

# **Our Lady's Catholic High School**

## **Examinations Contingency Plan**

*'Our Lady's is first and foremost a Catholic school. It follows from this that the ethos of our school should reflect the values proclaimed by Christ in the Gospels and recognise the unique value of each individual. Our Mission is to be a Faith Community which, through following Gospel Principles, acts as a positive example, both within our own and our extended community.*

*(from OLCHS Mission Statement)*

**Reviewed: Spring Term 2022**  
**Next Review: Spring Term 2023**

# EXAMINATIONS CONTINGENCY PLAN POLICY

## Contents

### Purpose of the plan:

To identify and resolve causes of potential disruption to the exam process:

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)
2. SENCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
3. Principal Teacher extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
4. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice
6. Failure of IT systems
7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period
8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open
9. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers
10. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
11. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
12. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Appendix 1 Exams Day Contingency Plan

Appendix 2 Policy for Severe Disruption / Evacuation during external exams

Appendix 3 Exam Room Incident Log

[Appendix 4 Covid-19 Measures for the Exam Room](#)

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning can be obtained from:

Ofqual

JCQ

GOV.UK

### 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 Our Lady's Catholic High 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 scenarios contained in the Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations 2021-22 (section 5.3) in that:

*The centre agrees to “have in place a written escalation process should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration, be absent”.*

#### **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 are not undertaken, these may include:

#### **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:**

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) to appoint a suitable Deputy Examinations Officer as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the Examinations Officer remit.
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Deputy Head (Curriculum)
- Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times

#### 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:**

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) to appoint a suitable Deputy SENCO as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the SENCO remit.
  - Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Deputy Head (Curriculum)
  - Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times
3. Principal Teacher 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:**

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) to ensure departmental continuity by requesting an alternative member of the department takes responsibility for the actions above.
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:**

- Examinations Officer to maintain a short list of suitable candidates.
- Examinations Officer to ensure that capacity is never exceeded on any one day.
- Examinations Officer to review training procedures regularly and put in place additional training as required.
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Exams Day Contingency Plan is in place (Appendix 1)
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place (Appendix 2)
- Examinations Officer to ensure an Incident Log is in place (Appendix 3)

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:**

- Pre-planning at all stages is essential.
- Deputy Head (Curriculum) and Examinations Officer to continually review all stages of the process. Gym to be the first option as an alternative venue for emergency accommodation. Assembly Hall to be the second option.
- Emergency Evacuation plan should be in place (Appendix 2)

#### 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:**

- Deputy Head (Curriculum) and Examinations Officer to contact in-house IT department.
- Examinations Officer to contact all Examination Boards (see Appendix 1 for telephone numbers) for alternative route for dissemination of results.

#### 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

#### **Centre actions:**

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Look into the provision of alternative venues to be prioritised for students with imminent exams.
- Examinations Officer to advise the Examination Boards as appropriate.

- In extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.

#### 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

##### **Centre actions:**

- 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 to liaise with Exam Boards to sit exams at a different venue in extremis.
- Should a significant number of candidates need to be isolated due to sickness, use the Gym or back of the Sports Hall if not all of the cohort sitting the examination and designated invigilators/pastoral support staff should be on hand.
- If a small number (<5) are affected, isolate students in Learning Support with separate invigilation.
- Apply for Special Consideration for those affected to the appropriate Exam Boards.

#### 9. 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 communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- Arrange with Exam Boards for alternative means of receiving papers either electronically or alternative courier.
- Examinations Officer to ensure papers are kept securely until needed.

#### 10. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

**Centre actions:**

- The centre to communicate with relevant Exam Boards at the outset to resolve the issue.
- Alternative transport should only be used with the agreement of the relevant Exam Boards.
- Scripts must be stored securely until such time transport is confirmed.

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

**Centre actions:**

- 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.
- The Exam Boards may generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other evidence, as defined by the Exam Boards and the regulators.
- It may be necessary for the candidates to retake the assessment at the next available opportunity.

12. 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

**Centre actions:**

- Centre to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- Arrange to access results at an alternative site.
- Inform staff, students and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.



**Appendix 1**  
**Exams Day Contingency plan**

<b>Exam Item</b>	<b>Location/ Holders Name</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Keys to Secure Storage for exam papers and exam stationery	FGR holds spare keys	LGA / RCH / FGR
Gen Office – Centre Timetable	Timetable widely published	LGA / RCH
Seating plans	Kept by LGA	LGA / Invigilators
Invigilators	EO to organise	LGA
Access Arrangements (incl. Cover sheets)	Notification on attendance sheets.	PBA/ LGA
Script envelopes / Examiner address labels	Kept by LGA	LGA
Exam clashes	Resolution arranged, candidates informed	LGA
Collection of scripts	Invigilators	Invigilators
Collation of scripts	Exams Officer - Checked off on official attendance registers Official attendance sheets	Invigilators / LGA LGA
Completion of proof of posting form / posting scripts	Kept by LGA	LGA
Awarding Bodies tel no:	WJEC 029 2026 5000 AQA 0800 197 7162 OCR 01223 553 998 Pearson 03444632535	

## **Appendix 2**

### **Policy for Severe Disruption/Evacuation during External Examinations**

#### Possible Causes

- Unreasonable noise disruption
- Fire/Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

#### 1. Unreasonable noise disruption

In the event of a severe disruption in an externally set examination, invigilators are advised to stop the examination, tell the candidates to close their answer books, make a note of the time and summon help (Exams Officer/Deputy Head (Curriculum)/ Main Office) to sort out the problem. Exam room conditions must be maintained.

