



TRUST IN LEARNING (ACADEMIES)

EXAMINATION CONTINGENCY PLAN

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Approval By: Directors	Lead: Director of School Improvement	Review date: January 2026
As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.		



History of Policy Changes:

Date	Page	Change	Reason for Change
April 2025		New policy	New over-arching policy for the Trust

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1. Statement of Intent

At Trust in Learning (Academies), we are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of integrity and fairness in all examinations and assessments. Our commitment is reflected in our proactive approach to planning for all potential contingencies that may arise during the conduct of examinations.

We recognize the importance of anticipating and identifying potential risks and issues that could disrupt the examination and assessment process within our schools. This includes a wide range of unforeseen events such as natural disasters, technical failures, staff shortages, and security breaches. By diligently examining these possibilities, we aim to be fully prepared to address any challenges that may occur.

To ensure readiness, we have developed comprehensive strategies that clearly outline the actions and procedures to be implemented in the event of a disruption. These strategies are designed to mitigate any negative impacts on the examination process, thereby safeguarding the interests of our candidates and maintaining the credibility of our assessments.

Our plan includes detailed guidelines for maintaining examination conduct standards, ensuring confidentiality and security, and providing timely communication to all stakeholders involved. This ensures that examinations are conducted smoothly and in accordance with JCQ guidelines, even when faced with challenges.

We also commit to a process of continuous improvement and review, regularly updating our contingency plans to reflect new risks and incorporate feedback from previous experiences. This ensures that our plans remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving landscape of examination and assessment challenges.

2. Values and Principles

This Trust Policy is set out with the following principles at its core:

Trust in Learning Academies is a family of schools each with a distinctive identity, collaborating to strengthen and support each other. We deliver high quality education with evidence-informed approaches to teaching, learning and the curriculum. Inclusion is at the heart of all we do. We actively listen to the voices of our pupils, staff and communities. Every school makes deliberate choices to be sustainable and globally focused.

The Trust vision is to:

- Inspire pupils to trust in learning and achieve their full potential
- To empower pupils to have confidence in their successes to make a positive contribution to the world
- To remove barriers to learning and help transform the lives of our pupils

Any data collected, stored or managed as a result of this policy is in accordance with UK and any relevant retained or assimilated EU law, and in line with the Trust's ethos and values.

This Policy has been framed in accordance with the guidance on best practice from the Department for Education (DfE).

3. Objectives and Scope

3.1 Objectives

The Examination Contingency Plan aims to:

1. Define Examination Contingencies

Establish a clear understanding of examination contingencies.

2. Prevent Examination Disruptions

Implement robust policies, provide thorough training, and ensure effective communication of expectations to prevent examination disruptions.

3. Ensure a Transparent Investigation Process

Guarantee a transparent and fair investigation process for all reported instances of examination disruptions, in compliance with JCQ's guidelines.

4. Maintain Examination Integrity

Protect the integrity of qualifications by maintaining robust security, confidentiality, and examination conduct standards.

5. Develop Response Strategies

Prepare response strategies for various potential examination disruptions, ensuring minimal impact on the examination process.

6. Establish clear communication

Ensure there are clear channels with all stakeholders, including candidates, staff, and examination authorities, to ensure timely and effective responses to any contingencies.

3.2 Scope

This plan applies to:

- **Candidates:** Disruption could engender potential issues such as cheating, plagiarism, or possession of unauthorized materials. Clearly, candidates must not be disadvantaged by disrupted assessments
- **Staff:** The role of staff is crucial to maintaining the integrity and smooth operation of the examination process. This section emphasizes the importance of strict adherence to protocols to prevent negative impacts of any disruption

Integration with Other Policies

This plan works in conjunction with the following policies to ensure a comprehensive approach:

- **Safeguarding Policy:** Protects pupils from undue stress ensuring a safe examination environment for all candidates
- **Behaviour Policy:** Reinforces conduct expectations during examinations, promoting a fair and respectful atmosphere
- **Data Protection Policy:** Ensures the confidentiality and security of examination materials and records, adhering to data protection standards

For more information on JCQ regulations, refer to JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.

4. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Trust central team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed

4.2 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- To oversee the consistent implementation of the Examination Contingencies Policy, ensuring that all staff adhere to procedures for exam disruptions, alternative arrangements, and candidate support across all departments
- To regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of contingency systems (e.g. alternative venues, invigilation cover, IT backup), track the allocation of resources, and assess the outcomes of implemented actions following any examination disruption
- To coordinate the dissemination of the policy to all relevant staff through briefings, training, and written guidance, ensuring clarity on individual roles in executing contingency procedures during exams
- To investigate and respond to complaints from students, parents, or staff regarding examination contingency measures, ensuring resolution in line with the policy and escalation protocols where necessary

4.3 Responsibilities of school leaders

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance
- To hold sessions for staff and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood

4.4 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive
- To feed back to school leaders where concerns may arise in the implementation of the policy

4.5 Responsibilities of parents

- To support the implementation of the policy with the child
- Where a parent has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school

4.6 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council, to school staff

5. Policy

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Trust in Learning 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.

This plan confirms Trust in Learning schools' compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3)**, ensuring a written examination contingency plan is in place for each centre. This allows members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in an emergency or where the head of centre, exams officer, or SENDCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle.

5.1 Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), TiLA's schools must have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan must cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders must have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENDCo (or equivalent role), examinations manager or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. These are listed by each school in the version of this policy on their website. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.

Our schools must have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results-related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Our schools must ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

5.2 National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre in each TiLA school will ensure that they respond to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

5.3 Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the head of centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

6. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

6.1. Exams Manager Extended Absence at a Critical Stage

- Key planning, entries, pre-exams, exam-time, and post-results tasks not undertaken
- Trust in Learning schools' senior leadership teams (SLT), and administration staff will ensure tasks are completed
- Awarding bodies will be contacted for advice if necessary

6.2. SENDCo Extended Absence at a Critical Stage

- Identification and assessment of candidates for access arrangements delayed

- Exam staff will collaborate with the pastoral team and SLT to ensure applications are processed
- External professionals may be engaged where required

6.3. Teaching Staff Extended Absence at a Critical Stage

- Failure to provide entry information, internal assessments, or coursework marks
- Exams manager to liaise with heads of department and SLT to meet deadlines
- Awarding bodies will be consulted if needed

6.4. Invigilator Shortages or Absences

- Insufficient invigilators recruited or trained
- SLT and school staff will be prepared to step in if required
- Recruitment and training to be reviewed at the start of each academic year

6.5. Exam Rooms Unavailable at Short Notice

- Alternative venues within Trust in Learning schools will be identified
- SLT and exams staff will ensure security and continuity of the exam process

6.6. Cyber-Attack

- Immediate action taken by the network team in consultation with the SLT
- Awarding bodies, the Department for Education (DfE), and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) will be contacted
- Daily backups of critical exam data are stored securely offline

6.7. IT Systems Failure

- Alternative devices and sites will be used to submit entries or access results
- Exams manager will liaise with awarding bodies to minimize disruption

6.8. Emergency Evacuation or Lockdown During an Exam

- JCQ guidelines will be followed, and awarding bodies notified immediately
- SLT and exams manager to assess and implement alternative arrangements

6.9. Extended Closure of the School Before Exams

- Remote learning will be provided to ensure continuity of exam preparation
- SLT will coordinate with awarding bodies if any adjustments are needed

6.10. Candidates Unable to Attend Exams

- Alternative arrangements will be discussed with awarding bodies
- Special consideration applications will be made where appropriate

6.11. Centre Unable to Open During the Exam Period

- Alternative venues within Trust in Learning schools will be arranged
- Awarding bodies will be informed, and JCQ alternative site procedures followed

6.12. Disruption in the Distribution of Exam Papers

- Secure electronic access to papers will be arranged where possible
- Awarding bodies will be contacted for further instructions

6.13. Disruption to Transporting Completed Scripts

- Alternative dispatch options will be identified in line with JCQ guidelines
- Secure storage of scripts will be ensured until collection

6.14. Assessment Evidence Not Available for Marking

- Awarding bodies will be notified immediately
- Steps will be taken to provide alternative evidence if required

6.15. Centre Unable to Distribute Results or Facilitate Post-Results Services

- Alternative site arrangements will be made within Trust in Learning schools
- Digital distribution methods will be considered
- Awarding bodies will be informed of any necessary changes

Further Guidance and Compliance:

- **Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>

- **JCQ Notice to Centres on Exam Contingency Plans** for maintaining consistency.

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Notice-to-Centres_Exam_contingency_plan_2324_FINAL.pdf

- **Emergency Planning and Response for Education Settings** for handling disruptions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings#exam-and-assessment-disruption>

- **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Support** for mitigating cyber threats.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>

This plan will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Addendum

School-specific sites and venues, if needed:

Please add