



Exams Contingency Policy

Authorised and approved for use by the CEO 1st February 2025

History of Policy Changes

Date	Version	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
May 2018	1	Creation of Policy	JCQ Guidelines	Sarah Pearce & Amanda Sheppard
May 2019	2	Addition of TKASA	Annual Review	Sarah Gibbon
May 2021	4	No change	Annual review	Sarah Gibbon
October 2022	5	Addition of Cyber Security section Addition of specific TKASA contingencies Addition of Appendix 3	Annual review	Sarah Gibbon

This policy applies to The Priory Learning Trust and all its secondary academies

Date policy adopted	October 2022
Review cycle	Annual
Review date	January 2025

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1. 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 TPLT Secondary Schools. 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:

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre 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;”*

2. Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

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 are not undertaken, these may include:

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
- invigilators training and updates not carried out
- 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

Centre actions:

- Head of Centre to appoint a suitable Deputy Examinations Officer as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the Examinations Officer's remit.
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Head of Centre
- Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times

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

Centre actions:

- Head of Centre to appoint a suitable Deputy SENCo as rapidly as possible, who will follow procedures and practices within the SENCo remit.
- Exams Officer to ensure essential information is available to Head of Centre
- Exams Officer to ensure Exam Cycle, policies and procedures are up to date at all times

Heads of Department 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

Centre actions:

- Head of Centre to ensure departmental continuity by requesting an alternative member of the faculty takes responsibility for the actions above.

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

Centre actions:

- Examinations Officer to maintain a short list of suitable candidates.
- Exams Officer to ensure that a few members of school staff are fully trained and up to date so that they can be called upon in an emergency
- Examinations Officer to review training procedures regularly and put in place additional training as required.
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Exams Day Contingency Plan is in place (Appendix 1)
- Examinations Officer to ensure a specific Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place (Appendix 2)
- Examinations Officer to ensure an Incident Log is in place (Appendix 3)

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

Centre actions:

- Pre-planning at all stages is essential.
- Head of Centre and Examinations Officer to continually review all stages of the process.
- Sports Hall to be first option as alternative venue for emergency accommodation.
- Emergency Evacuation plan should be in place (Appendix 2)

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
- Cyber-security attack affecting any part of the exam cycle

Centre actions:

- Head of Centre and Examinations Officer to contact in-house IT department.
- Examinations Officer to contact all Examination Boards (see Appendix 1 for telephone numbers) for alternative route for dissemination of results.
- Refer to IT Critical Incident plan

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

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.
- Alternative venues to be prioritised for students with imminent exams.
- Examinations Officer to advise the Examination Boards as appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances advise candidates they may need to sit exams in the next available series.

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

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
- Centre to liaise with Exam Boards to sit exams at a different venue in extremis.
- Should a significant number of candidates need to be isolated due to sickness, use the Sports Hall and request a member of the Site/Cleaning Staff to be on hand.
- If a small number (<10) are affected, isolate students in separate classroom with separate invigilation.
- Apply for Special Consideration for those affected to the appropriate Exam Boards.

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre closed

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- 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 (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal)
- 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, including students potentially sitting the examination at another of our Trust sites
- 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

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

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
- Arrange with Exam Boards for alternative means of receiving papers either electronically or alternative courier.
- Examinations Officer to ensure papers are kept securely until needed.

Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- The centre to communicate with relevant Exam Boards at the outset to resolve the issue.
- The Examinations Officer must contact Parcelforce (Yellow Label Service Provider)
- Alternative transport should only be used with the agreement of the relevant Exam Boards.
- Scripts must be stored securely until such time transport is confirmed.

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

Centre actions:

- 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.
- The Exam Boards may generate candidate marks for the affected assessments based on other evidence, as defined by the Exam Boards and the regulators.
- It may be necessary for the candidates to retake the assessment at the next available opportunity.

Centre 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

Centre actions:

- Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.
- Arrange to access results at an alternative site.
- Inform staff, students and parents as soon as possible of the change in distribution of results.

3. 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>

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>

4. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust and where materially amended is consulted on, where necessary. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix 1

Exams Day Contingency plan

Exam Item	Location/ Holders Name	Responsibility
Keys to Secure Storage for exam papers and exam stationery	In Small Exams Safe – in Exams Office Second set of keys placed in School safe during exam period (TKASA)	Data Manager (PCSA) A Lead Invigilator (Worle) Data Manager & Asst. Principal (TKASA)
Exams Office – Centre Timetable	Alarm code needed for Entry (Worle) Timetable widely published Exam timetable available on School website plus copy on back of door in secure room and in Exam Office (TKASA)	Invigilators (SM)
Covering for Exams Officer	Red Exams Office folder on bottom shelf of bookcase Material accessible in Exam office	Data Manager (PCSA) Data Manager & Lead Invigilators with support from Asst Principal overseeing Exams (TKASA)
Seating plans & Exam Registers	In wallets on exam desk (PCSA) In blue trays (Worle) In daily wallets in Exam Office in date order (TKASA)	Invigilators
Exam cards / setting out of exam rooms / notices etc	In wallets on exam desk (PCSA) In trays / Drawers under the walkie talkies (Worle) Exam cards In daily wallets in Exam Office (TKASA) All signs and notices on Exam trolley in secure store	Set up by invigilators
Invigilators	AS will have organised on the rota booklet. SP will have organised on the pink sheets. FM will have organised on a google sheet and share with Invigilators and LT also (TKASA)	
Access Arrangements (incl. Cover sheets)	Notification on exam registers	Invigilators

