STM Exams Contingency Plan

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The St Thomas More Mission:

We the St Thomas More family, 'aspire not to have more but be more'.
We aspire not to have the world but be more for the world.
#BeMore

We are **A**uthentic — we seek to find our true vocation and who we really are

We are **S**acred — we are loved and made in the image of God

We are **P**assionate — we strive to grow and be our best selves

We are **I**nspirational — what we do here can help us change the world

We are **R**esilient — for our greatest learning comes when we make mistakes

We are **E**mpathetic — we are called to care for all in our community and the world

STM Exams Contingency Plan

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.
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 at St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual 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' and the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ notice Preparing for disruption to examinations.

This plan details how St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy complies with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3, Centre management) by having 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. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams officer absence at key points in the exam process (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
- 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 of 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
- confidential 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 post-results service

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- SLT to nominate a "deputy" to cover a role or task, liaising with the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher.
- Familiarisation and continuing training of supporting deputy with exam cycle and requirements.
- Source alternative venues / facilities (i.e. Sports Hall, other local schools, businesses, hotels).
- Invigilators contacted regularly to check their availability.

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (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 (facilitators) providing support
- 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 listed above

The centre will:

- SEN support staff and teaching staff to follow a schedule of testing identified candidates and providing evidence of need.
- SENCo to liaise with Exams Officer and Deputy Headteacher regarding access arrangements and room allocation etc.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (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

Other criteria:

- Exams Officer to prompt other department members for the subject(s) in question, to provide the information required
- Laison with Senior Management Team for intervention if necessary

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 listed above

The centre will:

- Ensure that there are adequate numbers of invigilators available for work during any exam season
- Book invigilators well in advance, allowing extra cover for peak times
- Absence on the day of the exam – Exams Officer will contact another member to cover or re-allocate another member of staff
- All TA's and cover staff are conversant with criteria for invigilation

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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

Other criteria:

- Room allocation for access arrangements is planned in advance by liaison with SENCo and Deputy Headteacher.
- Where extra accommodation is required on the day, exams officer will find available rooms and/or request room changes of lessons to accommodate the duration of an exam.
- If main venue becomes unavailable, the School Hall will be used, or in the event of a fire, power cut etc. the Hall and Stage at St Anne's Academy will be used. This primary school is nearby St Thomas More and part of the same MAT.
- Address: St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Lightwood Road, Buxton

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible,

move to alternative venue, prioritising 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 venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Entries are usually made well before deadline but any late additions still outstanding during IT down time can be made via the exam boards' secure website.
- MIS system failure during exam preparation - exam board stationery will be used i.e. attendance register, after liaison with subject head to check for tier changes etc
- MIS system failure at results release time - secure section of exam board websites has result information available. If IT systems are completely down, school should request urgent delivery of paper statement of results by special delivery.

7. 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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)

- 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
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

8. 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

Other criteria:

- No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- The school will use usual methods of communication, including SMS, Email, Arbor, MSTeams and VLE
- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the disruption to teaching time and provide appropriate work via the school online platforms.

9. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Centre will inform awarding organisation(s) of examinations to be affected
- School SLT and Exams Officer will endeavour to arrange alternative accommodation
- Parents, carers and candidates will be informed of the new arrangements
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

10. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- 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

Communication details:

- school will contact via usual channels: Arbor, SMS, Email

- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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 the exam

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the 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 will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

12. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other centre actions:

- No other actions identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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 and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'

- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Other centre actions:

- centre will arrange an alternative courier or deliver scripts to local Post Office for dispatch

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
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforseen emergency) 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 service

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details: St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Lightwood Road, Buxton

- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-result services

Communication details:

- school will contact via usual channels: Arbor, SMS, Email

15. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Cause of disruption

Cyber Attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

- Maintain measures to prevent / minimize the effect of a cyber attack
- Maintain printed document of Exam board contact numbers – so that exam boards may be contacted if required; access to 4G by mobile phone, if required
- Maintain a document of student contact details so that pupils may be contacted by phone, if required
- Maintain a printed copy of all entries and the overall exam timetable to ensure candidates take the correct papers