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Examinations Contingency Policy

Revised and applicable from 5th March 2024

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Irene Papadopolou". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chair of Governors

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Rachel McGowan
Exams officer line manager	Tomas O Donnell (Deputy Head)
Examinations Officer	Hayley Johnson-Laymen
SENCo	Sagree Naidoo
Leadership Team members:	Sarah Heath (Deputy Head) Lucy Aminzade (Assistant Head) Lucy Still (Assistant Head) Louisa Sanderson (Assistant Head) Kalash Thakor (Assistant Head) Sohal Gachi (Assistant Head) Tom O'Brien (Assistant Head) Damian Osman (School Business Manager)

Purpose of the plan

This plan is designed to minimise the risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Plashet School. It will be invoked in case of disruption and is intended to mitigate the impact disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the **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 that Plashet School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (*section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2023-24*) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the Leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams and Data Officer (E&DO) extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams and Data Officer absent.

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Assistant, supported by the Deputy Head in charge of exams and two lead invigilators, to take over responsibilities for the management of examinations. This is reflected in Exams Assistant Job Description and Performance Management.

This Contingency Plan has been written to ensure compliance with JCQ regulations and to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of the absence of the E&DO.

General

- The E&DO maintains a week by week schedule of tasks that need to be done. This can be accessed by the Exams Assistant at any time. The Exams Assistant knows how to carry out all necessary tasks.
- The Exams Assistant has access to the relevant SIMS manuals that might be required at any time throughout the year.
- The Exams Assistant has the full support of the Deputy Head i/c Exams (T O Donnell) at all times.
- The E&DO records all important decisions and makes the Exams Assistant aware of these throughout the year.

Making Entries

- The Exams Assistant is aware of the procedures for making entries and the deadlines for doing so.
- The Exams Assistant has access to the SIMS Exams Organiser software in order to make entries.
- Subject leaders will be asked to check entries and will be advised in good time of entry deadlines.

Controlled assessment/Non-exam assessment

- Where applicable the subject leader is aware of the deadline and the data that has to be submitted.

- The Exams Assistant will submit controlled assessment/non-exam assessment marks and check that controlled assessment/non-exam assessment samples are sent by subject leaders by the required dates.
- Sample requests that are sent by email go to the generic exams@plashet email address which forwards all emails to the E&DO and the Exams Assistant.
- Regulations regarding appeals against non-exams assessment marks are set out in the relevant policy and candidates are informed of their rights.

Exam Preparation

- Seating - The Exams Assistant is aware of procedures for allocating candidates to exam rooms and seats.
- Timetables - The Exams Assistant is able to produce individual candidate timetables and distribute these to candidates.
- Invigilators - The Exams Assistant can take charge of booking invigilators.

Exam paper delivery

- The Deputy Head i/c exams has access to the key to the secure exam paper storage. The Exams Assistant can access the key that is kept in the safe in the exams office.
- The Exams Assistant is aware of the regulations relating to the exam paper storage.
- The Exams assistant will check off all exam papers when they are delivered.
- The reception office staff are aware of the need to secure the exam paper delivery as a matter of urgency and will keep a record of all exam board deliveries during the exam season.

Exam period

- The keys to the exam storage room are locked in the safe in the Exams Office – the E&DO and the Exams assistant are the only ones who know the code to the safe.
- In case of absence, the Examinations Officer will inform the Exams Assistant (or vice versa) in good time so that the smooth running of examinations can be ensured.
- In the event of both the Examinations Officer and Examinations Administrator being absent The Deputy Head i/c Exams has a spare set of keys. If absence is pre-planned, then it is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer and/or Examinations Assistant to ensure that cover for the absence has been planned for.

Getting Exam papers to the right exam room

- Exam papers are arranged in the Exams strong room filing cabinets in date order so that the following day's exam papers are always easily found.
- The papers for later weeks are in filing cabinets with the week number and date shown on each drawer. These need to be checked during the previous week.
- There is a list of exams in the strong room detailing which exam takes place in which venue with numbers of candidates and details of modified papers required. There is also an exam timetable in the Exams Office.
- Exam packets may need to be opened and re-packed if an exam is taking place in more than one room. This will be shown on the exams list on the wall of the strong room. This must be witnessed by a 2nd person to check that the correct envelope is being opened - usually one of the two lead invigilators. Check current JCQ guidelines for how far in advance of the exam this may be done. The papers must all be ready to go to the exam room by 8.30/1.00 at the latest.

