



# Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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## Examinations policy: Contingency plan in the event of disruption to public examinations at Blackfen School for Girls

### 1 - Background

The contingency plan for public examinations is jointly owned by the school Leadership Team and Examinations Office personnel at Blackfen School for Girls.

#### 1.2 - Who the plan is for

The plan is designed for three audiences:

- The Examinations Office personnel who normally deliver examinations at Blackfen School
- The Leadership Team at Blackfen School and staff whom they direct in the day-to-day running of the school
- The Governing Body at Blackfen School

#### 1.3 - The purpose of the plan is as follows:

- To ensure that relevant staff in school respond to disruption to examinations in a timely and ordered manner.
- To ensure there is a consistent and effective response across all staff groups in the event of major disruption to the examination system.

#### 1.4 – The outcomes of the plan

- Students are able to sit public examinations and achieve their qualifications.
- Communication with examination and other relevant bodies ensures that students receive their results and achieve their qualifications.
- Procedures at school are carried out in compliance with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

#### 1.5 – Qualifications covered by the plan

The qualifications covered by the plan are primarily large entry, externally assessed examinations delivered in schools. These include GCSEs, AS levels, A levels, Tech levels, BTEC National Diplomas and Cambridge Nationals.

## **1.6 – When the plan would be triggered**

The plan would be triggered in the event of a major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidates across several awarding organisations.

This could include severe weather, widespread illness, travel disruption, fires, bomb threats, logistical problems or system failures.

Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

## **1.7 - If planned contingency actions are not sufficient**

If the contingencies set out in this plan are not proving sufficient to tackle the issue, the Headteacher (who is Head of Centre) - or other staff directed by the Headteacher - must take alternative, responsible action, ensuring at all times that procedures at school are carried out in compliance with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards. A written record of alternative decisions must be made as soon as possible after the event and sent to the Headteacher.

## **1.8 – Reviewing the plan**

The contingency plan for Blackfen School for Girls is reviewed as part of the annual Examinations Review or sooner, if this is appropriate.

## **2. Communications**

In the event of a major disruption, communication is an important factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across all staff in school.

This includes communications between the staff groups in school who are involved in the response, and communication to stakeholders such as examination bodies, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

## **3. Scenarios**

Twelve specific scenarios are set out in this plan relating to widespread disruption of the examination system where contingency plans would be invoked.

The scenarios are set in sequence, following the way in which an examination would be set out to posting examination scripts to the appropriate external agency.

Each scenario sets out the following information:

- The type of scenario
- Who the scenario affects
- When to implement the plan
- One example of the scenario
- Recommended actions for various stakeholders to take

- Specific communication – if there is specific communication that should be undertaken with one of the stakeholders: students, school staff, parents and carers.
- Success criteria – what a successful resolution of the issue would look like
- For the purpose of the scenarios, ‘the school’ refers to Examinations Office personnel who are the staff who usually administer the full process of examinations. The ‘Examinations Office’ personnel are the Examinations Officers. Other administrative and welfare staff may also be called upon to offer assistance.
- In an emergency context, the Leadership Team line manager and/or other members of the school’s Leadership Team can be called upon to manage and supervise public examinations, as directed by the Headteacher. Members of the school Leadership Team may also delegate responsible school leaders to assist in the management of public examinations.

### 3.1 Scenario 1 – Disruption of teaching time: the school is closed for an extended period

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates
Impact on	Teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that the school is closed, and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.
Example of scenario	Severe flooding closes the school
Recommended actions	<p>Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, the school Leadership Team will take responsibility to prepare students for examinations as usual by taking the actions or similar actions outlines below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reallocation of examination or teaching venues, e.g. Sherwood Park Primary School or Hurstmere Secondary School;</li> <li>• Restructuring the school day and staff teaching timetables for examination candidates to facilitate additional lessons;</li> <li>• Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will communicate with parents, carers and students via electronic and hard copy texts about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this issue.
Success criteria	Students continue to be taught either through an alternative method of learning or at an alternative venue.
Further advice and information	The school will follow guidance on emergency planning, making use of advice on severe weather from the Department for Education, as well as the statutory guidance on school closures.

### 3.2 Scenario 2 – Candidates are unable to take examinations because of a crisis: the school remains open

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates
Impact on	Examinations Office personnel, teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.
Example of scenario	A sickness bug means that a number of candidates are not able to attend a centre to take an examination.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.</li> <li>The school will offer candidates the opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series and will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements for this to be the case.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The school will also communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
Further advice and information	The school will follow JCQ's guidance on special consideration and alternative site arrangements as set out on the JCQ website.

