

Blackfen School for Girls



Examinations Policy Contingency Plan and Contingency day

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	Date	Name	Signature
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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:

- i. To ensure that relevant staff in school respond to disruption to examinations in a timely and ordered manner.
- ii. 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 Contingency Plan would be triggered in the event of a major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidates across several awarding bodies. 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.

JCQ has grouped the range of disruptive events into three main categories:

- 1 - Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centres remain open
- 2 - Centres at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period
- 3 - Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

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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

Specific scenarios are set out in this plan relating to the three main categories of disruption to examinations identified by JCQ which would invoke contingency plans. 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 and the invigilation team. The Cover Manager also assists in managing staffing arrangements.

In an emergency context, the Examinations 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 other responsible school leaders to assist in the management and invigilation of public examinations. Other administrative and welfare staff may also be called upon to help.

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3.1 CANDIDATES AT RISK OF BEING UNABLE TO TAKE EXAMINATIONS: CENTRES REMAIN OPEN

Scenario 1 – Candidates are unable to take examinations because of a crisis

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	Adverse weather conditions or travel disruption mean that a significant number of candidates are not able to attend a centre to take an examination but the school remains open.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school Leadership Team will consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates. JCQ regulations for very late arrivals to the examination will be followed. The school will offer candidates the opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series and will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements for this to be the case.
Specific communication	The school will communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The school will also communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions and outcomes to the issue.
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
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 the school is able to open.</p>

Scenario 2 – 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	The school is closed by instruction of Public Health England due to the impact of an infectious disease.
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"> Instigating the school's 'Remote Learning Policy'; Restructuring the school day and staff teaching timetables for examination candidates to facilitate additional lessons when the school re-opens; Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.
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, as well as the statutory guidance on school closures.

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Scenario 3 – Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery of examination papers
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"> The school will source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies. The school will request electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The school will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
Specific communication	The school will communicate with awarding bodies to organise alternative delivery of papers.
Success criteria	Students are able to proceed with taking examinations without having to reschedule examinations.

Scenario 4 – 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, including invigilators
When to implement the plan	In the event that both Examinations Officers are absent unexpectedly / lack of trained and suitable invigilators available on the day of the examination.
Example of scenario	Unexpected illness, transport problems or other unplanned issues mean that there are no Examinations Officers on site to manage examinations / lack of invigilators to support or lead examinations.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Examinations Leadership Team line manager will inform the Headteacher immediately. The Examinations Leadership Team line manager will assume responsibility for managing all examinations on the day and will direct students, invigilators and additional teaching staff to ensure that examinations run according to JCQ regulations and standards. As required, very large cohorts will be divided into smaller groups and students held back to start their examination at a later time and in line with JCQ guidance for maintaining the integrity of the examination paper.
Specific communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Examinations Leadership Team line manager will inform the Headteacher of the absence of both Examinations Officers/lack of invigilators immediately. The Examinations Leadership Team line manager will communicate with the Cover Manager to ensure sufficient staff are able to support students and invigilators.
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
Further advice and information	In the absence of both Examination Officers, the Examinations 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.

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Scenario 5 - The school suffers a cyber attack on its IT system

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, Examinations office personnel
When to implement the plan	The school MIS does not function at the time of uploading examination entries/unit results or the school's IT system must be closed down with immediate effect.
Example of scenario	A cyber-attack on the school
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Examinations Officers will liaise with the Examinations LT line manager and the school's IT provider to begin retrieving MIS back-up information and seek advice from awarding bodies on alternative forms of uploading entries and unit results information. • The school will liaise with awarding bodies to identify whether examinations requiring the approved use of ICT can be sat at an alternative venue. • The school will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates who are require use of the school's ICT provision to complete practical examinations. • The Examinations LT line manager will seek to provide marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as advised by the awarding body. • The school will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible.
Specific communication	It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office to communicate this scenario immediately to the relevant awarding bodies and to work with the Leadership Team to communicate subsequently to students and their parents or carers.
Success criteria	Students are able to receive final grades for their qualifications.
Further advice and information	To be sought from the relevant awarding body.

