



Reading Girls' School
Succeeding Together

Name of Policy	Exams Contingency Plan
Scope of Policy	This policy applies to all candidates
Approved by	Principal
Date of Approval	October 2020
Review period	1 year
Review Date	October 2021

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TRUST**

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Reading Girls' School. 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 all times, the Examinations Officer and Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet its requirements and that JCQ regulations are adhered to where possible.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by **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 and the JCQ joint Contingency Plan in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

- This plan also confirms Reading Girls' 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*
- *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*
- *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 the post-results services*

Centre actions

A member of the SLT, invigilators, cover teachers, or School office team to assume responsibility for the above with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Line Manager would liaise with the Student Service and Data Officer over entries. They, together with Pastoral, Teaching Assistant would liaise over the pre-exam administration.

Invigilators and Teaching Assistants to liaise with Line Manager regarding exam time issues and results.

2. SENCo 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

- *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
- *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*
- *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*
- *staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions

- Specialist assessor, Examinations Officer, and cover administrator to work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. The employment of outside agencies/professionals may be required.

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: 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 awarding body submission deadlines*

Centre actions

The Examinations Officer to liaise with the second in charge or Head of Faculty and/or the line manager, if necessary, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the Examinations Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

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 Exams Officer will review the invigilation team and ensure staff are recruited and trained usually for the Year 11 mocks in November each year.

The cover administrator will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

Invigilators are aware they may get called in to cover at short notice.

On the odd occasion, we will call on willing teaching staff who can help out on short notice.

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 unexpected incident at exam time*

Centre actions

- The Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations before the Easter holidays and book computer rooms ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan accordingly.
- Alternative rooms in school to be made available for exams.
- 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 Examinations Officer at all times during such emergencies.

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 Examinations Officer, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies and will also arrange an alternative method of data exchange. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Bodies. At all times during the system failure the Examinations Officer will liaise with the Awarding Bodies to minimise disruption and costs incurred.

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning
- If a fire occurred during the examinations, we would evacuate the examination room, keeping the students under exam conditions, and follow the emergency procedure for Reading Girls School.

Centre actions

- SLT to manage all such incidents and priority to be given to exam cohorts.
- We would follow the procedures for evacuating the room and EO would apply for special consideration for the affected students.

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 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 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 available 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.*

Centre actions

- The school will find alternative arrangements to continue teaching and preparing students for the exams. The use of the NTA building would be considered.
- The Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements or venue and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.

9. 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
- If the centre has a major flood or a burst pipe, we would accommodate the students or ask alternative centres for assistance

Centre actions

- The Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action.
- Alternative options would be explored for specific individual cases for example taking the exams at home or in hospital, with appropriate controls in place. Special consideration may be applied for.
- Consider using the NTA building as an alternative venue as it is on site but a completely separate building

10. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Bodies to notify them of such difficulties and put in place suitable arrangements. In the meantime, examination scripts will be kept in secure storage.

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
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Bodies to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given

12. Centre unable to distribute results as normal 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

- The Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Bodies to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.
- Results could be distributed from an alternative venue after consultation with SLT and the Awarding Bodies.

13. Current personnel

Examinations Officer – Mrs Elaine Winton

Exams Officer Line Manager – Miss Laura Evans

Cover - Mrs Jane Clacey/Mr Alex Smith

Specialist Assessor – Ms Kimika Gardner

SENDco - Ms Kimika Gardner

Head of Centre – Mr Jon Gargan

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

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>

Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

Procedures for handling bomb threats

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

JCQ

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents>

General Regulations for Approved Centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, JCQ, 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.

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>

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 a 'contingency day' for the 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 a 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 exams 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 was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling of exams 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 exam(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.

[Taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2020-2021*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, 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
- [Public health guidance to support autumn exams](#) from the Department for Education

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
- [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>