	Identified in on seating plans, list of AAs in each room's folders also (TKASA)	
Script envelopes / Examiner address labels	In filing cabinet in stationery cupboard (PCSA) In Blue trays (Worle) Script Envelopes on Exam Trolley. Labels will placed daily folders for week ahead. Any further ahead they will be in folder in date order on shelf in Exam or office (TKASA)	Invigilators
Exam clashes	In wallets on exam desk (PCSA) Resolution notice on desk Details will be on a spreadsheet in the generic Exam Folder in Exam Office. Also detailed in the daily folder (TKASA)	Invigilators
Collection of scripts	Invigilators	Lead Invigilators
Collation of scripts	Invigilators Checked off on official attendance registers Official attendance sheets completed before posting Script packages to be stored in Secure room until driver arrives (TKASA)	Invigilators TH / NC Lead Invigilators WS/MN/BG to oversee (TKSASA) KM/ER/PJ next in line
Completion of Parcelforce Collection Sheets	Folder on bottom of shelf of book case (PCSA) Clip board on Filing Cabinet Copies of Collection sheets in folder with Attendance Registers in Exam Office (TKASA)	Invigilators TH / NC Lead Invigilators WS/MN/BG to oversee (TKSASA) KM/ER/PJ next in line
Awarding Bodies Tel no: WJEC AQA OCR Pearson	02920 265 000 0800 197 7162 01223 553 998 08444 632 535 01223 553 554	

Appendix 2

Policy for Severe Disruption/Evacuation during External Examinations

Possible Causes

- Unreasonable noise disruption
- Fire/Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

Unreasonable noise disruption

In the event of a severe disruption in an externally set examination, invigilators are advised to stop the examination, tell the candidates to close their answer books, make a note of the time and summon help (Exams Officer/Leadership Team) to sort out the problem. Exam room conditions must be maintained.

When the disruption has been resolved the candidates can resume their examination and the time taken to resolve the issue added on at the end of the examinations. The candidates must be supervised at all times and thus the break in the examination can be regarded as 'a supervised rest break'.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted. The Exams Officer to make Examining Bodies aware of the disruption if necessary.

Fire/Bomb/Flood Alert during an Examination

In the event of a fire alarm or bomb alert sounding (or any other emergency situation arising) during an examination, the first priority of the invigilators is to preserve life. The next priority is to ensure the security of the examination.

If the emergency is over quickly, the candidates should resume the examination. A careful note of the time of resumption must be noted and the full time allocated for the examination given to complete the examination, ignoring the interruption.

An incident log (Appendix 3) must be completed with the times of the disruptions noted. and a special consideration form will be filled in so as not to disadvantage the candidates.

Procedure for Emergency Evacuation from an Examination

If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the lead invigilator should then stop the examination taking a note of the time and evacuate the building by row and in silence. The candidates must leave all examination papers, scripts and writing equipment behind, and in accordance with the school emergency evacuation procedures. The candidates should remain supervised and in silence throughout the emergency. Several other members of staff will be needed to help police this.

In the event of emergency requiring candidates to evacuate buildings during an examination, the following area should be used but the candidates must be kept at a distance and in silence from the main body of pupils.

WCSA - Huts and field to the side of SRB centre

PCSA – Tennis Courts at the back of the school

TKASA – Whole year group exams to their usual muster point at the rear of F block, registered by tutor team and monitored by invigilating staff. Part year group exams to the front of A block by 1610 parking spaces, key pastoral staff to assist in registration.

Invigilators should refer to the plan in the invigilators box as to correct route to the site.

At all times invigilators must act in accordance with section 16 of the 'Instructions for conducting examination' booklet. They should also summon assistance immediately an emergency arises. Silence should be maintained during the time the candidates are outside the examination room.

Section 16 of 'Instructions for conducting examination' booklet states:

The invigilator must take the following action in an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert.

- Stop the candidates from writing.
- Collect the attendance register and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination. Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination.
- Make a full report of the incident and the action taken (Appendix 3), and send to the relevant awarding body.

Appendix 3

Exam Room Incident Log

Date:

Time:

Examination:

Venue:

Exam	Start	Finish

Invigilator(s):

Name	Time in	Time out

Record of incident:

Time	Incident

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