Invigilators

- Invigilators are given their timetables in advance using the 'Sling' software and phone app and should all know where to go. Invigilators' hours are organised by the Exams assistant. Lead Invigilators can deal with minor rescheduling of invigilator sessions.

Attendance registers and seating plans

- Exam registers and seating plans can be reprinted from Exams Organiser by going to Reports/Seating Organiser/Seating Plans (or attendance registers). The Exams Assistant knows how to do this and can also print individual candidate timetables and the summary exam timetable. Other exams documents can be found in the Exams Folder and can be accessed by the Exams Assistant.

Script despatch

- Scripts must be packed and either taken to reception for collection in the afternoon or locked up in the exams storage room (if it is too late for that day's collection). Parcelforce collects scripts between 1.00 pm and 3.00 pm.
- The Exams Assistant and lead invigilators are familiar with this procedure and can oversee it. Other invigilators are trained to pack scripts, but are not left to do it unsupervised. The attendance registers are stored in the exams office and must be ticked and signed. One copy goes into the envelope with the scripts. Envelopes are stored in the Exams Office.
- A yellow label must be stuck on the envelope – this will either be in the same drawer as the attendance registers or emailed to the Exams email address.
- A Parcelforce despatch sheet must be completed (See script despatch ring binder on shelving in exams office.)

Results

- The Exams Assistant is aware of procedures for downloading results data.
- The Exams Assistant can produce statements of results for candidates.
- The Exams Assistant is aware of the embargo arrangement.
- The Deputy Head i/c Exams will be available on both results days (data downloading and student collection).

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
 - 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
 - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- Exam time
 - staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not available

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The member of the Leadership team that line manages the SEND department will take on SENCo responsibilities
- E&DO will offer support and guidance

3. Teaching staff / Subject leader 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 E&DO on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Access arrangement requirements not notified to SENCo in time
- Final entry information not provided to the E&DO 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

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

For departments where there is no 2nd in Charge, the LT link for that department will nominate a member of staff to assume responsibility.

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
- Collection of exam papers and other materials before start of exam
- Collection of exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and return to exams office

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Internal staff or supply invigilators to be utilised alongside the team of trained invigilators.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- E&DO 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

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Alternative rooms to be sourced by E&DO - use of Hall/Gym in North building if Sports Hall in South building is unavailable.
- Deputy Head Teacher to co-ordinate the re-rooming of timetabled classes as appropriate.
- Alternative venue in case of the whole school being closed - East Ham Town Hall.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation / exams sessions
- MIS system failure at results release time

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- IT Manager to liaise with the MIS provider as a matter of urgency.
- The School to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue.
- Exam registers and other paperwork printed in advance.

7. The potential impact of cyber attack**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Network failure when delivering assessments/ downloading results.
- Unexpected emails, messages or phone calls as phishing attempts with regards to exams.
- Unauthorised access to email accounts of users who access/manage information or data from awarding bodies.
- Unauthorised activity on awarding body websites from centre staff accounts.

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The school to promptly report to the relevant awarding bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery/downloading results.
- Staff are not to share passwords and authentication codes to anyone.
- Passwords need to be changed to a new strong password which can not be easily guessed.
- Centre accounts and access rights are reviewed on awarding body websites regularly.

8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – School closed for an extended period**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- School 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
- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of the school to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. The school will have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- School to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

9. Disruption in the receipt of examination papers**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the School in advance of examinations

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The School to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCQ scenario 3]
- Awarding bodies are able to provide schools with electronic access to exam papers via external networks. The E&DO would then ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions, before use.
- If necessary the E&DO will arrange a secure alternative site in which to download papers and will maintain the security of the papers at all times.

10. 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 School to take examinations as normal

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The School communicates with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.
- The School to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- School will liaise with the affected candidate(s) to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant Awarding Body. School will apply for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- School Emergency Plan - see Appendix A – School Bad Weather plan.

