



AL BASMA BRITISH SCHOOL

Policy: Exam Contingency Plan

Approved/reviewed by	
Governors/Head of Centre	
Date of next review:	September 2024

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
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Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Allison McDonald
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SENCo	Dr Sarika Jubin
SLT member(s)	Mohammad Mudassar, Bart Fowler, Hasib Osmani
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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Al Basma British 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 process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the 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.

This plan also confirms Al Basma British School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2017-2018*) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. 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 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

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, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- ▶ candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ SLT to assume responsibility for the above tasks. SLT have access to Exams Officer Folder on G Drive. Check Annual Plan for any outstanding tasks and complete and update. On day of exam print all documents required for each exam and use the exam day checklist.

2. 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*
- ▶ *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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Senior Teachers & Examinations Officer work with SLT to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required. Assistance of outside agencies/professional may be required.

3. Teaching staff 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

Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled

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 awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer to liaise with other subject staff and/or SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the Examinations Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- ▶ Examinations Officer will provide training to all affected staff members prior to the first exam series.
- ▶ Examinations Officer will be aware of the school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will organise rooming for examinations ensuring sufficient time is available to identify and plan appropriate rooms.
- ▶ Examinations Officer will liaise with site supervisor regarding specific requirements.
- ▶ In the event of a room not being available at very short notice, sufficient staff will be made available to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is found. SLT will work with the Examinations Officer during such emergencies.

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

System failure at final entry deadline

System failure during exams preparation

System failure during Practical exams where computers are necessary

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer in consultation with SLT, will make entries from another venue direct to the Awarding Bodies. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Bodies. At all times during the system failure the Examinations Office will liaise with the Awarding Bodies to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- ▶ Examinations Officer to liaise with IT Administrator to solve the issue
- ▶ Examinations Officer to contact Exam Board if unable to rectify the situation

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

8. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ SLT to manage all such incidents.

9. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action.

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the relevant Awarding Body to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with SLT to take appropriate action ie. find alternative venue, inform students/parents.

11. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will keep record of examination papers received and will contact the Awarding Body in the event of non-receipt of papers, well in advance of the exam day.

12. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements.

13. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

14. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Examinations Officer will contact the Awarding Body to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.

15. Criteria for implementation of the plan – Cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ IT have 3 layers of security and use modern endpoint protection with support from the supplier
- ▶ Isolate any desktops or laptops used for Exam purposes, and provide alternative means of internet access if required
- ▶ Daily checks on backups to maintain the integrity of data, and ensure it can be retrieved to any location

16. Withdrawal of Centre Approval Status and Protection of Learners

Protecting the interests of learners is of paramount importance in the event of the withdrawal of exam centre approval status. Here's how learner interests can be explicitly incorporated into the plan:

Criteria for implementation of the plan

The Centre's Approval Status is Withdrawn by an Examining Body.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Candidate Notification and Support, including alternative examination arrangements for students affected
- ▶ Offer guidance and support to candidates who may face inconvenience due to the centre's withdrawal
- ▶ Emphasise that the withdrawal is primarily to uphold the integrity and fairness of the examination process, which ultimately benefits all candidates.
- ▶ Establish a dedicated communication channel or helpdesk to address candidate inquiries and concerns promptly
- ▶ Establish a clear and fair appeals process that allows candidates to appeal any adverse decisions resulting from the withdrawal.
- ▶ Highlight the commitment to ongoing monitoring and quality assurance measures to prevent similar disruptions in the future, thereby safeguarding the interests of future candidates.
- ▶ Establish a feedback mechanism to collect input from affected candidates and other stakeholders on the withdrawal process, with a focus on improving the overall candidate experience.

By incorporating these measures, the contingency plan not only addresses the procedural aspects of withdrawal but also places a strong emphasis on safeguarding the interests and well-being of the learners, thereby upholding the credibility and fairness of the examination process.

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

1. Contingency planning

You should prepare for possible disruption to exams and other assessments as part of your emergency planning and make sure your staff are aware of these plans.

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps

Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However,

we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted**, sections 1 and 2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>]

JCQ

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, JCQ 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 may be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, page iv]

General regulations for approved centres

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

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Guidance on transferred candidate arrangements

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries>

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

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption

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

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>

Statutory guidance on school closures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>