SBL
SIR BERNARD LOVELL
ACADEMY

North Street, Oldland Common, BS30 8TS
T: 01454 868 020 E: sblovell@sblonline.org.uk
W: www.sbllearning.org.uk

Exam contingency plan

2017/18

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
SLT / CMU	
Date of next review	May 2019

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Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr Dean Anderson
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Mr Simon White
Exams officer	Ms Claire Murray
SENCo	Ms Kate Haden
SLT member(s)	Dean Anderson, Simon White, Dominic Knowles, Lucy Allison-Wright, Dan Clompus

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the [insert centre name]. 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 *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*.

This plan also confirms Sir Bernard Lovell Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2017-2018*) 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*.

Possible causes of 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*

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*
- *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

- Line Manager, Simon White to liaise with Data Manager, Kay Purnell over entries.
- Line Manager, Simon White, Kay Purnell, I.T. Manager, SENDCO & Senior Invigilator to liaise over preexam administration.
- Line Manager, Simon White and Kay Purnell to liaise with Mr J Yockney & Ms C Barclay (MAT exam officers re consortium entries and procedures)
- Senior Invigilator to liaise with Line Manager regarding exam time issues and results.

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

- *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*
- *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- SENCO deputy (Ms S Connor) and AA examiner (Ms R Cornelius) to liaise with Exams Officer and action

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 ▶ Early monitoring of entries etc to ensure no late entries as far as possible. ▶ Policy re centre assessed marks published in advance so all aware of deadlines. ▶ Line Manager and Exams Officer to liaise with remaining teaching staff. ▶ Line Manager and Exams Officer to take responsibility or ensure deputy head of curriculum could action

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 ▶ Recruitment and training is done well in advance. ▶ Exams Officer and Senior Invigilator to cover absences or shortages, although SBL Academy's policy is not to work to the minimum ratio requirements. ▶ TA's are all invigilator trained so can use in an emergency as well

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 ▶ SBL fortunate to have an abundance of suitable rooming. ▶ Use all of Main Sports Centre. If unavailable, use M90 (lecture theatre) in main school and/ or G61 (old gym) ▶ If unavailable, use post 16 centre and close off to rest of school. ▶ If unable to use sports centre and school (unlikely) contact other schools in MAT re venues.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption ▶ Exams Officer and IT Manager/ Department to liaise with Examination Boards as to appropriate action.

7. 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
▶ Follow centre's lockdown procedure. Keep students calm and under exam conditions. ▶ Lucy Allison-Wright (SLT lead on safeguarding) to liaise with exams officer and principal ▶ Inform the examining boards

8. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption
▶ Principal and SLT to take the necessary action. ▶ Liaise with other academies within the MAT. ▶ Inform the examining boards ▶ The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

9. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption
▶ Consideration would be given on an individual basis as to why they were unable to attend the examination centre. Special consideration may be applied for. ▶ 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.

10. 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 (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)
Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
▶ Exams Officer to liaise with Head of Centre and to inform awarding bodies. ▶ Line Manager and Exams Officer to explore alternative local venues.

11. 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 ▶ The Exams officer will contact Awarding Body to notify them of situation and put in place suitable alternative arrangements acting upon advice offered

12. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption ▶ The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue ▶ Scripts remain securely stored in exams office or Exams Officer transports them to the Post Office by collection by Parcelforce.

13. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption ▶ Exams Officer to communicate this immediately to awarding bodies for advice. ▶ Head of centre subsequently communicate to students and their parents or carers

14. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption ▶ Exams Office to contact awarding bodies for advice.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans…

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps

Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the ***Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted***, sections 1 and 2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted**]**

JCQ

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, JCQ and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.

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.

In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

Further information may be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations, page iv]

General regulations for approved centres

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

Guidance on *alternative site* arrangements

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms

Guidance on *transferred candidate* arrangements

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries

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

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/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

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

Statutory guidance on school closures

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

Wales

School closures – opening schools in extreme bad weather

http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schoolclosuresfaq/?lang=en

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

School closures

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-closures