

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

# Examination Contingency Plan

Examination Contingency Plan



Key staff involved in the policy:

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Emma Pole
Exams manager line manager (SLT)	Lesley Owen (Vocational) Carl Walker (General)
Exams Officer	Joseph Slater
ALNCo	Kirsty Smith
Other members of staff	Not applicable

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Bishop Vaughan Catholic 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.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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** for the Examination System in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland

This plan also confirms Pate's Grammar School compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams manager 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

#### 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 the post-results services

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SLT lead for examinations to follow contingency plan in exams office to provide invigilators with exam papers. SLT lead to undertake or delegate responsibility of administration during the planning, entries, pre-exams and post results stages. The Swansea Schools Collective Assistance Plan is there should additional support be required from other local Exams Officers.

## 2. ALNCo 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
- 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

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Exam staff to work with Pastoral team and SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements 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

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

Exams officer to liaise with Head of department and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. If this is not possible, the EO will liaise with the awarding bodies 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO will review invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- School staff will be trained and ready for invigilation duties at short notice and at peak times if required.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO will organise rooming before Easter holidays, ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms.
- In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, SLT and EO will work together to ensure that sufficient staff are available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised, whilst alternative rooming is sourced.

Alternative venue details: Morriston Comprehensive School/Local Community centres and library

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

The EO will work with the SLT and the Network manager, to make immediate contact with the Awarding Bodies to seek further guidance and support. The SLT will work with the EO to take as action as determined by the relevant awarding bodies.

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Back ups are taken daily of the MIS and the data is stored offline
- The systems for restoring the data are reliable and robust
- The school will make contact with the police and Action Fraud
- The school will make contact with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
- The school will inform the Department for Education

## 7. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EO, in consultation with 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 and costs incurred.

## 8. 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

- Exams Officer will liaise with AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

## 9. 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

- SLT to manage all such incidents. Candidates will be taught remotely.

**10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

**11. Centre at risk of being 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 at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The EO will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

Alternative venue details: Morriston Comprehensive School/Local Community centres and library

**12. 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

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

### 13. Disruption to transporting 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

- EO will contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body.
- for any examinations where we make our own collection arrangements, EO will investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*.
- EO to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

### 14. 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

- Exams Officer will contact the AB to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

### 15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services (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

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- EO will liaise with SLT to make arrangements to access the results/post-results services at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, or to send them electronically if appropriate. The EO will contact the AB to notify them where appropriate.

## 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**

#### General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: 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 terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

#### Disruption to assessments or exams

- [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#)
- [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- 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.

#### Wider communications

*The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA Regulation](#) 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.*

## JCQ

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy  
[www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for conducting examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption;  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning [www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

## National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)

4. Backing up your data
5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK

#### Swansea Schools Collective Assistance Plan:

This initiative sees collective support between partner schools in Swansea whereby, in the instance of Exams Officer absence from one partner school, other partner EO's will, if possible, be available to provide advice, guidance and possible practical assistance (if feasible) to that school if required and requested. Details of the schools included and contact details are listed below.

School	Exams Officer	Phone	Email
Bishop Gore	Janice John	01792 411400	Johnj87@hwbcymru.net
Bishop Vaughan	Joseph Slater	01792 772006 (Ext 2213)	Slaterj16@hwbcymru.net
Bryn Tawe	Rhian Davies	01792 560646	DaviesR390@hwbcymru.net
Cefn Hengoed	Cath Jones	01792 773464	JonesC3021@hwbcymru.net
Dylan Thomas	Nick James	01792 610341	jamesN78@hwbcymru.net
Gowerton	Dawn Devonald	01792 873461	devonald@hwbcymru.net
Gwyr	Catrin Davies	01792 977117	Daviesc1509@hwbcymru.net
Maes Derw	Helen Whittaker	01792 986370	WhittakerH9@hwbcymru.net
Morrison	Leanne Richards	01792 764366	Richardsl390@hwbcymru.net
Olchfa	Nicci Morris	01792 534300/309	Morrisn4@hwbcymru.net
Pentrehafod	Sue Davies	01792 410400	Davies1015@hwbcymru.net
Birchgrove	Rhian Pye	01792 535400 (Ext 438)	PyeR8@hwbcymru.net
Pontarddulais	Nicola Oulton	01792 884556	oultonn@hwbcymru.net



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Copies of this policy are available on our website, in policy folders on the school network and can be made available on request.

Date: October 2023

Date: November 2024

Date: November 2025

**Policy Next Review Date: November 2026**