



Exam Contingency Plan 2024/2025

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved by:	Amy Deane	Date: September 2024
Last edited:	September 2024	
Next review due by:	September 2025	

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Charles Bartholomew
Deputy Principal (exams officer line manager)	Victoria Smith
Exams officer	Joanne Beesley
Assistant exams officer	Charlotte Whelan
Assistant Principal Inclusion (SENCO)	Amy Deane
Assistant SENCO	Lyndsey Healey
IT Technician	Member of Pentre staff

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at LIPA Sixth Form College, including, for example, in the event of a cyber-attack.

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 (and Northern 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 LIPA Sixth Form College 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 potential impact of a cyber-attack is considered within this policy.

LIPA Sixth Form College operates across one centre only. The arrangements covered in this contingency plan relate to the following centres:

- LIPA Sixth Form College (34345)

Possible causes of 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*

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Charlotte Whelan is fully trained and has assistant exams officer responsibilities alongside Joanne Beesley, Exams Officer to keep this training current and updated.
- Charlotte Whelan would be able to pick up any of the above-listed activities with the support of her line manager, Victoria Smith, Deputy Principal, who is one of two senior leaders in the organisation who has a good working knowledge of the examination system.

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 the disruption

- Lyndsey Healey, our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistant SENCO is also a fully qualified SENCo who can perform all the tasks noted above.
- In our SENCO, Amy Deane's absence, Victoria Smith, Deputy Principal, would be able to support Lyndsey, if needed, with any of the above tasks as she is one of two senior leaders in the organisation who has a good working knowledge of the examination system.

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 awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- College has an established partnership in place with several local teacher recruitment agencies who have been able to support us linked to this issue in the recent past, so college would utilise these contacts, for example, Lizzie McDonnell at Tradewind to support college with cover staff.
- Secondary Maths and English teachers may also be available in the other schools within the multi-academy trust, i.e., LIPA Secondary School.
- Amy Deane, Assistant Principal – Inclusion, leads on maths and English in college and has capacity to support with maths teaching and associated administrative tasks should this be needed.

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

- College has in the last year trained more internal administration and support staff as invigilators using the training resources on The Exams Office.
- Updates are given to staff linked to changes to regulations in staff team meetings and sent by email to staff in emails by Amy Deane, the SENCO, and one of two senior leaders in college with good working knowledge of the examination system.
- Teachers and senior staff who teach a subject are made aware they cannot invigilate that subject; similarly, LSAs who support specific students are aware they are not able to invigilate for students they support. Jo Beesley, our exams officer works alongside Amy Deane, SENCO, to ensure timetabling of exams and invigilation takes account of this.
- College has an established partnership in place with several local recruitment agencies who have been able to support us linked to this issue in the recent past, so college would utilise these contacts, for example, Lizzie McDonnell at Tradewind, JJFox or Red Apple to support college with invigilation staff. Where we need to use external invigilation staff through an agency, the exams officer/senior leader requests copies of the resources used to train the invigilators, as well as dates completed, to support us to ensure all invigilation staff are fully trained.

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

- College aims for all exams to be sat on the LIPA Sixth Form College premises.
- If there were an issue with rooming at short notice, SLT would meet in order to fix an appropriate contingency plan. The following options would be considered as potential alternative locations:
- Blackburne House, Hope St (we have used this venue on occasion in the past)
- LIPA university
- LIPA Sixth Form College
- LIPA Primary School
- Liverpool Cathedral

All of the above locations are within 0.2km of the college.

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- In the event of any cyber attack in college, our IT Technician will contact his line manager, Victoria Smith, one of the two senior leaders in college who has good working knowledge of the examination system.
- Victoria Smith will communicate this information immediately to Jo Beesley, the examinations officer, and the rest of the SLT team. Jo Beesley will make immediate contact with the awarding body to seek further guidance and support.
- Senior leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the awarding bodies.
- Back-ups are taken daily of the MIS and the data is stored offline.
- The systems for restoring the data are reliable and robust.
- The school will contact the police and Action Fraud.
- The school will contact the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).
- The school will inform the Department for Education.

7. 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

Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All student data is added to EDEXCEL ONLINE at the earliest opportunity after students are enrolled in September each year. Therefore, MIS systems would very likely not be needed in any of these instances.
- Student contact details are available within our web-based Microsoft Office system to enable us to email students' results on any site.
- Paper copies of exam arrangement information are kept locked in cupboard in Inclusion & Safeguarding Office should this be needed for reference in case of MIS failure.
- The IT technicians have a stock of exams laptops which would be able to be utilised for an exam should there be a power outage immediately prior to an online exam. In this instance, the exams officer would contact the awarding body to advise of the disruption and seek advice, if needed.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer would inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so, seek advice and follow instructions.
- College staff would refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy/lockdown policy, where appropriate.
- Invigilators would refer to follow the emergency evacuation/lockdown procedure for examinations and the JCQ's centre emergency evacuation procedure.
- College SLT would take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre would be able to open.
- College SLT would 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, year 13 student exams would be prioritised linked to the potential impact on their onwards progression.
- The exams officer would communicate at the earliest opportunity with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- All maths and English staff have capacity to teach their subjects online, if needed, via Teams and other online platforms.
- In 2023/24, College is also using its full National Tuition Fund allocation on additional online GCSE tuition for our maths and English retakers with Get Further; in the instance of disruption to teaching, more hours of tuition on a 1:3 basis could be commissioned by college for students with their allocated Get Further tutor.
- If students were not able to engage with alternative teaching methods, perhaps linked to individual needs and circumstances, students could potentially retake their GCSE exams in a different series. This option would most likely suit a year 12 student not progressing onwards until the end of the following academic year.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice.
- Communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding any possible solutions/options to the issue, for example, alternative rooming, or invigilation taking place in the home if the circumstances are appropriate for this.
- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations.
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- As a last resort, College would offer the candidate an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer would inform the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice.
- SLT would consider opening the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- Students could be offered the option of sitting exams in a different series. This option would most likely suit a year 12 student not progressing onwards until the end of the following academic year.

The following options would be considered as potential alternative locations to run exams in this instance:

- Blackburne House, Hope St (we have used this venue on occasion in the past)
- LIPA university
- LIPA Sixth Form College
- LIPA Primary School
- Liverpool Cathedral

All of the above locations are within 0.2km of the college.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer would communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative receipt of papers, e.g., electronically via a secure external network or alternative courier.
- Copies of any papers received in an alternative way would be received, made and stored under secure conditions using our administration office and secure exams room.
- College would follow any issued awarding body guidance received in this instance.
- College is aware that only as a last resort would scheduling of the examination be moved to 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer would communicate with awarding organisations in this instance and follow instructions. College is aware that we should not make our own arrangements for transportation unless instructed to do so by the awarding body.
- College ensures the 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The exams officer would communicate this incident immediately to the relevant awarding organisation to get advice and follow their instructions.
- College is aware that in this instance, teaching staff may need to provide alternative evidence to support the awarding body to generate candidate marks for affected assessments. Alternatively, college is aware students may be required to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.
- Procedures to recover/re-complete work will be employed where relevant. For example, GCSE English candidates type their exam scripts at LIPA Sixth Form College as per college policy. IT technical staff would seek to recall copies of any lost GCSE English Language scripts completed on secure exams computers.

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Our normal method of results distribution is to send results by email direct to students.

Our exams officer and assistant exams officer always have a work laptop with them at home in case needed for results distribution.

Exams officer would contact awarding bodies if alternative options were needed in order to share results or for the facilitation of post results services.