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Scenario 6 - There is an emergency evacuation of the examination room or the school site

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, Examinations office personnel
When to implement the plan	In the event of an emergency evacuation of the examination room or a centre lockdown.
Example of scenario	The fire alarm sounds or the centre receives a bomb threat requiring evacuation of school buildings.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilators are trained to stop the examination when the emergency alarm rings and to note the time of stoppage on the board. Examination students are led out of examination rooms in silence to attend at designated outdoor areas. • Examination Officers and the Examinations LT line manager go to designated outdoor areas on the school site to meet and remain with students and invigilators. The register is taken. Silence is maintained. • If safe to do so, invigilators lead students back to examination rooms in silence. The full time is allocated to students to complete the examination. • The school will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates for disruption to their examination or if students are not able to go back into the building and resume their examination. • The school will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible.
Specific communication	The Examinations Office will inform each awarding body of the circumstances disrupting their examinations.
Success criteria	Students are able to finish examinations and/or receive final grades for their examinations.
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 the school is able to open.</p>

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3.2 CENTRES AT RISK OF BEING UNABLE TO OPEN AS NORMAL DURING AN EXAMINATION

Scenario 7 - 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.
When to implement the plan	In the event that centres are unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
Example of scenario	Adverse weather conditions / fire / flooding at the centre means that it is closed when examinations are due to take place.
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • The Leadership Team will source alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible) • The school will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements for this to be the case. • The school will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible.
Specific communication	The school will inform each awarding body 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 the school is able to open.</p>

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Scenario 8 - Centres are unable to operate as normal during the examination period

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, Examinations office personnel, parents, carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that centres are unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
Example of scenario	The school is closed or restricting attendance due to industrial action
Recommended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • The Leadership Team will source alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible). • The school will apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements for this to be the case. • The school will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible.
Specific communication	The school will inform each awarding body with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as 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 the school is open.</p>

Scenario 9 – 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"> • To make arrangements to access results at an alternative site. • To share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible. • To set up on-line access for distribution of results or to provide distribution in person, where students do not have on-line access at home.
Specific communication	The school will contact awarding bodies about alternative options.
Success criteria	Candidates receive results in a timely way.

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3.3 DISRUPTION TO TRANSPORTING COMPLETED EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

Scenario 10 – Completed examination scripts are not collected from Centres as scheduled

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"> • The school will seek advice from awarding bodies and their normal collection agency regarding collection. • The school will not make its own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding bodies, in order to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection. • 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 their qualifications. • The completed scripts will be stored securely, in line with JCQ regulations, until the time of collection.
Specific communication	The school will communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to resolve the issue.
Success criteria	Scripts are collected and delivered to awarding bodies 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.

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.

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

Awarding bodies 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 bodies
	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 body 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 bodies
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 bodies
	Assessing and liaising with awarding bodies 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

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Examinations contingency days

The Summer examination series includes an examination “contingency” day(s), arranged by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) on behalf of all of the examination awarding bodies and which applies to all students taking GCSE and A-Level (or equivalent) examinations. The examination contingency days have been put in place to be used in the event of “sustained national or local disruption” during the examination period. In these circumstances, the awarding bodies whose examinations are running at this time will have the option to postpone their examination and to rearrange it at a later date (on the contingency day), so that students affected by the incident have a fair and equal chance to gain their qualifications.

The examination contingency dates for Summer 2024 public examinations are as follows:

- Thursday 6th June 2024 - afternoon
- Thursday 13th June 2024 - afternoon
- Wednesday 26th June 2024 – all day

This means that all examination candidates at Blackfen School must be available to sit GCSE, A-Level and BTEC examinations from the date of their first examination until Wednesday 26th June 2024. This decision is not a school decision and it applies to all candidates, in all schools.

Parents, carers and students should note the date of the examination contingency days in the event that an awarding body needs to invoke its contingency plan. They are advised to ensure that telephone and email details held by the school are accurate and updated, if necessary, so that students can be contacted quickly.

JCQ makes the following point: “If students are not available because they are on holiday and one of their exams is rescheduled to this day, they will not be eligible for special consideration by the exam boards. For this reason, the JCQ requests all schools inform parents and students of this date so that it can be taken into account when making plans for the summer.”