

Examination Contingency Plan



Saffron Valley Collegiate

Last reviewed: November 2020

To be reviewed: November 2021

Mission Statement

The Saffron Valley Collegiate seeks to provide a personalised educational experience that identifies and responds to the circumstances and needs of each individual child or young person. In doing so it enables them to progress academically and become successful learners through the re-engagement of the young person with education.

EQUALITIES STATEMENT:

All who work at the Saffron Valley Collegiate are committed to the celebration of diversity, and the challenging of disadvantage and discrimination, in all of its forms.

These values are explicit to the ethos of the Saffron Valley Collegiate and implicit in all policies and practices.

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed a Joint contingency plan for the examinations system in

case of wide scale disruption as a result of a flu pandemic, adverse weather conditions or other event.

The joint contingency plan is designed to 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.

Examination centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant Examination 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 exam 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.

The Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland may be downloaded from the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

Legal

- To meet the requirements of the Ofqual Joint Contingency Plan
- To meet the requirements of the Joint Qualifications Council (JCQ)
- To meet the requirements of Cambridge Assessment International Education

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Key staff involved in contingency planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Jennifer Adamson
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader)	Astrid Searle

Exams officer	Stephanie Walters
ALS lead/SENCo	Josephine Kennedy and Sally White
Senior leader(s)	HOPs and AHOPS within Saffron Valley Collegiate

Purpose of the Plan:

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at [insert centre name]. 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 **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 in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- This plan also confirms Saffron Valley Collegiate is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2020-21) and Cambridge Handbook (UK) 2020-21 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. 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.

In the event of disruption, the Saffron Valley Collegiate will:

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 your centre is able to open.
3. 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.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination, please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure.
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam:

1. 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.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. 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.

Potential Causes of Disruption to the Exam Process:

Extended Absence of Examinations Officer

Should the Exams Officer be absent for an extended period of time at key points in the exam process (planning, entries, pre-exams, exam time, results and post results) the Finance Officer who has several years of exam officer experience will assume overall responsibility for the management of exams. The Finance Officer should refer to the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) book, and exam officer instructions folder, which is stored on the Exam Officer's desk at KS4 South. The Finance Officer and Head of Centre have keys to the secure storage room located at KS4 South.

Extended Absence of SENCO

Should the SENCO be absent for an extended period of time at key points in the exam process (planning, pre-exams or exam time) the assistant SENCO will undertake the administration and management of the access arrangement process. Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

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

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, the Senior Leadership Team will agree the additional actions required.

Disruption of teaching time- Saffron Valley Collegiate closed for an extended period.

If the Saffron Valley Collegiate is 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. It is the responsibility of the Saffron Valley Collegiate to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.

- In the case of modular courses, candidates should sit the examinations in the next available series.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate should plan to facilitate teaching and learning on site or virtually at any provision within the Saffron Valley Collegiate.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website:

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

Disruption:

If the distribution of examination papers to schools in advance of examinations is disrupted:

- The awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.
- The awarding organisations would provide the Saffron Valley Collegiate with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The Examinations Officer must ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis- school remain open.

If candidates are unable to attend examination to take examinations as normal.

- Saffron Valley Collegiate can liaise with the candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at another provision in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series if available the exams officer will confirm availability with the awarding body.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.
- Jcq guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the Jcq website: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

2. Saffron Valley Collegiate is unable to open as normal during the examination period

If the Saffron Valley Collegiate is unable to open for scheduled examinations it must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the Saffron Valley Collegiate to open lies with the Headteacher. The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open.

- The Saffron Valley Collegiate should open for examinations and examination candidates only if possible.
- Saffron Valley Collegiate should use other provisions in agreement with relevant awarding organisations
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate can apply to awarding organisations for special considerations for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.

Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:

- The Saffron Valley Collegiate will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. The Saffron Valley Collegiate must not make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate must ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Assessment evidence is not available to be marked:

If due to large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked:

- The awarding organisations should generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators.
- The candidates should retake affected assessment as subsequent assessment window.

Disruption to the scanning process- where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking.

If the examination boards scanning process is disrupted, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates:

- The awarding organisations should implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to on-screen marking process.

- The awarding organisations should revert to traditional form of marking.
- The awarding organisations should recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers.

Markers unable to mark examination scripts according to marking schedules.

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates:

- The awarding organisations should re-allocate scripts to available markers
- The awarding organisations to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers and prioritisation of marking to be based on results dates.

Difficulty in meeting planned schedule or unable to issue results.

Inability of awarding organisations (including the case of a single awarding organisation) to either meet planned schedule for issue of results, or to issue results as planned due to a systems failure in consultation with regulators, assess the level of disruption and consider alternative options for issuing results dependent upon the nature of the particular systems failure, the awarding organisations and regulators to liaise with relevant organisations (i.e. local colleges) regarding process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations unable to issue accurate results.

Due to system error/failure or attack on systems means significant numbers of results cannot be validated as accurate or are issued and found to be inaccurate:

- The candidates, college and stakeholders will be informed of any incorrect results.
- The awarding organisations will re-validate results.
- The awarding organisations to re-issue results, via alternative format if necessary.

Saffron Valley Collegiate is unable to distribute results as normal.

If the Saffron Valley Collegiate is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services.

- The Saffron Valley Collegiate will contact the awarding organisations about alternative options.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate will make arrangements to access its results at any of provision within the collegiate.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate will make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from any provision within the collegiate.
- The Saffron Valley Collegiate will share facilities with any provision within the Collegiate where possible.

Summary of Saffron Valley Collegiate responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations.

- HOPS to have individual plans for any disruption to exams as part of Saffron Valley Collegiate's general emergency planning (*Appendix A- Emergency Evacuation Policy (exams)* .
- Preparing candidates for examinations.
- Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations and JCQ.
- Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions.
- Deciding whether the Saffron Valley Collegiate can open for examinations as scheduled and

- informing relevant awarding organisations if the Saffron Valley Collegiate is unable to open.
- Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Contingency day 2020-21

The DfE has directed that examinations be scheduled between 26-28 May 2021 and 7 June – 2 July 2021. The assumption is therefore that there will not be a contingency day in July 2021.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- Guidance for schools Covid-19 from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)
- Responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series from the Department for Education in England
- Public health guidance to support autumn exams from the Department for Education

1.2 General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools from the Department for Education in England
- Procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.
- JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Wider communications

- The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.
- The Department for Education in England, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.
- Awarding organisations will alert the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Central Applications Office (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.
- Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.
- 7. Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments
- The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2020/21 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2020 and summer 2021.
- As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with

regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for exam timetables.

JCQ

15.1 The qualification 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.

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>

15.2 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.

15.3 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.

15.4 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.

15.5 **The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2021.** This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or **significant** local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the **event** of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer **2021**, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and **government departments** to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the **contingency day**. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of this contingency arrangement so that they may take it into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

GOV.UK

- Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings
- Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

- 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>

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

- Procedures for handling bomb threats www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats