



George Stephenson
High School

Examination Contingency Plan

Governance	Curriculum Governing Body
Policy Officer	Deputy Headteacher
Version	V2
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Statutory	Yes

Version Log History

Issue	Changes	
1	Adopted	September 2020
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Centre Name	George Stephenson High School (GSHS)
Centre Number	39303
Date plan first created	16/9/2020
Current plan approved by	Mr Tyson
Current plan reviewed by	Mr Tyson
Date of next review	15/09/2025

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr P Douthwaite
Senior leader(s)	Mr S Tyson
Exams officer	Mrs J Price
ALS lead/SENCo	Ms R Bennett

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process. 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 at GSHS. This plan is also informed by: the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2023).

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. In the event of a Cyber-Attack please refer to our Cyber Attack Policy.

Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- annual data collection on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- annual exams plan identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred
- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- 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
- exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

The Senior Leader in charge of Exams will arrange cover for the Exam Officer, internally or externally led by SLT. Advice will also be taken from NTC and other local Exam Offices in the local exam officer forum.

SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated
- centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- approval for access arrangements not applied for
- modified paper requirements not identified or applied for
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Centre actions:

Centre to arrange cover for SENCo from within SEN team. Contact to be made to SENCos at local schools and Ed Psych team from LA. Exam Officer to support on administering AA and training of staff. Advice from awarding bodies sought to mitigate impact on candidates.

Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time
- 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
- 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

Centre actions:

- CLs/Assistant CLs to assist in making entries.
- Late fees to be absorbed by Exams or Curriculum budgets.
- Additional study sessions made available for affected candidates.
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for further advice

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:

Agency staff to be employed where possible and other invigilators to be taken from the following categories: cover supervisors, TAs, SLT, Support staff.

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 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:

- Use of alternative venues such as the Hall, Drama Room, Sixth Form Study Room.
- Teaching classes to be moved to alternative venues
- Candidates to be held under supervision and exam to be taken in separate sessions.
- In the event that GSHS is unable to open to allow exams to take place, the following establishments can be used, White Swan Centre, Local Primary Schools, Longbenton High School, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- Communicate with candidates/or parent any changes to the exam timetable or assessment venue
- Ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- Longbenton High School can also be used for IT access, Reprographics and other admin tasks, if these are unavailable at GSHS

Failure of IT systems or Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline or during exam preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time
- Where a cyber attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice.
- Use of alternative means of entry and results reporting, such as secure websites.

- Exams Officer to work from home if Internet is unavailable.
- Refer to and invoke GSHS Cyber Attack Policy

Emergency Evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start or complete their exams.

Centre Action

- refer to and invoke Exam Emergency Evacuation Policy in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' or Lockdown Policy
- contact the awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- Consider if Special Consideration could be applied for.

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:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning Communication details:
- study sessions made available to catch up.
- Alternative venues for teaching sought, such as local schools or the White Swan Centre – advice to be sought from LA.

Candidates unable to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examination
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Centre may not be able to be open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre at risk of being 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.

Centre actions:

- Centre to seek advice from -Awarding Bodies.
- Alternative venues sought, such as local schools, community Centre or the White Swan Centre.

- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

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:

- The centre to liaise with awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from awarding bodies
- Exams Officer (if advised) to take scripts to ParcelForce Worldwide post office as alternative.
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

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

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.

Centre actions:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence.
- where marks cannot be generated, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series
- Centre to seek advice from awarding bodies with regard to seeking special consideration.

Centre unable to distribute results (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies to seek advice
- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services.

Widespread national disruption

In the event of widespread sustained national disruption, the 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.

General contingency guidance

Emergency planning and response (www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings) from the Department for Education in England

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools (www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools) from the Department for Education in England

Exceptional closure days (www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland

Checklist - exceptional closure of schools (www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland

School closures (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) from NI Direct

Opening schools in extremely bad weather (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government

Procedures for handling bomb threats (www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance) from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

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.