

Exam contingency policy

Reviewed: New

Adopted by Governors: Full Governors
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Next review: Spring 2028

Kings Mill School & Residence



Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Absence of exams officer
4. School closure
5. Disruption of teaching time
6. Distribution of examination papers
7. Candidate unable to take examination
8. Emergency evacuation
9. Invigilators
10. Examination room
11. ICT systems
12. Transportation of completed scripts
13. Unavailable assessment evidence
14. Disruption in the marking schedule
15. The results schedule
16. Distributing results
17. Monitoring and review

Appendices

- A. Exam Day Programme

Statement of intent

This plan is in place to ensure the school is prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments, and that staff will understand how to manage disruption. This plan sets out how the school will comply with the awarding body's requirements and follow a consistent and effective response in the event of disruption to exams and assessments.

Where disruption arises, the school will aim to ensure that any exam or timetabled assessment can still take place if possible, e.g. by relocating to alternative premises.

In the event of disruption, any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the awarding body and any other official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced.

The priority when implementing this plan will be to maintain the following three principles:

- Deliver assessments to published timetables
- Deliver results to published timetables

Comply with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards

Legal framework

This plan has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- JCQ (2023) 'Instructions for conducting examinations'
- JCQ (2023) 'General Regulations for Approved Centres'
- JCQ (2023) 'Centre Emergency Evacuation Procedure'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- Ofqual (2023) 'What schools, colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted'

This plan operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Assessment, recording and reporting policy
- Assessment policy – management of controlled assessments
- Exam Appeals Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Emergency Plan
- Evacuation, invacuation and lockdown procedures

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the success of this plan.
- Reviewing this plan every two years, in conjunction with relevant members of staff.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring this plan is adhered to consistently across the school.
- Familiarising themselves with relevant guidance from awarding bodies and the JCQ.
- Ensuring staff are supported and appropriately trained to undertake their duties in relation to exams and assessments.
- Ensuring staff with responsibilities relating to assessment and exams meet internal and external deadlines.
- Advising parents that they must not contact awarding bodies directly and that all queries must be directed to the school.

In relation to formal exams, as the head of the centre, the headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school:

- Complies with relevant guidance from awarding bodies and the JCQ.
- Contacts the relevant awarding bodies and promptly follows instructions in the event of disruption or expected disruption.

- Seeks advice where appropriate from relevant local and national agencies in deciding whether the school is able to open for exams and assessments.
- Takes all reasonable steps to maintain the integrity of the exams and assessments, including the security of all assessment materials.
- Delivers qualifications, as required by the relevant awarding body, in accordance with relevant equality legislation.
- Familiarises all relevant staff with this policy and the school's exam contingency arrangements.
- Enables relevant staff to receive appropriate training and support to facilitate the effective delivery of exams and assessments, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations.

The exams officer is responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, relevant guidance from awarding bodies and the JCQ.
- Liaising directly with the relevant awarding bodies in the event of disruption.
- Carrying out all necessary duties as directed by the headteacher.
- Collecting and interpreting assessment data.

Invigilators are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, relevant guidance from awarding bodies and the JCQ.
- Ensuring all pupils have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, e.g. making sure no additional notes are brought into the examination room.
- Ensuring the security of the examination materials during exams.
- Preventing and reporting possible pupil malpractice.
- Preventing possible administrative failures.

Absence of exams officer

In the absence of the exams officer during peak examination periods, the necessary tasks will be undertaken by the headteacher. The headteacher will delegate tasks to suitable members of the SLT as appropriate.

Where cover for the role of exams officer is unavailable, the exams officer of another school can be approached to provide assistance.

The school will endeavour to brief all candidates on exam timetables and the relevant awarding body's information.

In the event that the exams officer experiences an extended absence at key points in the examination cycle, annual data collection exercises to collate information on qualifications will be undertaken by the headteacher.

All assessment related procedures and tasks undertaken in the absence of the exams officer will be documented, in order to ensure that all information held by the exams officer is kept up-to-date.

School closure

In the event that the school is unable to open as normal for scheduled exams, the exams officer will inform each relevant awarding body as soon as possible.

After deferring to guidance from the government, the headteacher is ultimately responsible for deciding whether it is safe for the school to open. When considering whether the school will open as normal, the headteacher will take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local and national agencies.

In the event that the school is unable to open as normal, the school will, where possible, open for exams and examination candidates only.

Where the school is only able to partially open, or provide space for a limited number of candidates, pupils whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned will be prioritised.