When the disruption has been resolved the candidates can resume their examination and the time taken to resolve the issue added on at the end of the examinations. The candidates must be supervised at all times and thus the break in the examination can be regarded as 'a supervised rest break'.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted. The Exams Officer to make Examining Bodies aware of the disruption if necessary.

#### 2. Fire / Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

In the event of a fire alarm or bomb alert sounding (or any other emergency situation arising) during an examination, the first priority of the invigilators is to preserve life. The next priority is to ensure the security of the examination.

The invigilator should summon assistance, if there is time and it is appropriate, via the Exams officer who will confirm if immediate evacuation is necessary and the School Office who will notify the Deputy Head (Curriculum). A decision will be made as to whether a full evacuation is necessary.

If the emergency is over quickly, the candidates should resume the examination. A careful note of the time of resumption must be made and the full time allocated for the examination given to complete the examination, ignoring the interruption.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted. A special consideration form will be filled in so as not to disadvantage the candidates.

## Procedure for Emergency Evacuation from an Examination

If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the lead invigilator should then stop the examination taking a note of the time and evacuate the building by row and in silence. The candidates must leave all examination papers, scripts and writing equipment behind, and in accordance with the school emergency evacuation procedures. The candidates should remain supervised and in silence throughout the emergency. Several other members of staff will be needed to help police this.

In the event of an emergency, requiring candidates to evacuate buildings during an examination the following areas should be used but the candidates must be kept at a distance and in silence from the main body of pupils who will be mustering at other emergency evacuation points:

Sports Hall: In the field at the front

At all times invigilators must act in accordance with section 25 of the JCQ '*Instructions for Conducting Examinations*' 2020-21 booklet. They should also summon assistance immediately an emergency arises. Silence should be maintained during the time the candidates are outside the examination room.

### **Section 25 of the JCQ '*Instructions for Conducting Examinations*' (ICE) booklet 2021-22 states:**

*In an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert, the invigilator must take the following action:*

- *Stop the candidates from writing;*
- *Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present) and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority;*
- *Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room;*
- *Ensure candidates leave the room in silence;*
- *Ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination;*
- *Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted;*
- *Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination once it resumes;*
- *If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination;*
- *Make a full report of the incident and the action taken (Appendix 3), and send to the relevant awarding body.*

## **Appendix 3**

### **Exam Room Incident Log**

This incident log is for the exams officer or invigilator(s) to use to record any irregularities that may happen in the exam room at the point of occurrence.

All irregularities must be recorded.

An exam room incident log should be used to record any irregularities. [JCQ ICE 25]

An example of the Exam Room Incident log is printed at the end of this document.

In order to avoid potential breaches of security, care must be taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened. An additional member of centre staff must check the time, date and any other paper details before a packet is opened. [JCQ ICE 18.1]

After the exam(s) in this room have concluded, incidents recorded here will inform required follow-up actions or reports to awarding bodies. The incident log will be affixed to the seating plan, copy of the attendance register(s), and exam room checklist for this exam room session.

Irregularities are unplanned incidents that could impact on the security of the examination, breach the rules and regulations or affect the conditions that enable candidates to achieve their potential. Examples include: candidate late/very late arrival; suspected malpractice (candidate, centre staff); emergency evacuation; candidate illness/distress; disturbance inside/outside the exam room; unauthorised persons entering the exam room etc.

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 **2022**:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea>

## 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>

## Exam Room Incident Log

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Examination:**

**Venue:**

Exam	Start	Finish

**Invigilators:**

Name	Time In	Time Out

**Record of Incident:**

Time	Incident

## Appendix 4

### Covid-19 Safety Measures in the Exam Room

- All invigilators will be issued with face shields and masks – they may bring their own masks if they prefer. There will also be surgical gloves for the handing out of and collecting in the examination papers.
- There will be plenty of hand sanitizer available and both pupils and invigilators must use it on first entering the room and when leaving.
- The pupils will sit as normal (they do not need to be socially distant from one another) but invigilators need to wear masks when giving out or collecting in papers – pupils will also wear their masks at this point.
- When a pupil puts their hand up they will be asked to put their mask on before speaking to an invigilator.
- Desks must be sprayed with disinfectant between exams.
- Rows to be shortened to 19 seats instead of 20 so that invigilators can have space to be socially distant from pupils at the back of the hall.