

St Matthew Academy

CONTINGENCY PLAN

2026/2027
Policy



Date of Approval	Autumn 2026
Review Date	Autumn 2027

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr J Potter
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader with oversight of examinations administration)	Ms V Dunne
Exams officer	Ms G Williams
SENCo	Ms S Williams
Senior leader(s)	Ms J Chick, Ms S Williams, Mr J Young, Mrs I Ige, Mr J Charlery

Purpose of plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process at St Matthew Academy. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our processes.

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', 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 Matthew Academy's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3) that the centre has in place 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 Matthew Academy 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, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer 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. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.

St Matthew Academy **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.

St Matthew Academy **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.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that the centre 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/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

In the event of the absence of the head of centre responsibility for implementing JCQ regulations and requirements relating to examinations and assessments will be escalated to Mr F Magar, Deputy Headteacher.

Where the head of centre/senior leader 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.

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- National centre number registration annual update and head of centre declaration
- Annual update of all policies
- Directs relevant staff to updated JCQ regulations
- Agreement of qualifications delivered
- Authorisation of entries, including any with conflict of interest
- Ensuring adequate staffing
- Ensures arrangements in place to deliver any NEAs
- Ensures all exams conducted in accordance with JCQ regulations
- Delegation of internal appeals
- Decisions relating to post results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The nominated senior leader will seek advice and guidance from Head of Centres at partner schools, the Exams Officer and the Senior Leader with responsibility for examinations, where necessary

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation

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
- 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

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

The nominated members of staff mentioned below shall take over the exams officer's duties until s/he returns.

The **Data Manager** (currently Ms B Crammond) will take over the running and implementation of the entry process for public exams. This includes:

- Liaising with Heads of Subject to ensure intentions to enter and/or estimated entries are submitted to the exam boards
- Liaising with Heads of Subject to establish firm and final entry requirements for each subject
- Downloading the appropriate exam basedata to Bromcom
- Creating and populating marksheets according to the Heads of Subjects' entry requirements
- Checking with Heads of Subject that the information on those marksheets is correct before proceeding with submitting entries (and any subsequent amendments to entries) via A2C to the exam boards.
- Checking on the exam boards' secure websites that the entries have been received and processed

All of the above shall be completed by the appropriate deadlines to avoid unnecessary additional expense to the school.

The **nominated member of SLT** – (currently Ms V Dunne) will take over the day to day running and conduct of public exams. This includes:

- The receiving, logging, checking and secure storage of exam papers as they arrive in school
- Contacting exam boards with queries about exam papers as & when they arise
- Ensuring the rooming, notices and equipment for each exam meets JCQ requirements
- Ensuring that each exam is properly and professionally invigilated
- Starting and finishing each and every public exam wherever possible
- Ensuring the completed exam papers are properly collated and ordered, packaged and labelled ready for posting
- Taking responsibility for any inspection visits from external bodies (e.g. exam boards, JCQ)
- Keeping a record of the hours worked by external exam invigilators, and submitting them monthly to the HR department to ensure their payment
- Completing and filing the exam dispatch log on each day of public exams with the PB number of each package and all the appropriate details of the relevant exam, with the destination postcode
- Ensuring the secure storage of completed exams until they are collected by the appropriate courier
- Ensuring each exam is collected no later than the next working day after the exam takes place

The **SENCo** (currently Ms S Williams) will assume full responsibility for ensuring Access Arrangements (AA) and Special Consideration (SC) procedures are followed.

This includes:

- Making, and keeping up to date applications for Access Arrangements for any students taking public exams, and keeping all relevant documentation up to date
- Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working is collated.
- Modified paper requirements are identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadlines.
- Staff providing support to access arrangements are allocated and trained
- Ensuring the rooming, notices and equipment for each exam meets JCQ requirements for AA candidates
- Ensuring that each exam for AA candidates is properly and professionally invigilated
- Starting and finishing each and every public exam for AA candidates wherever possible
- Taking responsibility for any inspections of AA arrangements by external bodies (e.g. exam boards, JCQ)
- Recognise duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.
- Obtaining any necessary paper evidence (e.g. medical letters) to support applications for Special Considerations for public exam candidates, and making such post-exam applications by the required deadlines

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 (facilitators) 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

The nominated member of staff mentioned below shall take over the SENCo's duties until s/he returns.

- Head of centre will consider engaging a temporary/consultant SENCo
- Current members of staff who have experience of working as SENCo, e.g. Ms J Chick, will take over duties

3. Senior leader with oversight of examination administration absence at a critical stage in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Support for exams officer with planning and conducting exams
- Scheduling of NEA
- Support for invigilators and candidates during exam season

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Mr J Potter, Headteacher will take over responsibilities
- The nominated senior leader will familiarise themselves with JCQ guidance

4. Teaching staff extended absence at a 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- Exams officer to work with senior leaders to determine early/estimated entries
- Exams officer to work with senior leaders determine final entry information
- In the event of non-examination assessment tasks being set, absent teachers line manager should inform the exams officer who should contact the examination board straight away to find what the correct course of action is. This may include extra costs to the centre.