### 3.3 Scenario 3 – Disruption in the daily management of examinations: unexpected absence of Examinations Office personnel

Type of scenario	Unplanned absence of Examinations Office personnel
Impact on	Candidates, Examinations Office personnel other than Examinations Officers
When to implement the plan	In the event that both Examinations Officers are absent unexpectedly
Example of scenario	Unexpected illness, transport problems or other unplanned issues mean that there are no Examinations Officers on site to manage examinations.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Leadership Team line manager will inform the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers of the situation immediately.</li> <li>The Leadership Team line manager will assume responsibility for managing all examinations on the day and will direct students, invigilators and additional staff, as required, to ensure that examinations run according</li> </ul>

	to JCQ regulations and standards.
Specific communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leadership Team line manager will inform the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers of the absence of both Examinations Officers immediately.</li> <li>• The Leadership Team line manager will communicate with the Cover Manager to ensure sufficient staff are able to support students and invigilators.</li> </ul>
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
Further advice and information	The Leadership Team line manager will seek JCQ's guidance on sending examination scripts for marking; the 'secure storage of scripts' (to be found on the JCQ website), as well as check the guidance on the 'Life of a script which is also available on the JCQ website.

### 3.4 Scenario 4 – Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Examinations Office personnel, candidates
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.
Example of scenario	A courier delivers a wrong set of examination papers to a centre.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies.</li> <li>• The school will request electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.</li> <li>• The school will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
Success criteria	Students are able to proceed with taking examinations without having to reschedule examinations.

### 3.5 Scenario 5 – Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Examinations Office personnel
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.
Example of scenario	A courier contacts a centre to report a problem about picking up scripts on time.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection.</li> <li>• The school will not make its own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations, in order to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.
Success criteria	Scripts are stored 'securely' in line with JCQ guidance. Scripts are collected and delivered to awarding organisations with the minimum of delay.
Further advice and information	The school will follow JCQ guidance regarding the 'secure storage of scripts' on the JCQ website as well as check the guidance on the 'Life of a script' also available on the JCQ website.

### 3.6 Scenario 6 – Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, Examinations office personnel, parents, carers and awarding organisation staff.
When to implement the plan	In the event that centres are unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
Example of scenario	A fire at the centre means that it is closed when examinations are due to take place.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leadership Team will organise the school to be open for examinations and examination candidates only, if the Headteacher is advised that the premises are safe</li> <li>• The Leadership Team will source alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible – see Scenario 3.1).</li> <li>• The school will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration</li> </ul>

	<p>for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements for this to be the case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible if it is unable to open as normal for examinations.
Success criteria	Students are able to take examinations in alternative venues in a timely way.
Further advice and information	<p>The school covers the impact on examinations as part of its general planning for emergencies. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the school to remain open lies with the head of centre, in this case, the Headteacher or other staff to be delegated by the Headteacher.</p> <p>The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open and takes advice from DfE guidance on school closures on the GOV.UK website.</p>

### 3.7 Scenario 7 – Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Type of scenario	Marking
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, school staff, parents, carers and awarding organisation staff.
When to implement the plan	In the event of large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked.
Example of scenario	A fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school will request that awarding organisations generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators and will ensure the collation and submission of such evidence.</li><li>• The school will offer candidates the opportunity to retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible.</li></ul>
Specific communication	It is the responsibility of Examinations Office personnel to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and to work with the Leadership Team to communicate subsequently to students and their parents or carers.
Success criteria	Candidate marks are able to be generated (if possible) from existing assessment materials.
Further advice and information	To be sought from the relevant awarding organisation.



### 3.8 Scenario 8 – Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

Type of scenario	Issuing results
Impact on	Examinations Office personnel, school staff, candidates, parents and carers.
When to implement the plan	In the event that schools or colleges are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.
Example of scenario	A school or college is closed and therefore candidates are not able to visit to find out their results.
Recommended actions	<p>The school Leadership Team will liaise with Examinations Office personnel to take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make arrangements to access results at an alternative site.</li> <li>• To share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible.</li> </ul>
Specific communication	The school will contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
Success criteria	Candidates receive results in a timely way.

Any other disruption to examination processes will be managed by the school in a similar way:

- The school will take responsibility for communicating with examination candidates and their parents/carers promptly, as well as take responsibility for providing electronic or hard copy updates as required and in line with normal practice in similar crisis contexts.
- The Examinations Office personnel will take responsibility for liaising promptly with awarding bodies and working with the Leadership Team to manage recommended actions and the follow-up that is required to ensure that students receive their results and achieve their qualifications.

#### 4. Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

Awarding organisations are responsible for:	The school, acting as an Examination centre is responsible for:
Offering advice regarding communication with candidates, parents and carers	Communicating with candidates, parents and carers
	Preparing plans for any disruption to examinations as part of general emergency planning
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations	Preparing candidates for examinations
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
	Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions
	Deciding whether the school buildings and premises can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining or approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the school cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations
Evaluating and declining or approving requests for special consideration	Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations
	Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates	The distribution of examination results to candidates
Advising UCAS and CAO about any delays that may impact on their deadlines	
Making a post results service available	Offering a post results service