St Michael’s Catholic Grammar School

A Voluntary Aided School in the Trusteeship of St. Michael’s Catholic School Trustee, a Member of the Loreto Education Trust

Founded by the Sisters of the Poor Child



**Exam Contingency Plan 22/23**

| Approved/reviewed by | |
| --- | --- |
| M Stimpson | |
| Date of next review | 31/03/2024 |

**EXAMINATION SYSTEM CONTINGENCY PLAN**

**Purpose of the plan**

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at St Michael’s Catholic Grammar 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 (andNorthern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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**for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This plan also confirms St Michael’s Catholic Grammar School’s compliance with JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3)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. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

***The term “Centre” in this policy refers to St Michael’s Catholic Grammar School, Nether Street, North Finchley, London N12 7NJ***

**General contingency guidance**

* [emergency planning and response](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings) from the **Department for Education in England**
* [handling strike action in schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools) from the **Department for Education in England**
* [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools) from the **Department for Education in England**
* [police guidance](https://www.protectuk.police.uk/) from **National Counter Terrorism Security Office** and partners on preparing for threats

**Possible causes of disruption to the exam process**

### Exam administrator 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* * *confidential 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * The Exam Administrator’s line manager, is also trained in many aspects of the exam’s processes and procedures and would take control * A close working relationship with a local school would ensure support * Very experienced senior invigilators could step up, if required. * If necessary agency staff could be employed * Subscription to The Exams Office provided support |

1. **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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * No one in school works in isolation * Exam’s Officer/Administrator would take control with other members of SLT. * All key documents are on a shared drive * The SENDCO has an admin support worker who can step up |

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### 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Ensure all staff know their responsibilities * Line manager of dept to take control * Contact awarding bodies where/when necessary (sooner rather than later) |

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### 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Ensure a large pool of invigilators to call on who are adequately trained * If necessary use teaching staff |

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### 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Rooming timetable to be scheduled in advance to ensure any peak points are identified. * Exams administrator to work in conjunction with cover manager to identify suitable rooms * Centre to use alternative venues in agreement with relevant Awarding organisations   Alternative venue details:  Finchley Catholic High School Woodside Lane N12 8TA  St Alban’s Church Hall Nether St North Finchley N12 7NN |

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### 6.Cyber-attack

| Criteria for implementation of the plan  *Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Take advice from Awarding bodies |

### 7. Failure of IT systems

| Criteria for implementation of the plan  *MIS system failure at final entry deadline*  *MIS system failure during exams preparation*  *Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test*  *MIS system failure at results release time* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption  *See separate policy* |

### 8. 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Contact Awarding Bodies |

### 9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it will remain the responsibility of St Michael’s to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. * Due to advances in technology, teachers can continue to teach “live” lessons and assess progress |

### 10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

| Criteria for implementation of the plan  *Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Contact Awarding Bodies * as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date |

### 11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

| Criteria for implementation of the plan  *Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * Contact Awarding Bodies * Alternative venues need to be identified   Alternative venue details:  Finchley Catholic High School Woodside Lane N12 8TA  St Alban’s Church Hall Nether St North Finchley N12 7NN |

### 12. 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action. 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 date |

### 13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

| Criteria for implementation of the plan  *Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * where examinations are part of the national ‘yellow label’ service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body * for any examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*. * centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption   * awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations * where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series. |

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

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

| 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* |
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| Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption  **Distribution of results:**   * centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation * centres to 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.)   **Facilitation of post results services:**   * Centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location * centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible   Alternative venue details:  Finchley Catholic High School Woodside Lane N12 8TA  St Alban’s Church Hall Nether St North Finchley N12 7NN |

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**Addendum:** The Department for Education has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-strike-action-in-schools) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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### In summary:

**Disruption to assessments or exams**

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

* the exam or assessment cannot take place
* a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student’s control

**Steps you should take**

**Exam planning**

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation’s requirements.

