MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1549

Examinations Contingency Plan

2026-27

This policy should be used in conjunction with our Examination Policy; Word Processing Policy and Malpractice Policy

Policy Date	To be Reviewed
November 2023	Annually
October 2026	Annually

Aims of this Policy:

- To examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of exams, including the potential impact of a cyber-attack.
- To mitigate the impact of disruptions by providing actions or procedures to follow.

The MGS Contingency Plan:

This plan is based on a number of scenarios that we believe we should prepare for. We cannot prepare for every possible scenario, and in the event of an unexpected situation, there are links to further supporting institutes at the end of this document.

Scenario 1
The Exams Officer and/or the relevant SLT member with oversight of examinations and assessment administration becomes ill or is absent for an extended period of the exams cycle at key periods.
When should this plan be implemented?
There are five key moments when the school should react with urgency if the Exams Officer is away from school: 1. The Planning Stage of Exams: i.e. understanding what exams are being completed during that cycle, or booking invigilators. 2. The Entry Stage: i.e. completing entries by key dates in the cycle. **3.** Submission of marks and NEA to exam boards within deadlines. 4. The Pre-Exams Stage: i.e. issuing timetables, booking rooms or scheduling. 5. The Exam Stage: i.e. day to day running of public exams. 6. The Post-Exams Stage: i.e. downloading results and handling reviews of marking.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to take on the role of the Exams Officer. • The Headteacher is to direct other SLT members to take on certainly responsibilities that need to be removed from the new Exams Officer. • Admin Support is to be directed to support the new Exams Officer. • Contact should be made with other centres to provide support for the Exams Officer.
Who is responsible?

The Headteacher is to make the decision as to when an alternative SLT member should be deployed in this fashion as it will have knock on effects on their wider roles within the school.

Scenario 2

The SENCo becomes ill or is absent for an extended period of the exams cycle at key periods.

When should this plan be implemented?

There are two key moments when the school should react with urgency if the SENCo is away from school:

1. The Planning Stage of Exams: i.e. understanding what exams are being completed during that cycle, or booking invigilators.
2. The Pre-Exams Stage: i.e. issuing timetables, booking rooms or scheduling.

What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?

- The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to take on the role of acting SENCo.
- Admin and TA Support is to be directed to support the new SENCo, especially TAs with greatest experience with the higher needs students.
- Contact should be made with other centres to provide support for the SENCo.
- The school may need to invest in temporary specialist support from outside agencies.

Who is responsible?

This is a decision that should be made by the SLT Line Manager of Exams in conjunction with the Headteacher. There will be times when the school can cope, but there are key moments when the Exams Officer needs the full support of the SENCo.

Scenario 3

A member of teaching staff is absent for a prolonged period of time when NEAs are due to be completed.

When should this plan be implemented?

When teaching staff are absent for a prolonged period thereby affecting non-examination assessment tasks being set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled and/or internal assessment marks/work not being available for submission to awarding bodies.

What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?

- The Headteacher is to direct an SLT member to arrange cover for other members of the Department who will need step in to run NEAs.
- If no member of staff can run them, the school will need to contact other schools in order to temporarily employ/reimburse a professional to run the NEAs.

Who is responsible?

The Exams Officer and the SLT Line Manager of the Department affected are to inform the Headteacher/Deputy Head (Curriculum).

Scenario 4

Disruption to the school/closure of school.

When should this plan be implemented?

When the school cannot open as normal during the sitting of public exams.

What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?

- The Exams Officer will inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice.
- Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate.
- Open for the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- Use alternative venues (locally or at other schools) in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. The school business contingency plan names Parkway Primary as a venue in the event of a full closure of the school. A member of the SLT will contact the school.
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- Where necessary, MGS will pay for candidates to sit their exams in the next available series.

• Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available examinations series, if possible.
Who is responsible?
This would be an emergency whereby the Headteacher would have to call in the SLT and delegate key actions to all.

Scenario 5
Exam rooms shortage; lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice.
When should this plan be implemented?
When it is identified that there are insufficient exam rooms available to accommodate candidates for scheduled public examinations.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Exams Officer will organise rooming for examinations in advance of all examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately. • In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available), support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced (candidates will be suitably isolated as required). • Seek advice from awarding organisations and JCQ Inspection Service; request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings. • Alternative accommodation may be used at a nearby centre and candidates transported as appropriate
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams.

Scenario 6
Cyber Attack.
When should this plan be implemented?
Where it is identified that a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Exams Officer will work with IT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance. • Senior Leaders will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies. • If the school system is significantly compromised for an exam that requires ICT for completion, the school may need to transport students to an alternative venue. • The school may need to hire support from an outside agency to check the systems are 'clean' for exams to resume and we are safe[r] from future attacks.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and IT Manager.

Scenario 7
Shortage of trained invigilators.
When should this plan be implemented?
When the centre fails to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams (to meet expected ratios) or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days/absence on the day of an exam.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Exams Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained to meet expected ratios working closely with HR teams. • HR will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days (support staff); Exams Officer will coordinate requirements with HR and Exams Team SLT Line Manager to mobilise staff at short notice as needed. • Staff will be directed by the Headteacher. • Staff will be trained in advance.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and Exams Officer.

Scenario 8
Failure of IT Systems.
When should this plan be implemented?
• When SIMS fails in the exam cycle. Key points in the cycle relate to: • Exams submitting entries to awarding bodies • Pre-exams Exam scheduling (rooming/candidate seating etc.) Issuing candidate timetables • Exam time Online examinations • Results and post-results Downloading and producing results slips
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Exams Officer will make entries from another site direct to the awarding bodies (using awarding bodies' secure extranet sites). • Exam room scheduling/timetables compiled using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables). • Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies in respect of re-sitting online exams affected by system failure, or to seek an alternative solution. • Results accessed directly from the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites (accessed from an alternative site if necessary).
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and IT Manager.

Scenario 9
Emergency Evacuation or Lockdown.
When should this plan be implemented?
When the exam room requires evacuation (e.g. due to fire/bomb threat) or the centre enters a lockdown procedure.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so and seek advice. • Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy/lockdown policy, where appropriate. • Invigilators to follow the emergency evacuation/lockdown procedure for examinations in accordance with agreed protocols.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and Exams Officer.

Scenario 10

Student is absent.
When should this plan be implemented?
This could be a sudden illness, tragedy, viral outbreak or missing person.
What actions should be taken to mitigate 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. • Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series. • Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and Exams Officer.

Scenario 11
Disruption to distribution of papers.
When should this plan be implemented?
In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. • Arrange with exam boards for alternative means of receiving papers, e.g. electronically or alternative courier.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and Exams Officer.

Scenario 12
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked
When should this plan be implemented?
In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, e.g. a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts.
What actions should be taken to mitigate disruption?
• Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s), candidates and their parents or carers. • Seek advice from awarding organisations on their procedures for dealing with such issues. • Where partial assessments can be recovered these will be made available where appropriate. • Procedures to recover/re-complete work (e.g. IT data reconstruction for electronic work) will be employed where relevant.
Who is responsible?
SLT Line Manager for Exams and Exams Officer.

JCQ Guidance:

- The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates.

- In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.
- In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

Further Information:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations
- Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms
- Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms
- Instructions for Conducting Examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations
- A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance GOV.UK
- Emergency planning and response: www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-andresponse-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-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