RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY
EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

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 Rushey Mead Academy. 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 scenarios contained in the *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:

> The 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 have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"*

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
  - 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

School Action:

Staff cover for Exams Officer

The Data Services Manager will ensure there is adequate trained staff to cover the Exams Office in the case of absence or will know where to seek help from.

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
  - 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
  - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
  - staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
  - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

School Action:

Staff cover for SENCo

There is always more than one person who knows the testing process and is trained in Access arrangements. We currently have three people trained in school.

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*
- *Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines*

The Head of Faculty or second in charge will always cover for absent staff in making entry decisions and work in liaison with the Exams Officer.

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*

School action:

In addition to the Invigilators we recruit specifically for exam seasons, we have a number of permanent school staff who receive the JCQ invigilator training every year. These staff will step in as and when required to ensure adequate cover at all times.

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*

School actions:

- Room planning is carried out well in advance of the actual exams. During the main external exam season we use the Sports Hall as it can accommodate most students with only those requiring access arrangements needing alternative rooms.
- We try to keep alternative rooms in a small cluster as they are easier to manage even if this sometimes means relocating existing classes.
- As our site is made up of six different buildings, it would only be in extreme cases, the whole site would be closed. Our main Sports Hall is in E Block which is separated from the main school by a brook accessed by two small foot bridges. If E Block was out of bounds, we would use the Theatre in A block which seats 110 students and 5 classrooms upstairs in A Block. We also have a large Restaurant in B Block and a double classroom in D block which could all be utilised.
- With small exams where the Theatre was planned for use, we could move to B, D or E Block.
- If, for any extreme reason, the whole site was out of use, we would utilise the premises of other schools in our MAT. A Hall in one or two of the Primary schools could be best as the other Secondary School would also have exams going on.
- If there was an incident outside preventing access to the main entrance of the site, we have alternative entrances at the side and rear of the site.

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*

School actions:

- We have excellent off-site support for our MIS system from ESS Ltd
- We have remote access for working off-site
- All software for result downloads has been placed on an encrypted laptop so can be completed off-site.

7. Disruption of teaching time – school closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- School 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 school to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

School action:

The School would invoke the Business Continuity Plan. Whilst this was being put in place, study guides, revision work and appropriate course work would be posted online via 'show my homework.'

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – school remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination school to take examinations as normal

The school to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The school to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.

School actions:

The Exams Officer notifies the awarding bodies of any such cases immediately.

9. School unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- School unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

A school 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]

School action:

Students would be deployed to the alternative provision already identified and the Exams Officer would log into the relevant awarding bodies secure site to download the papers. These would be photocopied for the required numbers.

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the school in advance of examinations

The school to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP Senario 3]

<u>School actions:</u>

The Exams Office would log into the relevant awarding body secure site and download a copy of the paper. The required number of copies would then be photocopied.

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The school to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP Scenario 4]

<u>School actions:</u>

The Exams Officer would deliver to the post office.

12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

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

<u>School action:</u>

The Exams Officer would notify the relevant awarding bodies and seek advice. All course marks are recorded on our central MIS system.

13. School unable to distribute results as normal

<u>Criteria for implementation of the plan</u>

- School is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Schools to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP Scenario 11]

<u>School actions:</u>

An alternative place would be set up and this communicated to students / parents and carers.

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