.
- The centre is part of a group of Academies supported by a central team, the Greenwood Academies Trust. The centre is also located adjacent to another GAT run Academy (COPA centre number 22378) and support for systems and processes could be sought through the EO located there, as well as a number of other GAT academies within the locality.
- The PL is the phase leader for the secondary students who will be sitting the exams and therefore has sufficient knowledge to inform rooming and invigilation whilst ensuring that the students' SEN do not impact on others within the room, allowing for all of the individual access arrangements and that the teacher involved in delivering the course is not part of the team supporting the examination.
- The Deputy Principal (Head of the Secondary School) is the only other member of staff with knowledge of how to access the confidential material within the secure storage location. This will not be shared with any other centre staff, even in this situation.
- The Deputy Principal has the knowledge to perform the duties of the EO however time constraints may prove a barrier and in this case would be supported by the office staff within the centre. Office staff to shadow EO during key tasks in the cycle.
- All exams related material (apart from historically generated entry files) are saved in the following location which is accessible to SLT and admin support staff: K:\EXAM.

2. 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:

- Medeshamstede Academy is a small SEN school with no more than 35 students in examination years. The DP and PL are involved in the individual pathway co-ordination of the candidates and therefore is in a position to ensure that the above points would have little impact and can be overcome in the absence of teaching staff.
- Due to the needs of the students and the support they require whilst working we are heavily staffed with learning support who will have the knowledge to inform the EO of the required entry information.
- As we are a part of a multi academy trust with various other academies registered as exam centres who also have staff delivering the same courses, therefore the continued delivery of the course and internal assessments can be supported by bringing in staff from other GAT academies.

3. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *Failure train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams*
- *Invigilator shortage on peak exam days*
- *Invigilator absence on the day of an exam*

Centre actions:

- The centre does not plan to recruit external invigilators due to the nature of our candidates, taking their major need of ASD into consideration.
- The centre has a high number of learning support staff who will be our main staffing resource for invigilation for exams and to deliver access arrangements where required.
- The centre will hold staff training as necessary in each season as it is likely that all students will require a form of access arrangement. Also this is to ensure that the whole team have a comprehensive knowledge of the process and the plans for our centre as the candidates will be split up in to separate rooms/small groups/individuals for invigilation, depending on their arrangements.
- On the morning of each exam day a staff briefing will take place to ensure that everyone involved has the chance to ask questions around their role or the centre's arrangements for the exams, taking in to account any last minute personnel changes that may occur.
- Staff from other local centres within the Academy chain can be brought in to support the invigilation in the event of extreme staff shortage.

4. 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:

- Whilst we have the luxury of a large number of rooms in which to hold exams, The centre could apply to the JCQ in advance to use an alternative site such as another Academy within the GAT group or the shared sports hall (shared with centre ref 22378)

5. 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 centre's SIMS is server based so can be accessed from any location with GAT network access. Therefore in any of these situations above the EO could relocate to an alternative Academy within the Greenwood Academies Trust, and be supported by the central team.
- Support can be obtained from the SIMS SBS helpdesk if the above fails.
- The EO could use alternative systems such as MS Excel could be used to manually collate, record and distribute results.

6. 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]

Centre actions:

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, the centre will do it's utmost to continue to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- In the case of modular courses, the centre may advise candidates to sit examinations in the next available series
- Should the centre be closed for an extended period of time, learning could still take place in an alternative GAT academy, or in some cases tuition in the home could be provided by teachers and learning support staff.

7. 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

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. [JCP scenario 2]

Centre actions:

- Wherever possible the examinations will be conducted according to the centre's published examination timetable.
- The centre will 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.
- The centre will consider every solution possible and reasonable to continue to enable candidates to sit the examination whilst weighing up the anxiety and stress caused to them should unplanned changes to expected routines occur, as due to the candidates SEN, this may overall become too distressing for them and sitting examinations in such circumstances would not be beneficial for them in any way.

8. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams 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

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions:

- If the centre is unable to open as normal for examinations we will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.
- If conditions are so severe that a decision is made to close the academy, or where the academy remains open but some individual candidates are unable to reach it because of extreme weather conditions, and no alternative arrangements can be made to take the examination at a different location, then the options are:
 - Where candidates are entered for examinations but this is not their terminal (final) examination series, they may be entered again for the next series.
 - Where candidates are sitting units as part of their terminal examination series or no further re-sit opportunity is available, then an application for Special Consideration may be made.
- At all times the Academy shall communicate regularly with candidates and parents/guardians to ensure that candidates anxiety levels are not unnecessarily increase.

9. 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

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions:

- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise alternative delivery of papers, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.

10. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]

Centre actions:

- In all cases the papers will remain in the secure storage facility.
- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise alternative delivery of papers, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.

11. 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

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]

Centre actions:

- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise a solution, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.

12. 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 candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]

Centre actions:

- In such cases the centre will communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to devise alternative delivery of options, the solution will depend upon the specifics of the occurrence.
- The centre's systems are server based and therefore secure communication to candidates of the results could be managed from any facility with internet access, be that another Academy within the GAT group, the head office or a residential location.

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*