



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

Examination Contingency Plan

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Examinations Manager, Assistant Headteacher Pupil Progress and Assessment.

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed by the Examinations Manager and Senior Leadership Team on 15th February 2024 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Standards Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

Policy Review Dates:

Date last approved by Full Governing Board: 29th March 2023

Date submitted to Governors' Committee: 6th March 2024

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Review Frequency: Annually

Start date for policy review: February 2025

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Purpose of the policy

The Examination Contingency Plan is in place to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system at St. Gregory's Catholic High School.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will implement this plan if serious interference to the examination system is experienced, affecting significant numbers of candidates across several awarding boards, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures.

In the occurrence of such an event, any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for instance the police.

The priority when implementing this plan will be to maintain the following three principles:

- Deliver assessments to published timetables
- Deliver results to published timetables
- Comply with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation in accordance with examination awarding boards and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Examinations Policy

All staff will ensure that they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

2. Responsibilities of the school and individuals

It is the responsibility of St. Gregory's Catholic High School to communicate with pupils, parents and carers, ensuring that they are made aware of any issues that arise.

The school is responsible for preparing all pupils for examinations.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will ensure that examinations and assessments are conducted under the conditions prescribed by awarding boards.

The school is responsible for liaising with awarding boards in the event of an issue concerning examinations.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will offer a post results service and ensure that pupils are given the details of this service.

It is the responsibility of the school to explore the opportunities for alternative arrangement if the centre cannot open for examinations, and the school will agree such arrangements with the relevant awarding boards prior to the event.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to appoint an appropriate Examinations Manager within the school, whose role it is to organise and manage all examinations.

The Examinations Manager will create an annual exam plan for the school, which identifies essential key tasks, dates and deadlines.

It is St. Gregory's Catholic High School's responsibility to ensure that assessment materials and candidates' work are stored under secure conditions.

The Examinations Manager is responsible for ensuring that the schools internal assessment marks and samples of candidate's work are submitted to awarding boards, as well as external moderators.

The SENDCo is responsible for approving access arrangements and collating evidence to support the need for special requirements.

The Head of Centre will ensure that St. Gregory's Catholic High School, as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding boards' requests for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff. 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 boards with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre must 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.

In the event of the absence of the Head of Centre or the member of senior leadership with oversight of examination administration, responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to examinations will be escalated to the Curriculum Deputy Head who will work closely with the Examinations Manager.

3. Absence of Examinations Manager

In the absence of the Examinations Manager during peak examination periods, the necessary tasks will be undertaken by the Director of Finance, supported by the Data Manager.

The SLT will appoint a 'deputy' to cover a role or task.

Where cover for the role of Examinations Manager is unavailable, the Examinations Manager of another school will be approached to provide assistance through either Warrington Borough Council or Liverpool Archdiocese.

The school will endeavour to brief all candidates on exam timetables and the relevant awarding board's information.

In the event that the Examinations Manager experiences an extended absence at key points in the examination cycle, annual data collection exercises to collate information on qualifications will be undertaken by the Director of Finance, supported by the Data Manager.

All assessment related procedures and tasks undertaken in the absence of the Examinations Manager will be documented, in order to ensure that all information held by the Examinations Manager is kept up to date.

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 board specifications being delivered*
- *annual examinations plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines*
- *sufficient invigilators not recruited*

Entries

- *awarding boards not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff*
- *candidates not being entered with awarding boards for external examinations/assessment*
- *awarding board entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred*

Pre-examinations

- *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting examinations*
- *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding board 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 boards/external moderators*

Exam time

- *examinations/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding boards*
- *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding boards during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding boards*

Results and post-results

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

4. Absence of SENDCo

In the absence of the SENDCo during peak examination periods, the necessary tasks will be undertaken by the Deputy SENDCo/Specialist Assessor and the SEND Senior Link.

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-examinations

- *approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding board*
- *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*

5. Centre is unable to open

In the event that St. Gregory's Catholic High School is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, the Examinations Manager will inform each awarding board which examinations are due to be taken as soon as possible.

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for deciding whether it is safe for the school to open.

When considering whether the school will open as normal, the Headteacher will take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local and national agencies.

In the event that the school is unable to open, where possible, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will open for examinations and examination candidates only.

Classes for Years 7-10 to be collapsed and moved to online learning to allow the GCSE examinations to take place in unaffected buildings on the school site.

Where possible St. Gregory's Catholic High School will offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available exam series.

In the event of partial or whole exam disruption, the school will apply to awarding boards for special consideration for candidates who were affected by the disruption.

In the event of school being unable to open, St. Gregory's Catholic High School has exam rooms booked at the Peace Centre (Peace Drive, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 1HQ) throughout the exam season.

6. Disruption of teaching time

Where there is disruption to teaching time, or pupils do not receive the provision of normal teaching and learning, it is St. Gregory's Catholic High School's responsibility to ensure that pupils are prepared for the examinations as usual.

During the extended absence of teaching staff at key points in the exam cycle, the SLT will provide the Examinations Manager with the details of estimated and final entries for examinations.

In the absence of the necessary teaching staff, the HoDs will provide the Examinations Manager with coursework marks, as well as ensuring that coursework samples are transmitted to moderators.

The school will communicate with parents, carers and pupils about the potential for disruption to teaching time and how St. Gregory's Catholic High School's plans to address this problem.

The teaching provision for pupils who will be facing examinations shortly will be priority.

Where appropriate, the school will advise pupils to sit examinations in the next available series.

During major disruption, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will strive to continue teaching all pupils, either through an alternative method of learning or at a different venue.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Examinations Manager on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received

Final entry information not provided to the Examinations Manager on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for examinations/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding boards

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 board 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 board submission deadlines

7. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

If there is disruption to the distribution of exam papers to test centres in advance of examinations, it is the Examinations Manager's responsibility to communicate with awarding boards to organise alternative delivery of exam papers.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will always source a reliable courier for the delivery of examination papers, as well as organise an alternative service for the delivery of hard copies.