The school will use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies, such as sharing facilities with another school, as necessary. The secure transportation of exam papers or assessments to the alternative venue will be arranged.

In the event of partial or whole exam disruption, the school will consider whether any pupils' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant awarding body for special consideration. The school will, where appropriate, advise pupils on the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.

In the event of widespread partial or whole exam disruption, the school will follow guidance from the government and Ofqual to ensure the best outcome for candidates who were affected by the disruption.

Disruption of teaching time

Where there is disruption to teaching time, or pupils do not receive the provision of normal teaching and learning, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that pupils are prepared for the exams as usual.

During the extended absence of teaching staff at key points in the exam cycle, the Assistant Headteacher for Secondary and Sixth Form will provide the exams officer with details of estimated and final entries for exams.

In the absence of the necessary teaching staff, the headteacher will provide the exams officer with estimated grades and coursework marks, as well as ensuring that coursework samples are transmitted to moderators.

The school will communicate with parents and pupils about the potential for disruption to teaching time and the school's plans to address this problem.

The teaching provision for pupils who will be facing crucial exams shortly, including GCSEs, AS- and A-levels, will be a priority and, where appropriate, the school will advise pupils to sit exams in the next available series.

During major disruption, the school will strive to continue teaching all pupils, either through an alternative method of learning or at a different venue.

Distribution of examination papers

If, due to exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, examination papers are not issued for the academic year, the school will keep pupils and parents informed about alternative methods of grading.

If there is disruption to the distribution of exam papers to test centres in advance of exams, it is the exams officer's responsibility to communicate with awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of exam papers.

The school will always source a reliable courier for the delivery of examination papers, as well as organise an alternative service for the delivery of hard copies and where possible, the relevant awarding body will provide the school with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network:

- Examination papers will be faxed to the school if electronic transfer is not possible.
- It is the responsibility of the examination officer to ensure that copies are received, collated and stored under secure conditions.

The school will strive to ensure that pupils are able to proceed with taking exams without having to reschedule exams.

Candidate unable to take examination

When a pupil is unable to attend the school in order to complete an examination as normal, it is the responsibility of the school to communicate with the relevant awarding body to make them aware of the issue.

The school will effectively and efficiently communicate with parents and pupils regarding solutions to the problem.

The pupils involved will be given the opportunity to sit any exams missed at the next available series and where appropriate, the exams officer will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for pupils.

Pupils are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared, and have covered the whole course, but their performance during the examination is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

If a pupil chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons, they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

Latecomers will be permitted to take their examination, provided that they are within the awarding body's regulations.

Emergency evacuation

In the event of an emergency during an exam or assessment, staff and invigilators will follow the school's Emergency Plan, invacuation, evacuation and lockdown procedures and any instructions from relevant local or national agencies.

Where possible, invigilators will take the following action during an emergency as part of the evacuation procedure:

- Candidates will be stopped from writing
- The attendance register will be collected to ensure all candidates are presents
- All candidates will be advised to close their answer booklet and to leave all question papers and scripts in the room
- All candidates will be instructed to leave the room in silence and be supervised closely to ensure there is no discussion about the exam
- A note will be taken of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
- All candidates will be allowed the remainder of the working time set for the exam once it resumes, if possible

Where there is only a small number of candidates, invigilators will consider the possibility of relocating to another suitable space to complete the exam.

A full report of the incident will be made and the action taken to be sent to the relevant awarding body.

Invigilators

The school will ensure that all invigilators who are being used are appropriately trained and suitable for the job and the exams officer will endeavour to confirm the full attendance of invigilators prior to the examination date.

It is the exams officer's responsibility to maintain a panel of suitable invigilators which can be called upon in the event of a shortfall, and provisional timetables and estimated entry information will be used to determine the number of invigilators required. Where there is a shortage of invigilators, the exams officer will cover any absences.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that recruitment and training of invigilators is completed well in advance of examination dates.

A review of available invigilators will be conducted prior to the examination period, in which invigilators' availability for the next exam series will be confirmed, allowing time for any amendments or training.

Examination room

The examination officer will ensure that there are a sufficient number of rooms available during peak exam periods, and that rooms are suitably allocated and timetabled well in advance. It is the responsibility of the exams officer to ensure that all rooms utilised for exams are appropriate, such as lack of noise, large enough to allow for a desk per pupil and ICT facilities where necessary.

If, for any reason, an examination room becomes unsuitable for use, the sports hall will be utilised for examination purposes.

