
November | 24

HAZELWOOD
INTEGRATED COLLEGE



Exam Contingency Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Summary:

This policy aims examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process

Date of next review:

November 2025

Additional Notes

Policy Number: 2018/06/04

History:

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Reviewed: November 2020

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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 Hazelwood Integrated College. 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 where it is stated that “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”.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (page 15) in that:

The centre agrees to have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.

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

- 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 e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required 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:

- SLT to nominate a "deputy" to cover the role/task (i.e. BMcL as previous Examinations Officer). Extra help could be called on from our Lead Invigilator Mrs Denise Donnelly with support given by the Assistant Principal for Curriculum. Extra hours should be allocated to the "deputy" to ensure there are sufficient hours to cover the work required. Relief staff to be given access to secure storage procedures with usernames and passwords for the exam websites.
- Long term absences to be reported to the Exam boards so they are aware of the situation and can offer guidance and support.

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:

- The principal to nominate a "deputy" to cover the role/task as the Head of Centre (i.e. Learning Mentors)
- Presently our Qualified Assessor to test candidates is Carol Jordan who would continue in this role with the absence of the SENCo
- Learning Mentors and Qualified Assessor to arrange student support during all exams.

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 submission deadlines

Centre actions:

- HoDs/HoFs should take responsibility for any missing entries, coursework marks and any assessment marks in the absence of a member of staff. They will also brief new staff (cover staff) within the department on arrangements for assessment and examinations. Entries must be made on time to meet deadlines and avoid late fees. Amendments can always be made at a later date to confirm final entries.

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:

- New Invigilators undergo training by the Exams Officer and through the Exam board. All invigilators should be competent and confident in processes and procedures.
- Annual training sessions to be held for all Invigilators in Term 2 of the academic year by the Examination Officer in order to refresh their knowledge and communicate JCQ regulation changes and update local information. Hazelwood College retains a pool of approximately 70 invigilators from within their school staffing (including CAs).
- Other invigilators will be accessed from our pool of staff.
- As a last resort, SLT will be asked to invigilate.

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:

- A Clear rooming plan for exams should be determined at the beginning of the Academic year.

Default exam rooms – Cedar Lodge classrooms for small numbers of students sitting exams.

- Room bookings must be made early enough in advance to ensure there are sufficient rooms for exam students.
- If there is an emergency on the day, the free rooms must be checked first (SIMS) and moves made accordingly. SLT contacted.
- If a bigger venue is required, we will contact and liaise with the Greencastle Methodist Church on the Whitewell Road to use their halls for examination purposes. Resources required will be transported down by our caretaking team (i.e. tables, chairs, etc.) and all examination procedures adhered to.

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
- **Cyber attack**

Centre actions:

- All exam entries should be made well in advance of the deadline to avoid this issue in the first place. If the entries are left to the last minute and there is an IT failure, firstly the Examinations Officer will ring the relevant exam boards to explain (this may allow the College an extension).
- In the event of IT failure, SIMS will be accessed through a Standalone computer.
- Our ICT support officer (TG) will deal with any ICT issues that arise.
- **C2K will be contacted to advise the centre and investigate in the instance of a cyber attack which jeopardises the administration of exams. The Examinations Officer will ring the relevant exam boards to explain the matter at hand.**
- **CCEA MIA onscreen exams may be accessed via one Standalone computer and distributed manually to students.**

7) 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.

Centre actions:

- In the event of the Centre not being able to open as normal, appropriate communication with the relevant Awarding bodies will be undertaken by the Exams Officer. Alternative options will be explored such as moving the exam to the Church Hall on the Whitewell Road. All arrangements will be agreed with the Awarding bodies before being put in place. In such instances, details will be communicated to candidates via the school's website, parent text and Facebook accounts by the relevant personnel. Staff involved in exams (including invigilators) will be contacted by email, telephone and text.

8) 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.

Centre actions:

- The Centre will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations (Home, Hospital, Alternative centre).
- The Centre, if appropriate, can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- The Centre will apply to the awarding organisation for special consideration for candidates where they have met the requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse conditions beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they will be made aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

9) Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

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.

Centre actions:

- The Centre will be open if possible for examinations and candidates only.
- The Centre will use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations e.g. local school, church hall if possible. All arrangements will be agreed with the awarding body before being put in place.
- The Centre may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series with permission from the awarding bodies.
- In such instances, details will be communicated to candidates via the school's website, parent text and Facebook accounts by the relevant personnel. Staff involved in exams (including invigilators) will be contacted by email, telephone and text.

10) 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.

Centre actions:

- The Centre will check all exam papers upon arrival in school and will alert the appropriate Awarding bodies of any discrepancies.
- If this happens on the day of the exam, the Exam board will be contacted immediately by the Exams Officer. Awarding organisations can provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network or Faxed if electronic transfer is not possible.
- The Examinations Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

11) 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.

Centre actions:

- The Centre will seek advice from the awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. No arrangements for transportation will be made without the approval from the awarding organisation.
- The Centre will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection (safely stored in the secure Examinations Office). If this is not accessible, they will be stored in the safe in the main front office.

12) 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.

Centre actions:

- Notify Awarding Bodies immediately for further advice or instructions.
- The Awarding organisations will generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations.
- Candidates will retake affected assessments at subsequent assessment windows.

13) Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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:

- The Centre distributes the results as normal via collection by the learner. Where learners do not collect results in person, these will be distributed via post.

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*

FURTHER GUIDANCE TO INFORM AND IMPLEMENT CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/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>

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/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/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/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>