5. 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

Where there is invigilator shortage or absence on peak exam days:

- Unexpected absence of an invigilator (e.g. an invigilator calls in sick), will be covered by another invigilator from the pool wherever possible

- TAs, non-subject teachers and members of support staff will be drafted in to invigilate if required
- For longer term invigilator absence, HR will call the relevant agencies for vetted invigilators
- In extreme circumstances, non-subject senior or middle leaders will act as invigilators
- TAs, support staff and some senior leaders will receive annual invigilator training

6. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues available 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 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of lack of space to conduct examinations:
 - Investigate feasibility of candidates being split into smaller groups and conducting the examination(s) in classrooms
 - Seek advice from awarding body if examination needs to be taken in multiple sittings
- Consider moving examinations to the main hall or drama studio
- If no suitable rooms available on site, consider moving examination(s) to alternative centre, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- Alternative Site Details – within St Benedict Trust Schools
- Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties including invigilators regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable and/or 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

7. Cyber security

Where any incidents may compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Cyber-attack before examination, on screen test or controlled assessment resulting in IT failure
- Cyber-attack during examination, on screen test or controlled assessment resulting in IT failure and loss of work
- Cyber-attack at time of exam entries or download of results
- Cyber-attack at time of uploading non-examination assessment marks and/or samples
- Cyber-attack affecting storage of non-examination assessment materials and/or coursework

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the required arrangements for cyber security)

(GR 3.21) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

- Providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- Providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- Enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- Updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- Setting up secure account recovery options
- Reviewing and managing connected applications
- Monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required

- 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 cyber security
- Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- Reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body

8. 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
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time
- IT failure during controlled assessment or On-screen test
- Power outage immediately prior or during and on-screen test
- Internet failure at key times in the exam cycle

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

(This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work)

(GR 3.19)

- 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. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- Exams officer & data manager to be provided with remote access to allow working off site
- Entries to be made via awarding body secure sites rather than via EDI A2C
- Results to be downloaded directly from awarding body secure sites
- In the case of IT failure during a controlled assessment or On-screen test, pupils will:
 - will be asked to log on to adjacent computers
 - will be moved to another computer room
 - be kept under supervision whilst systems are rebooted
 - be given the appropriate time to finish the exam once the system is up and running again
 - will be compensated for the time lost in switching computers or venues
- Time lost will be recorded by invigilators
- The appropriate awarding body will be informed of any occurrence of this type and special consideration applied for if appropriate

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

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

- The centre's emergency evacuation plan should be followed by all staff, including invigilators

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

10. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

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
- Parents/carers will be informed via email communication
- 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
- in the case of modular courses, consider advising candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series
- prioritise teaching of pupils whose examinations cannot be changed
- deliver lessons on line and virtually
- investigate feasibility of teaching examination pupils at an alternative site
- consider whether any candidates ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

11. Candidates may not be able 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The centre will:

- Focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations*)
- contact relevant awarding organisation(s) for advice
- 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 emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open for examinations only
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue; it may be possible to use rooms/space at our partner schools, Sacred Heart and St Thomas the Apostle College or at Christ the King. If feasible, this would be suggested to JCQ as alternative accommodation 'in extremis'. Sacred Heart, Christ the King and St Thomas the Apostle are recognised exam centres.
- communicate with parents, carers and candidates any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties including invigilators regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable and/or venue
consider whether any candidates ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- contact relevant awarding organisation(s) for advice
- follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open for examinations only (the decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies)
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue; it may be possible to use rooms/space at our partner schools, Sacred Heart and St Thomas the Apostle College or at Christ the King. If feasible, this would be suggested to JCQ as alternative accommodation 'in extremis'. Sacred Heart, Christ the King and St Thomas the Apostle are recognised exam centres.
- communicate with parents, carers and candidates any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties including invigilators regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable and/or venue
- consider whether any candidates ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been affected and, if so, apply for special consideration
- this could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

13. Disruption in the distribution of exam 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

- contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and guidance
- awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network
- Follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should have plans in place to facilitate such an action
- as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to 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

14. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Completed scripts to be signed in by the exams officer and kept in the examination secure facility
- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, the exams officer should 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 organisation
- for examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- Ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible

15. 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

- the exams officer would notify the awarding body immediately for advice and further instructions
- awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations

- where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

16. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services
(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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

- Distribution of results
 - centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
 - centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
 - Make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative venue
 - centre to communicate with candidates and distribute results via Bromcom
 - centre to distribute results by post where required
- Post results service
 - centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
 - centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible
 - centre to make arrangements to facilitate post results service remotely
 - centre to communicate arrangements with candidates and inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services
 - Parents/carers will be informed via email communication