

Examination Contingency Plan

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MONITORING AND REVIEW

Staff Responsible	Deputy Head (Academic), Exams Officer
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	January 2026
Date of Next Review	January 2027

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:

- **JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-26**

RELATED POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Examinations Policy
- Crisis Management Plan

INTRODUCTION

This plan confirms St Mary's School, 52235, is compliant with the JCQ regulation (Section 3.17, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-2026) 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.

AIMS

To ensure that there is a consistent and effective response in the event of a major disruption to the examination system.

The overall outcome of the plan is to ensure that the interests of candidates are safeguarded while maintaining the integrity of the examination system. The plan seeks to achieve three specific outcomes:

- Delivering assessments to published timetables
- Delivering results to published timetables
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

Qualifications covered by the plan are GCSEs, iGCSEs, AS levels and A levels, alternative Level 3 qualifications including Level 3 Diploma and EPQ, Entry Level Certificates and Functional Skills.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The Head of Centre will also ensure that St Mary's has a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself.

SCENARIOS

Scenario 1	Examinations Officer not available: Escalation Process
Impact on	Staff, students
Example	Unwell or compassionate leave
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -The Assistant Exams Officer will be supported by the SLT Exam Link to lead the examinations.- Additional exam key holders for 2025-2026 KC, NP, LF. Keys kept in key safe to be held in School Office. • At least one day's shadowing is carried out annually to ensure practice is up to date. Happens in May before the exams – SLT Exam Link, one additional key holder and Assistant Exams Officer shadows Exams Officer. • Daily examinations procedure (as explained in Exams Procedure 2025-2026) to be followed by everyone involved with exams: SLT exam link, invigilators, keyholders, • All planning, invigilation, rooming etc is planned in the absence of the Exams Officer by the SLT link and available to all relevant staff • Relevant members of SLT to read and be familiar with all relevant policies and JCQ regulations. • Relevant emails of Exam Officer to be accessed with support from IT. • To run exams, refer to Exam Procedure document • If at the time of entries support to be sought from ISAMS and relevant awarding bodies.
Scenario 2	Head of Centre or SLT not available
Impact on	Staff, students
Example	Unwell or compassionate leave

Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another delegated member of SLT will take responsibility as Head of Centre to support the Exams Officer. • Exam Boards will be notified and Acting Head of Centre will comply with training, as required. • If death or significant illness of Head of Centre or other, special consideration to be applied for those students taking examinations.
Scenario 3	School closed for a significant period of time – disruption of teaching time
Impact on	Teachers, candidates, parents
Example	School closed due to flooding
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise candidates who are facing exams shortly. • Find alternative venues – Sports Hall, Oakdene Hall, St James Church, Gerrards Cross Memorial Hall. • Use internet to set/mark work remotely • Keep parents/pupils informed
Scenario 4	Disruption in the distribution of exam papers
Impact on	Awarding body, Centre staff, candidates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre to liaise with Awarding body re delivery of papers e.g. electronic access • Examinations officer to store papers securely.
Scenario 5	Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts
Impact on	Courier staff, Centre Staff, Awarding body staff
Example	Courier reports a problem in collecting scripts on time from Centre
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre seeks advice from Awarding Body • Scripts stored securely in the meantime • If the scripts are lost en-route, awarding body will generate marks according to other papers and evidence and possibly apply for special consideration
Scenario 6	Centre unable to open as normal during exam period
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, centre staff, Awarding bodies
Example	Centre unable to open due to a fire
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open for examinations only, if possible • Seek alternative accommodation, on site or nearby e.g. Sports Hall, Oakdene Hall , Thorpe House School, St James Church, Gerrards Cross Memorial Hall. • Apply for special consideration for candidates who have met the minimum requirements. • Centre must inform Awarding Body of any issues
Scenario 7	Secure room and secure storage facility cannot be accessed
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, centre staff, Awarding bodies
Example	Unable to open due to a fire or flooding
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre must inform Awarding Body of any issues • JCQ Centre Inspection Service must be contacted immediately
Scenario 8	In the event of national or local disruption to examinations
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, centre staff, Awarding bodies
Action	The awarding bodies have designated Wednesday 24th June 2026 , as the 'contingency day' for examinations. Candidates must remain available up until the final day, and on this day should an awarding body need to invoke its contingency plan candidates will be informed Parents informed of dates via a letter the previous year.
Scenario 9	Assessment evidence not available to be marked
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, parents, Awarding Body
Example	A fire at the Centre destroys completed examination scripts
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding bodies 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates re-take the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window if possible. • Head of Centre responsible for communicating with the Awarding body and subsequently to students and parents.
Scenario 10	Centre unable to distribute results as normal
Impact on	Awarding body, teachers, students, parents
Example	School closed and therefore candidates are not able to visit to find out their results
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site as above. • Exam results accessed remotely by EO • Inform Candidates, teachers, parents, and report to Awarding body
Scenario 11	Awarding body unable to offer post results service
Impact on	Awarding body, Centre staff, candidates, parents
Example	A system failure shuts down the Awarding body's online post-results service
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding body makes arrangements to provide post results service through alternative methods. Priority given to candidates going through UCAS. • Centre keeps candidates and parents informed.
Scenario 12	Emergency evacuation during exams
Impact on	Candidates, Invigilators, Awarding Body
Example	Fire Bell rings during a public examination.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency evacuation procedure for exams is in place in accordance with JCQ regulations* See Appendix A • Procedure talked through with students in advance of a mock examination period. • Invigilators, girls and staff are trained in the appropriate procedure. • Awarding body informed if required.
Scenario 13	Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle
Impact on	Exams Officer, SLT Exam responsibility, Heads of Department, students
Example	Member of department off on extended sick leave which requires regular cover or supply
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Department/SLT Link to ensure the relevant information is collected and tasks are set appropriately and ensuring the relevant information has reached students (such as coursework marks in time for appeals)
Scenario 14	Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence
Impact on	Exams Officer, SLT Exam responsibility, students
Example	Invigilator off sick for the day and teacher used as a substitute invigilator
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have reserve list of available invigilators • Have list of staff who can be used in certain exams as substitute invigilators • The invigilator must not be the subject teacher • Yearly refresh training for teacher invigilators • Have outlined procedure for invigilators
Scenario 15	Exceptional circumstances – local lockdown due to Covid19 or other
Impact on	Exams Officer, SLT Link, candidates, parents, awarding bodies, heads of department, centre staff, invigilators
Example	Centre closed due to lockdown
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Department retain at least one copy of the mock examinations in a secure location. • Examinations cannot take place • Awarding bodies may generate candidate marks for affected assessments/ examinations based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators. • Candidates may re-take the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window if possible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Centre responsible for communicating with the Awarding body and subsequently to students and parents. • Awarding body may advise the use of the contingency day for the assessments missed.
Scenario 16	SENCO extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle
Impact on	Exams Officer, LEAPS department, students, awarding bodies.
Example	Submitting AA for exam period
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form 8 and access arrangements are not processed in a timely manner. • LEAPS staff to provide additional support. • Access to email as appropriate to seek evidence for access arrangements. • SLT links to provide support. • Awarding bodies to be contacted in a delay in meeting deadlines.
Scenario 17	Failure of IT systems
Impact on	Exams Officer, students, teachers, exam boards
Example	Power cut
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entries made in advance of the deadline to allow time for any technical failings • IT system in school is purposefully established in sections so exams would be moved to a separate location in school where IT is working. • 45 minutes back up power on server. • MIS system failure at results release time. IT team on hand throughout day with SLT.
Scenario 18	Cyber Attack
Impact on	Exams Officer, Candidates, IT provision, teachers, exam boards, parents
Example	Loss of sensitive information, personal data, secure material
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filtering in place to prevent attacks, system regularly updated and monitored, MFA on remote devices, • Follow Cyber Security Policy, and work with external agencies to minimise risk. Contacts with those affected and exam boards in line with the Cyber Security Policy. • Use of USB or external memory storage to share exam papers. Exam laptops are not connected to the wider internet and threat from external agencies is therefore reduced. • Exam Boards contacted to forewarn of problem. • Word processed examinations saved to devices or printer with wired connection.
Scenario 19	Emergency evacuation of the exam room or centre lockdown
Impact on	Students, teachers, Exams Officer
Example	In the event of an intruder
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If centre lockdown, follow advice of emergency services. Reassure students and remain in contact with parents as appropriate. • Liaise with exam board and where necessary request special consideration for those affected.
Scenario 20	Use of AI
Impact on	Students, Exam Boards, School
Example	Use of AI in NEA or coursework
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure robust Malpractice Policy is in place, strict rules and monitoring of the policy and completion of coursework. • All departments provide their own NEA Policy with specific reference to the checks made for AI.
Scenario 21	Candidate absent at the time of an assessment
Impact on	Students, Exam Boards, School
Example	Student is too ill to attend school on the day of an exam