Where possible, relevant awarding boards will provide the school with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager to ensure that copies are received, collated and stored under secure conditions.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will strive to ensure that pupils are able to proceed with taking examinations without having to reschedule examinations.

8. Candidate unable to take examination

When a pupil is unable to attend the school in order to complete an examination as normal, it is the responsibility of the school to communicate with JCQ and arrange an alternative site to complete where necessary.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will effectively and efficiently communicate with parents, carers, and pupils regarding solutions to the problem.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will utilise the school's own transport facilities in order to transport candidates who would otherwise be unable to attend the examination.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager and SENDCo to liaise with pupils involved to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding boards.

The pupils involved will be given the opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.

Where appropriate, the Examinations Manager will apply to awarding boards for special consideration for pupils.

- Pupils are only eligible for special consideration, if they have been fully prepared, and have covered the whole course, but their performance during the examination is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.
- If a pupil chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons, they must be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.

Latecomers will be permitted to take their examinations, provided that they are within the awarding board's regulations.

9. Invigilators

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will ensure that all invigilators who are being used are appropriately trained and suitable for the job.

The Examinations Manager will endeavour to confirm the full attendance of invigilators prior to the examination date.

It is the Examinations Manager responsibility to maintain a panel of suitable invigilators which can be called upon in the event of a shortfall.

Provisional timetables and estimated entry information will be used to determine the number of invigilators required.

Where there is a shortage of invigilators, the Examinations Manager and Safeguarding Team will cover any absences.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager to ensure that recruitment and training of invigilators is completed well in advance of examination dates.

A review of available invigilators will be conducted prior to the examination period, in which invigilator's availability for the next exam series will be confirmed, allowing time for any amendments or training.

10. Examination Room

The Examinations Manager/SLT will ensure that there are sufficient number of rooms available during peak exam periods.

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager to ensure that all rooms utilised for examinations are appropriate, such as lack of noise, large enough to allow for a desk per pupil and IT facilities where necessary.

Rooms will be suitably allocated and timetabled well in advance.

The Examinations Manager will ensure that appropriate rooms are arranged in advance for pupils sitting examinations who have special requirements and adjustments.

Where necessary, pupils will be moved from normal classrooms to allow candidates to sit examinations in accordance with the timetable.

11. Cyber-attack or failure of IT systems

In the event that IT systems fail during peak examination periods, the relevant awarding boards will be informed immediately.

If systems fail at the final entry deadline, the relevant awarding boards will be informed and an extension to the deadline requested.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will ensure that during the exam cycle there will be an IT Team on standby in order to repair systems in the event of failure or damage.

Where a failure of IT systems results in serious disruption of the examination special consideration can be applied for.

In the event of IT systems failing during the distribution of candidates' results, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will advise of alternative sites where results can be obtained.

If the school system is down due to a cyber-attack, entries can still be made locally on awarding board websites. Access arrangement information is stored physically so no pupil would be disadvantaged. Physical papers would arrive. Pupils who use laptops in examinations could still do so locally. Exam results can be downloaded locally from awarding board websites.

12. Transportation of completed scripts

If there is a delay in the normal collection and transportation arrangements for completed exam scripts, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will seek advice from the relevant awarding board.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will not make arrangements for the transportation of completed examination papers without the prior approval of the relevant awarding board.

The school will ensure that completed examination papers are stored securely, with access limited to the Examinations Manager or designated deputy until collection.

In the event of disruption of the transportation of completed exam scripts, it is the responsibility of the Examinations Manager to communicate continuously with the relevant awarding board throughout the incident, until the issue is appropriately resolved.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will always aim for scripts to be collected and delivered to awarding boards without delay.

13. Assessment evidence is unavailable

The following procedure must be followed in the event of large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it has been marked.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to immediately inform the relevant awarding board of the issue.

The Headteacher or Examinations Manager will discuss the possible courses of action with the pupil involved and their parent/carer.

Where possible, the awarding board will generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of the candidate's achievement, such as NEA work or formal mock exam results.

Whether evidence is classed as 'appropriate' is defined by the awarding board in consultation with the regulators.

Where appropriate, the candidate will be given the opportunity to retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will seek further advice from the relevant awarding board involved in the incident.

14. Disruption in the marking schedule

If the awarding board markers are unable to mark examination scripts, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, the awarding boards will re-allocate scripts to available markers.

It is the awarding board's responsibility to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers in order to meet the scheduled result dates.

The awarding board is responsible for prioritising the marking of examination scripts based on result dates, UCAS deadlines and qualifications that require further study.

15. The results schedule

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will always act with the aim of issuing results to pupils on the scheduled dates and will continuously communicate with awarding boards to ensure the dates are met.

If awarding boards face delays in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results, they will establish priorities for processing results in line with UCAS and Central Application Office deadlines.

In the case of a disruption to the issuing of results the awarding board will liaise with relevant organisations regarding individual pupil progression to further and higher education.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will ensure that they keep continuous communication with awarding boards and are kept up to date regarding the progress of the marking system, in order to limit the potential damage of result deadlines not being met.

16. Distributing results

St. Gregory's Catholic High School is committed to ensuring that candidates receive their examination results in a timely manner.

St. Gregory's Catholic High School will make arrangements to access results at alternative premises in the event that the school is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.

If the school is unable to open to distribute examination results, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will share facilities with another institution and wherever possible use the Peace Centre.

The Examinations Manager will contact awarding boards regarding alternative arrangements for exam results in order to gain approval.

Where possible, St. Gregory's Catholic High School will provide pupils access to receive results online.