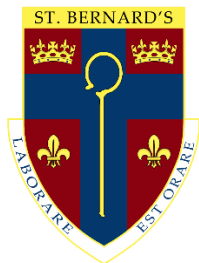


Exams Contingency Policy

Policy Group	Exam Policies
Policy Produced By	L Hamilton
Date Policy Produced	April 2025
Date SLT Agreed	
Date Governors Approved	
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2025
Linked or Related Policies	NEA Policy / Internal Appeals Policy / Special Consideration Policy/ Malpractice Policy
Named Persons in this policy	D Vince, L Hamilton, D Robson, R Peacock, Kevin Gill, C Woodend

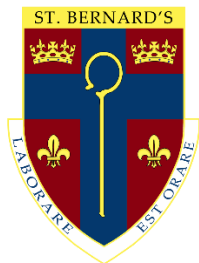


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Purpose of the Policy/Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the examination/assessment process at St Bernard's Catholic High School. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam processes.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted*, the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms St Bernard's Catholic High School's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually:

- a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), St Bernard's Catholic High School **must** have an up to date written contingency plan.

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

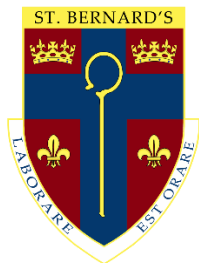
The plan covers the following scenarios:

- the head of centre (D Vince, Headteacher), relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration (L Hamilton, Assistant Headteacher), SENCo (or equivalent role) (K Pharoah, SENCo), examinations officer (D Robson) 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 identifies an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address.

St Bernard's Catholic High School has 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. Two contacts, D Vince and L Hamilton, have been provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

St Bernard's Catholic High School 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 are implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.



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National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that St Bernard's Catholic High School responds 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.

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

Where the head of centre may 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.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at critical stage in 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 and trained

Entries

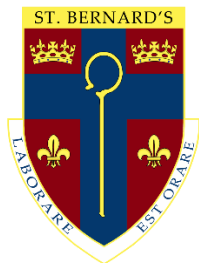
- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams

- 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
- 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



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Results and post-results

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

Centre actions:

- R Peacock (Office Manager) will cover a role/task with support from D Vince and L Hamilton
- Additional administrative time will be secured to provide additional support, if/as necessary.
- Awarding bodies will be informed if there are any risks of delays to administration.

2. SENCo extended absence at critical stage of 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
- 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-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 providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

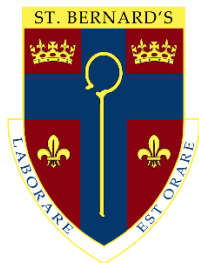
- C Woodend to work with two HLTA to ensure roles/tasks are covered.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at critical stage 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
- Non-examination assessment tasks (including controlled assessment and coursework) not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled



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- 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 submission deadlines

Centre actions:

- Subject leader/remaining department staff and D Vince will ensure deadlines are met.
- Subject leader to notify candidates of NEA marks.
- Exams officer to report to exam board if there is danger of submission deadline not being met.

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

Centre actions:

- Where availability allows, Exams Officer to build absence cover into invigilators allocated to exams.
- Cover Supervisors and administrative staff to receive updated exam invigilator training so they can cover absence if available
- Source and utilise agency staff
- SLT to invigilate

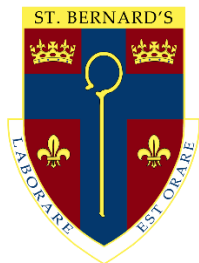
5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

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:

- Where possible, make use of other available rooms in the school, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned. Possible alternative rooms:
 - The Sports Barn can be used at late notice if required; K Gill to arrange set up if required in the same manner as the school hall.
 - Other possible locations include:
 - School library
 - K1 and K2 are both prepared as additional exam venues in case of emergency.
 - K7 will be used if N14 is unavailable for any reason.
- If use of other available rooms in the school is not possible, identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body. Where



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possible, move to alternative venue at Chetwynde School, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned, and:

- Communicate with candidates, and where appropriate/necessary with parents/carers, any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam/assessment timetable/venue
- Ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- Consider whether any candidate's ability to take the exam/assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.

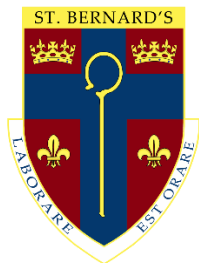
6. Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions:

- Arbor is a cloud based MIS so in the event of a cyber-attack it will still be possible to access the MIS via computers which are unaffected by the attack. We have a number of machines and an alternative method of accessing the Internet that we could use in this eventuality.
- Computers unaffected by the attack can also be used to access all online awarding body platforms. We have a number of machines and an alternative method of accessing the Internet that we could use in this eventuality.
- Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by (GR 3.21):
 - Providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret: We periodically remind staff of their responsibilities in this regard and have guidance in place for staff to follow. This document is reviewed often and is easily accessible by staff.
 - Providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts: We periodically remind staff of their responsibilities in this regard and have guidance in place for staff to follow. This document is reviewed often and is easily accessible by staff.
 - Enabling additional security settings wherever possible: We use a firewall/webfilter to secure our Internet connection. Portable devices are encrypted. MFA/2FA is used on sensitive data e.g. CPOMS
 - Updating any passwords that may have been exposed: We update exposed passwords as we become aware of them.
 - Setting up secure account recovery options: We use one or more of the following: email, text, phone call, recovery codes.
 - Reviewing and managing connected applications: We periodically check connected applications as to their continued relevance, suitability and security.
 - Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required: Where access is no longer required, we remove unneeded permissions, change the account password and archive old accounts.
 - Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on



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cyber security: This is done on an ongoing basis. The guidance is reviewed regularly to check for additions or changes.

- Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements: Several devices of this type are available for use.
- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body: Should this happen, ideally this would be done in the first instance via telephone.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Centre actions:

- Passwords are managed in accordance with our policy and two factor authentication is in place where appropriate.
- Candidates' electronic work is backed up regularly and stored securely on the school's IT system.
- Entries will be made two weeks in advance of the deadline to account for any possible issues.
- Exam seating plans can be downloaded to the network and pre-printed prior to examinations.
- Digital clocks are available to use should the digital screens be out of use.
- MIS failure at results release time will be managed by informing candidates of a delay to the release of examination results.
- Contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly and follow its instructions, for example to arrange alternative methods of information exchange, or to share facilities with another centre, if this is possible.

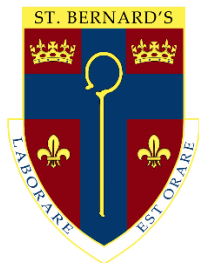
8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions:

- Follow procedures for emergency evacuation, as outlined in JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- 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
- Consider whether any candidate's ability to take the exam/assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration



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

Centre actions:

- Contingency plan to facilitate alternative methods of learning (see Remote Learning Policy)
- Communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential disruption to teaching time and plans to address this, including provision of appropriate work via Google classroom.
- Communicate to parents that this is not grounds for special consideration.

10. Candidates unable to take examinations – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

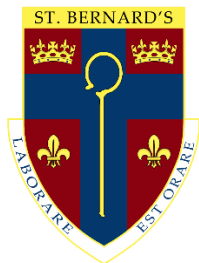
- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions:

- Focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations.
- Consider moving the start time of the examination for all candidates (section 6.2 of JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*).
- Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (section 21 of JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*).
- Consider example scenarios below, as appropriate.
- Contact the relevant awarding body if additional support or guidance is required.

Scenario A if multiple candidates are unable to attend:

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. 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.
3. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
4. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
5. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.
6. 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.
7. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.



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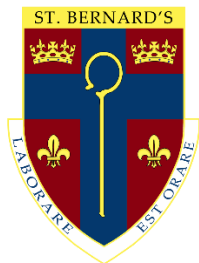
8. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
9. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions.
10. Take advice from the awarding body regarding options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

Scenario B if a single candidate is unable to attend:

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation to apply for special consideration for this candidate.
2. In summer 2025 the candidate must have sat a minimum of 15% of the exam series in order to be awarded a grade.
3. Evidence required for the submission of special consideration will be collected by the relevant pastoral leader and passed to the Exams Officer.

Scenario C if the exam room has to be evacuated:

- Follow procedures for emergency evacuation, as outlined in JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*:
 1. Stop the candidates from writing.
 2. Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present).
 3. Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
 4. Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet.
 5. Ensure candidates leave the room in silence.
 6. Ensure that 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. Candidates will be supervised on the school field spaced apart by 1m minimum distance. In the case of bad weather they will be supervised in the school canteen.
 7. Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
 8. Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination once it resumes.
 9. 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.
 10. Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send it to the relevant awarding body.
- Any breach of question paper security or malpractice must be reported to the awarding body immediately.
- As each incident will be different, advice can be sought from the relevant awarding body as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Consider whether any candidate's ability to take the exam/assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.



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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for exams owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Centre actions:

- Using advice/following instructions from relevant local or national agencies, D Vince to make decision on whether it is safe for the centre to open
- Inform relevant awarding body of examinations to be affected and follow their guidance, focusing on options that enable candidates to take their examinations, for example:
 - Consider moving the start time of the examination for all candidates (section 6.2 of JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*).
 - Using an alternative venue, Chetwynde School.
- If all other avenues have been exhausted, and candidates meet the published criteria, apply for Special Consideration.

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

Centre actions:

- Communicate with awarding body to organise alternative delivery of papers, eg via awarding body electronic access via a secure external network
- Ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions
- Follow guidance from 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 to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

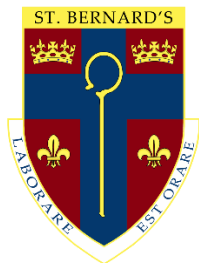
13. Delay in collection arrangements of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions
- For examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, the centre should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations
- Ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible



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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

Centre actions:

- Immediate communication to be made with relevant awarding organisation to determine if marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisation
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisation, candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series
- Students, parents and carers to be informed by letter.

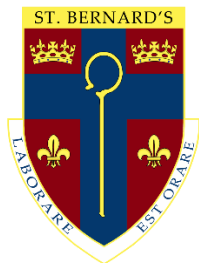
15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

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 (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Centre actions:

- Contact relevant awarding body and discuss alternative means of distribution.
- In agreement with awarding body, make arrangements for alternative means of distribution (JCQ scenario 11):
 - Distribution of results:
 - Make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
 - Make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
 - Share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
 - Facilitation of post results services:
 - Make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
 - Contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible
 - Awarding organisations to review the post results deadlines



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Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Joint Contingency Plan:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/4-5-1-Joint-Contingency-Plan-April-2019.pdf>

Guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-collecting-evidence-of-student-performance-to-ensure-resilience-in-the-qualifications-system>

JCQ

General regulations: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Instructions for conducting examinations:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

[JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#)

Guidance for centres on cyber security: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

Guidance on alternative site arrangements:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Alternative_site_guidance_notes_2024_FINAL.pdf

A guide to the special consideration process:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Gov.UK

Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings *How educational and childcare settings should plan for and deal with emergencies, including significant public health incidents and severe weather*

<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Dispatch of exam scripts: yellow label service - *Information for exams officers about using the Parcelforce Worldwide yellow label service to dispatch exam scripts for general qualifications*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>

Cyber security training for school staff:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>