



# Priory School

# Exams Contingency Plan

# 2019/20

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Priory School. 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 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 complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

Priory School agrees to *“have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy 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.”*

## Causes of potential 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 and trained
- *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*
  - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
  - Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting examinations
  - 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 e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
  - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required 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:

General (applicable as actions throughout the contingency plan).

- Comprehensive instruction manual to be stored in the Exams Office, so that tasks can be completed in the event of the EO being absent.
- The local EO network group and leader may be contacted for advice.
- The EO has been provided with comprehensive off site access to all of the examination computer programs.
- The relevant awarding body will be contacted where necessary and relevant to seek advice, and their instructions will be followed (overseen by SLT).

Planning

- Data Manager and SLT to support the data collection exercise in the absence of the Exams Officer.
- Exams Officer to create Annual Exams Plan, noting key dates and tasks. Information to be available to SLT in the absence of the Exams Officer.
- Exams Officer to review invigilator numbers annually and undertake recruitment as necessary.
- Invigilator training (comprehensive training for new invigilators and refresher/update training for existing invigilators) to be provided at the start of the academic year. Quarterly invigilator team meetings/'brief bites' training sessions will also be arranged.

Entries

- Teaching staff to be prompted by EO at start of academic year regarding early/estimated entries.
- Internal deadlines for entries and related processes will be set sufficiently in advance of the awarding body deadlines to ensure that staff, candidates and parents/carers have time to check entries and changes/amendments to be made prior to the awarding body deadlines.

Pre-exams

- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation and invigilation schedules to be prepared well in advance of required dates (prior to Easter holidays).
- Provision of statements of entry, individual candidate timetables and awarding body information to be scheduled into the annual exams plan to ensure the information is provided to students in a timely manner.
- Generic exam timetable and awarding body information to be made available on the school website, which can be accessed by all.
- Internal assessment and coursework submission dates to be built into the annual exams plan. Curriculum Leaders to oversee.

Exam Time

- EO, SLT and invigilators to have comprehensive understanding of required examination conditions prescribed by the awarding bodies. Copies of the 'ICE' document to be made available in every exam room (main and satellite rooms) for reference.
- EO to inform candidates of the requirements placed upon them by the awarding bodies in assembly and in writing (letter) and to be made available on the school website prior to the start of the exam series.
- Copies of relevant report/request forms to be provided for each exam to the lead invigilator, followed up by the lead invigilator and EO immediately after each exam, and submitted with the examination scripts. (Two-person check).
- EO and assistant must know how to dispatch exam scripts via Parcel Force service.
- In the event of the Parcel Force service not arriving to collect the scripts, they will be stored securely until the EO has contacted the awarding body for instruction or has delivered the scripts to the appropriate sorting office/collection point as advised.

Results and post-results

- Remote/offsite access to examination computer programs has been arranged for the EO in order that results can be accessed.

- In the event of MIS failure, the awarding body will be contacted and access to the results via the awarding body website will be processed in order to be able to provide results to candidates.
- The EO, members of SLT, departmental staff, college/careers advisor to be onsite and available to speak with candidates on results day to advise about the post results service.
- A letter regarding the post results service will be provided to candidates at the appropriate stage of the exam cycle.
- Instructions for the post results service process to be included within the instruction manual that will be kept in the Exams Office.
- Awarding body to be contacted and instructions implemented.

## 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 disruption:

- Applications for access arrangements to be scheduled into the annual exams plan.
- Applications for modified papers to be scheduled into the annual exams plan.
- Annual training provided to all learning support and hearing support staff. (Training program approved by JCQ).
- Learning Support team is sufficiently staffed to provide reserve staff in the event of absence of the timetabled member of staff.
- Access arrangements are organised by the EO and SENCO sufficiently in advance of the examinations to ensure that support provision is in place. (Checked by two people).