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students informed ahead of exam series through Examinations Booklet (GCE or GCSE) and procedure talked through in an assembly or form time of the procedures to follow in the event of illness that prevents attendance at an exam on the scheduled day. • Examinations Officer and/or Deputy Head (Academic) to confirm absence has been reported to school by parent/guardian. • Special Consideration application to the awarding body in line with <i>JCQ A Guide to the Special Consideration Process, Chapter 4</i> to be made where appropriate.
Scenario 22	Candidate late to assessment
Impact on	Candidate, Exams Officer, Invigilator
Example	Candidate arrives 30 minutes late to a scheduled exam
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students informed ahead of exam series through Examinations Booklet (GCE or GCSE) and procedure talked through in an assembly or form time of the procedures to follow in the event of illness that prevents attendance at an exam on the scheduled day. • Examinations Officer and/or Deputy Head (Academic) to confirm absence has been reported to school by parent/guardian. • Candidate directed to the examination room upon arrival in school. • Candidate allowed full time allocated to sit the examination.
Scenario 23	Candidate late to an assessment
Impact on	Candidate, Exams Officer, Invigilator
Example	Candidate arrives more than one hour late to a scheduled exam
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students informed ahead of exam series through Examinations Booklet (GCE or GCSE) and procedure talked through in an assembly or form time of the procedures to follow in the event of illness that prevents attendance at an exam on the scheduled day. • Examinations Officer and/or Deputy Head (Academic) to confirm absence has been reported to school by parent/guardian. • Candidate reports to Reception upon arrival in school, where possible, accompanied by a parent. • Candidate and parent sign a declaration form confirming the candidate has not been in contact with anyone who may have had sight of the paper. • Examsofficer inform exam board the candidate very late arrival. Submit online Very Late arrival form via CAP within 7 days, attach any evidence indicating that the candidate was late for reasons beyond their control and declaration that candidate did not access the paper's content beforehand • Candidate is accompanied to the examination venue by a member of staff, to ensure the security of the exam is not compromised. During this time the candidate may not communicate with anyone in any way. • Where possible, candidate is allowed the full time to sit the examination.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EVENT OF DISRUPTION TO EXAMINATIONS

Awarding body responsible for	Examination Centre responsible for
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing admirative support for centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering advice regarding communication with candidates, parents and carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with candidates, parents and carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide documentation and effective guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for any disruption to exams as part of general emergency planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing candidates for examinations • Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by the Awarding bodies • Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions. • Deciding whether the Centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing the relevant organisations if the Centre is unable to open.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining or approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the Centre cannot open for examinations and JCQ agreeing such arrangements with the Awarding bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating and declining or approving requests for Special Consideration in the case of emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking, moderating and grading the work. • Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates. • Advising UCAS and CAO about any delays that may impact on their deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep results confidential • Distribution of examination results to candidates • Report immediately to the awarding body/bodies any potential or actual breach of the results

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a post results service available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering a post results service • Ensure private candidates are made aware all post-results services requests can be made directly through the relevant awarding body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue certificates • Issue new certificates in a new name following gender re-assignment, or a released prisoner given new identity or witness protection case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the correct and secure despatch of certification • Retain securely all unclaimed certificates for a minimum 12 months • Destroy unclaimed certificates or return them to awarding bodies

Appendix A

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR EXAMS EG FIRE ALARM

1. Stop the candidates from writing and ask them to turn all question papers and scripts face down on their desks.
2. Evacuate the exam room in silence in the normal manner, keep candidates in seating plan order row by row.
3. Make sure all question papers and scripts are left in the exam room.
4. Take attendance register(s) in order to ensure all candidates are present.
5. Candidates to be escorted to Cedar Lawn and kept separate from the other students and in silence. They should line up on the side of Cedar Lawn, in their Seating plan order.
6. Invigilator take a quick register by calling out candidates' names.
7. Make sure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while out of the exam room and that they do not communicate with one another.
8. Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
9. When it is safe to return, re-start the exam and allow them the full time remaining, to include the time missed for the evacuation.
10. Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and let the Exams Officer know what happened so they can report it to the relevant awarding body.