



Cloughwood
Academy

Contingency Plan

(Examinations)

Centre Name	Cloughwood Academy
Centre Number	40403
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Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Robert Newton
Senior Leader(s)	Samantha Howarth
Exams Officer	Georgina Thomas
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Jane Thomas
Deputy SENCo	Courteney Chick

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process at Cloughwood 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 at Cloughwood Academy.

Alongside internal processes this plan is 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 the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations* (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms Cloughwood Academy's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3) by having in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination / assessment administration and delivery.

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 critical stage of the examination cycle. 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), this contingency plan covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. The Senior leaders at Cloughwood Academy have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

Operating across more than one centre

This does not apply to this centre.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will also ensure that as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Cloughwood Academy responds 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.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

Exams officer extended absence at a critical stage of the exam 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

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

- invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams
- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- 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

- exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies

Results and post-results

- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed

- The exams officer will keep the Head of Centre and Senior Leader for Examinations (Deputy Head) up to date with all milestones.
- In the absence of the exams officer, Senior Leader for Examinations (Deputy Head) will resume control for all exam processes, under the guidance of the Head of Centre.

ALS lead/SENCo extended absence at a critical stage of 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
- 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 candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- The SENCO, Deputy SENCO and examinations officer to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required, well in advance of examination series. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may also be required.
- Exams officer/Deputy Head of Centre, SENCO and Deputy SENCO to process access arrangements applications.

Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of 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
- 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 candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- The Examinations Officer to liaise with acting Head of Department and/or SLT, if necessary, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to.
- If Head of Department is absent, then the relevant Curriculum and Standards manager is to ensure all processes are completed.
- Where this is not possible, the Exams Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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 manner.
- The Examinations Officer will liaise with the Head of Centre and SENCO so that school staff are available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.
- All staff will undertake invigilator training annually; in case they are needed for invigilation duties.

Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

Alternative venue details:

In the event of the main venue; the main school hall being unavailable, examinations can take place in the following venues:

- Year 11 bungalow
- Sports hall
- Other classrooms around the school
- Greenbank School, Greenbank Ln, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LD

Communication details:

Candidates and Parents/carers will be informed via telephone, email and SMS with any changes in relation to examinations.

- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

This will include the required arrangements for cyber security) (GR 3.21) 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
- 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*
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

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
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

- This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work) (GR 3.19) 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. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

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, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its exams emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its exams lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow 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
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- SLT to manage all such incidents whilst in communication with Exams Officer to make sure all JCQ requirements are fully met.

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 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning, for example, remote learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

Candidates and Parents/carers will be informed via telephone, email and SMS with information on alternative methods of learning.

- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment later.

Other centre actions:

- The Exams Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

Candidates may not be able 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 because of a crisis*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- 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
- 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
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

Candidates and Parents/carers will be informed via telephone, email and SMS with any changes to the exam, assessment timetable or venue.

- 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 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 at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre can open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Where necessary, implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP)

The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Head of Centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies

Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted, and candidates meet the published criteria

Alternative venue details:

- Other outbuildings belonging to the school such as the Year 11 building.
- Greenbank school, Greenbank Ln, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LD

Communication details:

Candidates and Parents/carers will be informed via telephone, email and SMS with any changes to the exam, assessment timetable or venue.

- 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

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 listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- 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
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document **Instructions for conducting examinations**
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

Centre 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

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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 bod
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

Greenbank School, Greenbank Ln, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1LD

- Arrange to make post results requests at an alternative location (named above)
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

Communication details:

Candidates and Parents/Carers will be informed by phone call, SMS and email with any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services.