## 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 submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- All departments to have a 'second' and contingency plan to be fully aware of how to provide entry information to the EO.
- All internal deadlines to be set sufficiently in advance of the awarding body deadlines to allow time for processing and checks to be made.
- Deadlines and workload to be scheduled into annual exams plan.
- Comprehensive instructions to be included within the exams manual.

**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:

- Quarterly review and annual check on staffing levels of invigilating team with recruitment drive when needed.
- Annual training for all invigilators, TAs and relevant support staff.
- Trained support staff and school governors to be utilised as invigilators.

**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:

- As a fallback plan, the school will use the following rooms: track room, D1, SLT offices, music practice rooms.
- Within the local EO network group, neighbouring centres have agreed that help will be provided where possible.
- Liaise with awarding body and neighbouring examination centres.

**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:

- Internal deadlines to be set sufficiently in advance of the awarding body deadlines and scheduled in the annual exams plan to allow for time to resolve MIS issues.
- EO to contact awarding bodies and follow instructions. (This could include making entries directly onto the awarding body websites).
- Results to be accessed directly from the awarding body websites if MIS system fails at results release time.
- The school has full year ICT support on site to resolve MIS system failure.
- The school has subscription to full year SIMS support from local authority to assist with any difficulties.

## 7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being able to start, proceed with or complete their exams.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Invigilation team trained in how to deal with emergency evacuation
- Emergency evacuation procedure in each exam room folder
- Exam room evacuation procedures are part of Priory's Evacuation Procedure
- Candidates will be given the opportunity to sit the examination for its published duration

## 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

*The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- School to contact the local authority and follow procedures.
- Mobile classrooms to be used.
- The site has a number of separate buildings. In the event of some of the site remaining open, priority would be given to the teaching of GCSE courses.
- Alternative methods of learning have been developed and include regular contact between teachers and students through school email addresses, student work posted on Edulink, and the use of Teams.
- Students with no computer access will be posted work
- House Assistants in regular contact with students who are not engaging with learning.

## 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

*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. [JCP scenario 2]*

Centre actions:

- EO to contact the relevant awarding organisations and follow instructions.
- School to contact parents/carers and candidates to inform them of outcome.

## 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

*A centre, which is unable to open as normal for examinations, must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]*

Centre actions:

- The school has a number of separate buildings. If part of the centre was to remain open, the younger year groups could be sent home to allow rooms to accommodate examinations.
- EO to contact the relevant awarding organisations and follow instructions.

- Neighbouring centres and the local EO Network group have agreed to support each other where possible to accommodate examinations and examination papers (with agreement of awarding organisation).

## 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

*The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]*

### Centre actions:

- EO to contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow instructions. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative day.
- Awarding organisations would provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Exam papers would be received, made and stored under secure conditions

## 12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

*The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]*

### Centre actions:

- EO to contact the relevant awarding organisations and follow instructions.
- Where examinations are part of the national yellow-label service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, the EO will seek advice from awarding organisations and will not make own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- For any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, EO will investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements of the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- In the event of the Parcel Force service not arriving to collect the scripts, they will be stored securely until the EO has contacted the awarding body for instruction or has delivered the scripts to the appropriate sorting office/collection point as advised.

## 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

*It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]*

### Centre actions:

- Systems in place to ensure that completed scripts are stored securely until collection. Storage meets JCQ requirements and is fireproof.
- EO to contact awarding organisations and follow instructions.
- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations. EO to follow awarding organisation on how to facilitate this.



- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series. EO to communicate with candidates and parents.

#### **14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services**

##### 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

*Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]*

##### Centre actions:

- Remote ICT access is set up for EO and SLT to enable offsite access for both results and post-results services.
- EO to contact awarding organisations and follow instructions.
- Results to be accessed directly from the awarding body websites if MIS system fails at results release time in order to prepare for distribution to students.

**Causes 7-13** – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

## Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

### Ofqual

*Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

### JCQ

*General regulations*

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

*Guidance on alternative site arrangements*

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

*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

*Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early year's settings*

<https://www.gov.uk/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/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/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>