



Examinations Contingency

Policy

POLICY LEAD	Adam Nicholson, Vice Principal (QofE)
REVIEWED BY	Adam Nicholson
APPROVED BY	Emma Glover, Exec Principal
DATE OF APPROVAL	September 2022
LAST REVIEWED ON	September 2023
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY	July 2024

Key Staff Involved in the policy:

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	David Boyd
Exams Officer Line Manager (SLT)	Adam Nicholson
Exams Officer	Jane Leonard
SENCO	Lynette Pearcey
Data Manager	Marie Vickers
Digital Support	Martin Butler
AccessArrangements Facilitator(s)	Jane Leonard
Access Arrangement Assessor(s)	Andrew Dawtry (external member of staff)

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1.0 Background

1.1 Who is the Policy for?

The policy has been written for staff within Astrea Academy Sheffield including the Headteacher and those who are responsible for administering examinations.

1.2 The Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure there is an established, consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the delivery to the examination system within Astrea Academy Sheffield.

1.3 The Outcomes of the Policy

The overall outcome of the policy is to ensure that the interests of candidates are safeguarded while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and qualification standards.

There are three specific outcomes the policy seeks to achieve:

- ★ Delivering assessments to published timetables
- ★ Delivering results to published timetables
- ★ Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards

1.4 Qualifications Covered by the Policy

The qualifications covered by the plan are primarily large entry, externally assessed examinations delivered by Astrea Academy Sheffield for its students. These include GCSEs, AS levels, A levels, BTEC and all other approved vocational qualifications.

1.5 When Would the Policy Apply

The policy would apply in the event of a major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidates across the Academy. This could include severe weather, widespread illness, travel disruption, fires, logistical problems or system failures.

Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

1.6 Events Out of the Control of the Centre

If the contingencies set out in this policy do not prove sufficient to tackle the issue, the Headteacher will inform Astrea Academies Trust directors immediately to agree additional actions required.

Where contingencies are out of the control of all Centres, Ofqual will convene an identified crisis management team consisting of representatives of all organisations involved, to agree the additional actions required.

1.7 Reviewing the Policy

The policy was first published in 2022 and is to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, each autumn term, by the Academy Senior Leadership Team. A revised version will then be published to stakeholders as identified in section 4.1 of this policy.

2.0 Communications

The scale of the exams, qualifications and testing system at Astrea Academy Sheffield involves thousands of examinations with hundreds of students each year. It is vital that a system of this size has robust and coordinated contingency plans in place to deal with any major disruption that may affect candidates.

In the event of a major disruption, communication is an important factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the stakeholders involved.

This includes communications between the organisations involved in the response, and communications to stakeholders such as teachers, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

Where specific external contingencies have been agreed across organisations, these will be confirmed on [Ofqual's website](#) and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

Astrea Academy Sheffield is committed to:

- ★ Sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan.
- ★ Communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them, ensuring that any messages are clear and accurate.

In addition, the Department for Education (DfE) are committed to ensuring that relevant government ministers are informed as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

2.1 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those persons identified to whom this policy may impact. These are Examination Candidates, Parents or Guardians, Academy staff involved in administering examinations, the Headteacher, Astrea Academies Trust Directors and all other teachers involved in the affected examinations.

2.2 Communication Methods

Identifying and understanding the methods of communication is critical to ensure all relevant stakeholders take the correct actions required by them and thus implement this policy to its full extent should the need arise.

Given a range of stakeholders communication methods will be different for each.

Stakeholders	Communication methods
Examination candidates	School Website / Text Message to affected
Parents or guardians	School Website / Text Message to affected
Examination Staff	Email / Phone Call / Face to Face
Headteacher	Email / Face to Face
Astrea directors	Email / Phone Call
Other teachers affected	Email

Where communication is face to face or via phone call to ensure decisions are taken swiftly, written confirmation must be made via email as soon as reasonably possible. All communication must be directed by the Headteacher or a member of Senior Staff on behalf of the Headteacher.

2.3 Timing of Communications

In the event of a disruption to planned examinations, communication must be made as soon as is realistically possible. Where possible all affected parties should be notified with at least 24 hours' notice prior to the examination.

3.0 Scenarios

The scenarios are set in sequence, following the way in which an examination would be planned and delivered, from issuing scripts to offering post results services.

Each scenario sets out the following information:

- ★ The type of scenario
- ★ Who the scenario affects
- ★ When to implement the plan
- ★ One example of the scenario
- ★ Recommended actions for various stakeholders to take
- ★ Specific communication – if there is specific communication that should be undertaken with one of the stakeholders
- ★ Success criteria – what a successful resolution of the issue would look like
- ★ Where to get further information and advice

For the purpose of the scenarios, stakeholders include Candidates, Teachers, Centre Staff, Parents, Carers, Awarding Organisation Staff, Courier Staff and Scanning Centre Staff.

Please note that Centre Staff in these scenarios refer to members of staff who are administering examinations and may include Headteachers, Teachers and Administration Staff.

