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A. Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the examination process at St Mary's Catholic Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact such disruptions might have on our examination 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:

St Mary's Catholic Academy 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;"*

B. Causes of potential disruption to the exam process:

1. Examinations Co-ordinator or Senior Examinations 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 examination 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 examinations/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams

- examination timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on examination timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- examination/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.

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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.

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate Examinations Co-ordinator or Senior Examinations Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle):

Examinations Co-ordinator to liaise with Senior Examinations Officer to keep track of all cycles via 2 weekly meetings. Routine advertising and recruitment of external invigilators as appropriate - especially for Summer Season but also including internal mock examination series. Entries checked by HoD or subject leaders as appropriate. Examinations Co-ordinator to manage security of papers and liaise with HoD re controlled assessment deadlines – Senior Examinations Officer to oversee. Examinations Co-ordinator to secure delivery of statements of entries and exam 'do's and don't's'; sent to parents and given to students via pastoral staff; Examinations Co-ordinator to respond to any issues with examination clashes or timings and results including post-results service; in all cases Senior Examinations Officer to oversee. Senior Examinations Officer to liaise with Headteacher and refer to Senior Leadership Team as appropriate. In case of the absence of the Senior Examinations Officer, Examinations Co-ordinator to liaise with Headteacher and refer to Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

2. SENDCo 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

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate SENDCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle): Assistant SENDCo to liaise with Senior Line Manager for Learning Support and Senior Examinations Officer. Access arrangements requirements overseen by Assistant SENDCo in liaison with Senior Examinations Officer. Evidence collated as appropriate.

Awarding body rules checked and invigilators checked and trained on appropriate levels of intervention - 3 rooms are used for access - these are timetabled as is appropriate.

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 Examinations Co-ordinator on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the Examinations Co-ordinator 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

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle): Examinations Co-ordinator to chase up late returns in communication with Senior Examinations Officer – Examinations Co-ordinator has a hold on all paperwork necessary for submissions - deadlines put in place for HoD / subject leaders - in their absence Examinations Co-ordinator to liaise with 2nd in department or Senior Head of Learning House.

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

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence: See above - new cohort of invigilators recruited - exams timetabled and more invigilators used at peak times. If invigilators absent on day Cover Supervisor(s) informed; .

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Examinations Co-ordinator unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during examinations timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak examination days
- Main examination venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at examination time

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice: Contingency plan includes Drama Hall, 1CE, Chapel and Canteen, if Sports Hall were out of action. 1Hu4, 1MI4 and 1Co4 rooms allocated for overspill - see examinations timetable.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- SIMS system failure at final entry deadline
- SIMS system failure during exams preparation
- SIMS system failure at results release time

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate failure of IT systems: SIMS provider informed - all entries backed up and awarding organisation(s) informed as would be appropriate.

7. 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Possible use of Blackpool and the Fylde College facilities as well as Blackpool Sixth Form College / six Blackpool High Schools / CLC.

8. 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 organisation(s) 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this.

9. St Mary's Catholic Academy unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- St Mary's Catholic Academy 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this.

10. 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this.

11. 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this.

12. 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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this - make Headteacher aware.

13. St Mary's Catholic Academy unable to distribute results as normal

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]

Action taken at St Mary's Catholic Academy to mitigate the impact of the disruption: Senior Examinations Officer and Examinations Co-ordinator to deal with this.

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*

C. 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 years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

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>

***Hyperlinks provided in this document were correct as of September 2016**