The exams officer will ensure that appropriate rooms are arranged in advance for pupils sitting exams who have special requirements and adjustments.

Where necessary, pupils will be moved from normal classrooms to allow candidates to sit exams in accordance with the timetable.

ICT systems

In the event that ICT systems fail during peak examination periods, the relevant awarding bodies will be informed immediately. If systems fail at the final entry deadline, the relevant awarding bodies will be informed and an extension to the deadline will be requested.

The school will ensure that during the exam cycle there will be an ICT team on standby in order to repair systems in the event of failure or damage.

Where a failure of ICT systems results in serious disruption of the examination, special consideration can be applied for.

In the event of ICT systems failing during the distribution of candidate results, the school will advise of alternative sites where results can be obtained.

Transportation of completed scripts

If there is a delay in the normal collection and transportation arrangements for completed examination scripts, the school will seek advice from the relevant awarding bodies and collection agencies. The school will not make arrangements for the transportation of completed examination papers without the prior approval of the relevant awarding bodies.

The school will ensure that completed examination papers are stored securely, with limited personnel access, until collection. Scripts will be stored in a secure room until as close to the collection time as possible, and script packages will not be left unattended at the collection area.

In the event of disruption of the transportation of completed exam scripts, it is the responsibility of the exams officer to communicate continuously with the relevant awarding bodies throughout the incident, until the issue is appropriately resolved.

The school will always aim for scripts to be collected and delivered to awarding bodies without delay.

Unavailable assessment evidence

The following procedure should be adhered to in the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it has been marked.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to immediately inform the relevant awarding bodies of the issue and the headteacher or exams officer will discuss the possible courses of action with the pupils involved and their parents.

Where possible, the awarding body will generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of the candidate's achievement, such as other coursework. Whether evidence is classed as 'appropriate' is defined by the awarding body in consultation with the regulators.

Where appropriate, the candidate will be given the opportunity to retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window.

The school will seek further advice from the relevant awarding body involved in the incident.

Disruption in the marking schedule

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, the awarding bodies will re-allocate scripts to available markers.

It is the awarding body's responsibility to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers in order to meet the scheduled result dates and the awarding body is responsible for prioritising the marking of examination scripts based on results dates, UCAS deadlines and qualifications that require further study.

The results schedule

The school will always act with the aim of issuing results to pupils on the scheduled dates and will continuously communicate with awarding bodies to ensure the dates are met.

If awarding bodies face delays in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results, they will establish priorities for processing results in line with UCAS and Central Applications Office deadlines.

In the case of a disruption to the issuing of results, the awarding body will liaise with relevant organisations regarding individual pupil's progression to further and higher education.

The school will ensure that they keep continuous communication with awarding bodies and are kept up-to-date regarding the progress of the marking system, in order to limit the potential damage of result deadlines not being met.

Distributing results

The school is committed to ensuring that candidates receive their examination results in a timely manner and where possible, the school will provide pupils access to receiving results online.

The school will make arrangements to access results at alternative premises in the event that the school is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.

If the school is unable to open to distribute examination results, the school will share facilities with other institutes, where possible.

The exams officer will contact awarding bodies regarding alternative arrangements for exam results in order to gain prior approval.

Monitoring and review

This plan will be reviewed every two years by the Assistant headteacher for the Secondary and Sixth Form.

Any changes to this plan will be communicated to all relevant members of staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this plan is February 2028.

Exam Day Programme

Before exams
Senior invigilators are required to arrive early.
All invigilators are briefed.
Anyone acting as an oral language modifier, practical assistant, prompter, reader, scribe or sign language interpreter is briefed.
Seating plans are organised and printed.
Content of exam room boxes is updated e.g. pencils, pens, calculators etc.
Invigilators will complete an Exam Room Checklist for each room.
Emergency communications equipment is checked in each room.
All access arrangements in place are confirmed.
Exam papers are checked to ensure they are correct and are available but secure.
Number of required answer books is checked.
Invigilators will be informed of any timetable variations.
After exams
It will be arranged for completed exam scripts to be collected and checked against the attendance register.
Envelopes for sending completed exam scripts for marking are prepared.
Mailing administration is completed.
Exam scripts which are stored overnight are made secure.
Paperwork for malpractice, late arrivals and special considerations is completed.

Preparation for the next day
Exam papers for the following day are checked and sorted.
Seating plans for the following day are prepared.
The site manager is briefed about the requirements for the next exam.
Invigilators are thanked for their service.
It is confirmed with invigilators what time they are required the following day.