Type of Scenario	Disruption to Centre
Impact on	Teachers, Candidates, Parents, Careers
When to Implement the Plan	In the event that the Academy is closed, and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.
Example of Scenario	Flooding, Fire, Disruption to Utilities, Public Health Outbreak.
Actions required by whom	If disruption to normal teaching or study, student learning to continue remotely via MS Teams led by Charlie Pogson. Distribution of laptops to affected students, prior sting those candidates that are soon to site external examinations. This would be led by Martin Butler and Marie Vickers. If the disruption was to an external examination at a local level alternative local accommodation would be sought. This may

	<p>include our local primary schools (part of the same Trust). Emergency on the day papers would be used if applicable. Exam lists are kept secure and can be accessed remotely.</p> <p>If disruption was to an external examination at a regional / national level guidance would be sought from Local and National Government and would be followed in full.</p> <p>Special circumstance consideration submitted to JCQ if applicable.</p>
Specific Communication	<p>SLT meet immediately to agree actions.</p> <p>Text message sent by Adam Nicholson to affected candidates and parents. Direct communication to Email sent to staff including teachers. Jane Leonard to directly notify exam invigilators.</p> <p>Notification would be hosted on the main page of the website.</p>
Success Criteria	<p>Students would be able to continue their learning as a result of Academy site closure.</p> <p>Candidates would be able to sit all planned external examinations in the event of site closure.</p>

Type of Scenario	Disruption to Candidates
Impact on	Teachers, Candidates.
When to Implement the Plan	<p>In the event;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extended teaching staff absence - Extended SENCO absence - Exams Officer absence - Lack of appropriately trained invigilators
Example of Scenario	<p>Extended illness of teaching staff preparing candidates for external examinations.</p> <p>Ad-hoc absence of key staff during external examination.</p> <p>Extended period of absence due to ill health.</p>
Actions required by whom	Frances Ryall to source and direct long term specialist cover for teaching staff. This may also include a mix of MS Teams to ensure students have access to specialist teaching.

	<p>Succession planning in place to ensure several people on site can administer key responsibilities of both the SENCO and Examination Officer. Trust to provide specialist support from central team and/or another Academy.</p> <p>Multiple internal staff have received invigilator training who would be used in this instance.</p>
Specific Communication	<p>Frances Ryall to provide direction to long term cover / in centre blending learning to mitigate teaching staff absence.</p> <p>Adam Nicholson to direct roles and responsibilities to mitigate to absence of either SENCO and / or Examination Officer.</p>
Success Criteria	<p>Students are not disadvantaged in the event of staff absence.</p>

Type of Scenario	Disruption to Candidates
Impact on	Teachers, Candidates, Parents, Carers.
When to Implement the Plan	In the event students' are unable to attend the Academy due to illness of self-isolation.
Example of Scenario	Covid-19 symptoms / positive test / serious injury
Actions required by whom	Weekly meeting chaired by Adam Nicholson would identify and agree specific actions required to support an individual / group of candidates. Wherever possible candidates would be provided with access to learning appropriate to each specification and progress monitored by each teacher and centrally during the weekly meeting. Where a candidate is unable to access Charlotte Power (SENCO) and Lorraine Yates (DSL) would seek alternative provision arrangements. Where this is not possible the Academy holds a significant amount of assessment information should JCQ require a Teacher Assessed Grade and /or where a special circumstances application be appropriate.
Specific Communication	Candidate provide evidence to Attendance Team of positive Covid-19 test or other relevant medical record of serious injury.

Success Criteria	Students are not disadvantaged in the event of local public health outbreak, long-term illness or serious injury.
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Type of Scenario	Transport or Delivery
Impact on	Candidates
When to Implement the Plan	When scripts do not arrive on time for the examination When scripts are not collected in time for marking
Example of Scenario	Scripts do not arrive as scheduled. Scripts are not collected as scheduled.
Actions required by whom	Jane Leonard to contact relevant examination board to report and take guidance for next steps. Emergency on the day papers could be used if appropriate as full printing facilities available on site. Jane Leonard to contact relevant examination board to report and take guidance and next steps. This may include but not limited to seeking alternative transport or use of electronic means.
Specific Communication	Jane Leonard to contact relevant examination board by telephone / email. Jane Leonard to meet with Head of Centre and Adam Nicholson to agree action.
Success Criteria	Candidates are able to sit all external examinations. Examinations received and marked by examination board within the deadline. Candidates receive examination grades as usual.

Type of Scenario	Marking
Impact on	Candidate
When to Implement the Plan	Large scale destruction of scripts / evidence prior to marking.

Example of Scenario	Fire / Flood at the centre, damage in transit.
Actions required by whom	Jane Leonard and Head of Centre to confirm affected candidates and report to relevant examination boards. Weekly meeting chaired by Adam Nicholson during which grade evidence is reviewed. Therefore, a wide range of evidence would be available should Ofqual / JCQ request a Teacher Assessed Grade or an application for special circumstances need to be applied for.
Specific Communication	Jane Leonard to inform Head of Centre face to face. Jane Leonard to inform relevant examination board and update Head of Centre on advised actions in writing.
Success Criteria	Students are not disadvantaged in the event of damaged scripts / evidence.

Type of Scenario	Issuing Results
Impact on	Candidates
When to Implement the Plan	Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or facilitate post-result services.
Example of Scenario	The site is closed due to Flood / Fire / Public Outbreak.
Actions required by whom	The Academy has invested in electronic method of publishing examination results directly from the Academy MIS to individual candidates. The Head of Centre would initiate this where required.
Specific Communication	Head of Centre to inform staff via email. Adam Nicholson to inform candidates via email and letter on the methods by which they will be receiving their examination results. Adam Nicholson to send results via this service on national results day.
Success Criteria	Candidates receive their results on the national results day(s).

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 Key stakeholders

Key stakeholder refers to all affected parties discussed in this plan. These include but are not limited to:

Astrea Directors
Headteacher
Senior Staff at the Academy
Examination Officer
Invigilation Staff
Teachers
Candidates
Parents
Carers

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the stakeholders identified to execute their responsibility to full effect as set out within this policy.