**In the event of disruption**

* Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
* Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
* Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
* Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
* In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ’s [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/centre-emergency-evacuation-procedure).
* Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
* Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

**After the exam**

* Consider whether any students’ ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
* Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
* Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
* 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.

**Steps the awarding organisation should take**

**Exam planning**

* Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
* Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

**In the event of disruption**

* Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
* Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
* Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
* Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
* Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

**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.

**If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption**

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

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**COVID-19 Addendum: October 2020**

Following the amended publication of ‘Guidance for full opening: schools’ on 28 August 2020, the School has made the following temporary changes to our External Examinations Contingency Policy.

**Additions Conditions applying to invigilators during COVID pandemic**

Candidate numbers are sufficiently small for the autumn exams so that only 2 invigilators are required for each session; one inside the venue to run the session and the other outside to deal with any problems.

The Examinations Officer will brief invigilators on their roles and start exams.

* Please go directly reception where you will be briefed by the exams administrator
* Adhere to the one-way system and follow all signage and floor markings.
* Only move around the school if necessary; use mobile phones, set to ‘silent mode’ to communicate with centre exam staff if needed.
* Avoid congregating in communal areas and workspaces.
* Always wash or sanitise hands before entering and when leaving venues, before and after distributing exam materials, after sneezing or coughing (remembering to ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’) and before and after eating,
* Desks, tables, chairs (including backs) other surfaces and door handles will be cleaned by school staff and students when the exam finishes using disinfectant wipes after each exam session.
* Hand sanitiser, tissues and disinfectant wipes are available in each exam venue.
* Invigilators are advised to wear face masks, and may also choose to wear visors and/or disposable gloves. Visors and disposable gloves will be available as requested by individual invigilators.
* Students are not expected to wear face masks in school but may do so if they wish.
* Please permit exam candidates to enter the exam venue and sit at their designated desk bearing their candidate details, under exam conditions, as soon as the venue is set up for the exam session
* Keep windows and doors open in exam venues to promote ventilation.
* Adhere to social distancing rules (2 metres) whenever possible. If this is not possible, endeavour to maintain a distance of at least 1 metre and for the minimal time. When handing out or collecting in exam materials do so at arms’ length and either wear protective gloves or sanitise hands before and after doing so.
* Avoid face-to-face contact and stand alongside candidates and staff when interacting with them.
* Remind candidates of social distancing and good hygiene habits. For example, the principle of social distancing, and ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’.
* Centre Exam staff will collect exam materials and any equipment at the end of the last exam in a session.

**Conditions applying to students during COVID pandemic**

* If you test positive for Coronavirus or have symptoms of Coronavirus such as a high temperature, new continuous cough or loss of sense of smell or taste you should not attend an exam and should contact the school for advice.
* Arrive 8.30 -8.45 am for morning exams and between 1:30 -1.45 pm for afternoon exams. Remember to bring writing and any other appropriate equipment.
* Candidates should adhere to the one-way system and follow all signage and floor markings and only move around the school if absolutely necessary.
* Always wash or sanitise hands before entering and when leaving venues, after sneezing or coughing (remembering to ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’).
* Desks, tables, chairs (including backs) other surfaces and door handles will be cleaned by school staff by students at the end of the exam session.
* Hand sanitiser, tissues and disinfectant wipes are available in each exam venue.
* Candidates are not expected to wear face masks in exam venues but may do so if they wish. Invigilators are advised to do so but may choose not to if they wish.
* When invited to enter the exam venue, sit at your designated desk bearing your candidate details. You will be under exam conditions throughout the time you are in the venue.
* Adhere to social distancing rules (2 metres) whenever possible. If this is not possible, endeavour to maintain a distance of at least 1 metre and for the minimal time. Handing out and collecting in of exam materials will be done at arms’ length.
* Avoid face-to-face contact. Invigilators have been advised to stand alongside candidates when interacting with them.
* When exam papers are collected at the end of the exam please proffer them at arm’s length. · When you are dismissed from the exam venue please take with you anything you brought in and leave the School immediately unless otherwise instructed on the day.