11. Evacuation while Exam in Progress

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Examination venue(s) require evacuation (while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards)
- A confirmed genuine fire within the school building
- A gas leak that could result in an explosion is discovered
- Evacuation of the school building is required by the police or other emergency services
- An improvised explosive device is found within the school site
- A bomb threat is received by the school and is deemed genuine
- Major structural damage to the school building suggests collapse is imminent

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Note the time the alarm went off and the starting time of the exam.
- All examination material and other items to be left on the examination desks. Exam answer papers closed.
- Candidates are told to remain calm and leave their belongings and papers on their desks.
- Candidates reminded that they are still under examination regulatory conditions and they must not talk or communicate with each other or any other individual in any way. Remind them that a breach of regulations could mean disqualification from their examination.
- The E&DO and as many members of the Leadership team as possible will attend the exam room to assist with the evacuation and to help invigilators maintain examination conditions.
- The E&DO, invigilators and LT will lead the candidates out of the room and the building by the nearest safe exit and proceed to the assembly point (as designated within the Fire Evacuation Policy). Students will assemble at the Assembly Point in seat order.
- The exam attendance registers to be taken out to ensure that all candidates are present and accounted for at roll-call. Register to be taken of invigilators who were present in the exam room.
- Once the all clear for re-entering the building is given, candidates reminded that they must be silent then escorted back to the examination room.
- Time of restarting the examination notes and new finish time written on the whiteboard. All this information to be clearly recorded on an Incident Log Sheet, so that a Special Consideration can be submitted by the E&DO to the relevant awarding bodies.

School to communicate with relevant awarding organisations to make them aware of the issue. School to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

12. School unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- School unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- If the school is unable to open as normal for examinations the E&DO will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as possible. [JCQ scenario 5]
- The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for School to open lies with the Head Teacher. If the school does close, the Awarding Bodies will be informed (if examinations are due to be taken) as soon as possible. School will remain open for examination and examination candidates only, if possible. School may use alternative venues in agreement with the relevant Awarding Body (e.g. share facilities with other Schools or use other public buildings, if possible). School will apply to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

13. 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

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- The School to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCQ scenario 4]
- School will ensure the secure storage of completed examination papers until collection. School will seek advice from awarding bodies and normal collection agency regarding 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

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding bodies and subsequently to students and their parents/carers. [JCP scenario 6]

15. School unable to distribute results as normal and facilitate post results services

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- School is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

School actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- School to contact awarding bodies about alternative options.
- The school will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- The school will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site

- Centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.)

16. Escalation Process

- If the Head of Centre is absent, the Deputy Head in charge of exams will take over to provide support and guidance to the E&DO and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series;
- If the Deputy Head in charge of exams is absent a nominated member of the leadership team will take over to provide support and guidance to the E&DO. This will ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series;

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning.

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
- policies not revised, updated and in place
- sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- entries & Registrations
- awarding bodies not 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
- vocational entries and procedures not applied
- preparing
- access arrangements not provided by SEN Manager
- exam rooming allocation, timetabling; invigilation schedules; and clash resolutions not prepared
- candidates (and parent/carers) not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- pre-release materials not managed appropriately
- 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
- conducting exams
- 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, etc
- candidates' scripts not collated, stored and/or dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- computer based exams not conducted as required by awarding bodies
- results and post-results
- preparation of MIS for receipt of results disrupted
- access to examination results affects the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of the post-results services
- distribution of certificates impeded

Appendix A

School Severe Weather Policy

If there are timetabled examinations scheduled on a day when the Head Teacher decides that the school should be closed to staff and students, the "School Open: GCSE Examination Contingency Plan" position will be adopted. The school has a team of staff (the Contingency Team) who, should conditions allow, are able to come to school to ensure that timetabled exams may go ahead. In such an eventuality, the school as an examination centre will only open to candidates sitting timetabled GCSE examinations. In order that the school can ensure the correct administration of exams, the contingency team has to include the E&DO or a suitably trained member of the leadership team. If these members of staff are not able to get into school the scheduled exam(s) will not run. In line with JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) guidance, the school will endeavour to be open and, where conditions allow, timetabled examinations will go ahead. Advice and recommendations from the JCQ state:

"Wherever possible, the examinations should be conducted according to the centre's published examination timetable" and "it is important to note that rescheduling the examinations is not an option due to the consequences that it would have across the system"

In the event that weather is adverse and the school is closed on a day of a scheduled public examination the Head Teacher will assess the possibility of key staff being able to attend. If she is confident that key staff are able to be in attendance and that the exam will run. The school website will be updated to show timetabled examinations are still going ahead and advising of any revised start times. Start times may be delayed for morning exams if a number of candidates are late (permission will be sought from relevant awarding bodies). All candidates are expected to make the effort to come in and sit their examination. The decisions regarding travelling to school for an exam rest with individual families taking consideration of the weather and road conditions locally to them. If a candidate is unable to get into school on an exam day as a result of inclement weather, it is imperative that families contact the school as soon as possible to explain that this has occurred. If the Head Teacher were to make a decision that the school has to shut, as it is unsafe to open, we would notify the exam board that we had been unable to run the exams that were scheduled for that day.