



مدرسة وستمنستر  
THE WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

## Exam Contingency Policy 2025-26

POLICY FOR	Academic Honesty
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Academic Team / Examination Officer
REVIEWED BY	Assistant Principals and Head of School
APPROVED DATE	May 2025
REVIEW DATE	May 2026
APPROVED BY	Executive Principal/ CEO and Head of School/Deputy CEO
RELATED POLICIES	Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment Policy



Executive Principal / CEO .....



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## **Purpose of the plan**

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process 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 at The Westminster School, Dubai.

This plan is influenced by internal procedures as well as the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System which offers guidance in the publication "What schools and colleges and other centers should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted," and the JCQ document Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2023).

This will allow members of the Senior Leadership Team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the Head of centre, Examinations Officer is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. 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 should also be considered.

The Head of centre will also ensure that as 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. Head 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.

### **1. Exams officer's absence at a critical stage of the exam 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 and/or 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 are 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 to Awarding Bodies

Results and post-results:

- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of Post Results Services.

Other criteria:

- no other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption outlined above**

The centre will:

- Deputy Examination Officer / Data leader to cover any specific duties if Exams Officer is unable to work
- SLT to appoint Agency Exams Officer in the event of long-term absence

**2. SENDCo extended absence at a critical stage in the exam process (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
- 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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- Exams Officer trained on all aspects of Access Arrangements for Exam Students
- Inclusion Manager in place at school to cover in the absence of the SENDCo

## **3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical point in the exam process (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

Other criteria:

- no other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- SLT will nominate a Deputy to cover a specific role or task if necessary.
- Subject Leaders have a Deputy in place to assist where 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.

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- Exams Officer to provide training to all members of the Invigilation team to ensure they are all appropriately trained.
- Exams Officer to ensure enough Invigilators are employed by the school to ensure full coverage of Exam rooms
- Agency Invigilators to be used as a backup if we have a major shortage at any given time

#### **5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritizing candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.

Alternative

- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue.
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.

Communication details:

- Text Message sent to all parents
- Email sent to all parents
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

Other centre actions:

- Exams Officer to liaise with SLT lead to source alternative venues and facilities
- Data Manager to assist with room bookings if necessary.

## **6. Cyber-attack**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of exam delivery
- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate disruption**

The Centre will:

- Have back up data
- Protect against malware
- Keep technological devices safe
- Use passwords to protect data
- Avoid phishing attacks

**The centre will ensure:**

- All staff complete the mandatory GEMS U Course on Information Security Awareness.
- All staff receive Information Security Alerts from the GEMS Information Security Advisory.
- The school's E-safety policy is shared with all stakeholders.
- The question paper is downloaded 90 minutes before double verification.
- Board compliance is met.

### **7. Failure of IT systems**

#### **Criteria for implementation of the plan:**

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time
- Cyber Attack - Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of exam delivery

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- Internal deadlines for entries to be set before (the final entry deadline to allow for any IT failure
- All exams to be prepped in advance so that any IT failures on exam days will not affect the running of the exam
- Results can be requested in an alternative format on a separate computer not attached to the school network
- Liaise closely with IT department

## **8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

## **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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

- Information provided via the school website

- Information provided by letter to all parents/carers/students
- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who has not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

#### **10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open**

##### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

##### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- information to be communicated to students via the school website, DPR and letters to parents
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate

their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

## **11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Alternative venue to be confirmed
- If alternative arrangements are to be made then we will notify the JCQ Centre Inspection Service by submitting the JCQ Alternative site form online using CAP.

Communication details:

- Information to be communicated to students 'via the school website, DPR and letters to parents
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

## **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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

## **13. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where

awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from awarding bodies and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body

- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCO's Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Other centre actions:

- Not Applicable

#### **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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

##### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

#### **15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services**

##### **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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

**Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details: To be confirmed

- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post results services

**Communication details:**

- Parents will be updated in the school website/text message sent home with link

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

**16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process**

**Cause of disruption**

- No further causes identified

**Central actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

Not applicable

Upon review in September 2023, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.

## **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**

**DfE**

### **Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges**

Cyber Security Standards in schools and colleges

([www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges))

Cyber-crime and cyber security: a guide for education providers

([www.gov.uk/government/publications/indicators-of-potential-fraud-learning-institutions/guide-on-cyber-crime-and-cyber-security-for-education-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/indicators-of-potential-fraud-learning-institutions/guide-on-cyber-crime-and-cyber-security-for-education-providers))

### **Disruption to assessments or exams**

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

You may also wish to see the JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans

([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)) and

JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations

([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/)) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

## **Steps you should take**

### **Exam planning**

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

### **In the event of disruption**

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.

- 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, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' ([www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/)).
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

#### **After the exam**

- Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

#### **Steps the awarding organisation should take**

##### **Exam planning**

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
- Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

##### **In the event of disruption**

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions,

students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).

- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

### **After the exam**

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

### **If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption**

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.