Newhouse Academy

Hollingworth Learning Trust

A Hollingworth Learning Trust Academy

EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

(Website version with staff mobile phone numbers removed)

Created:	2021
Last Reviewed:	Autumn Term 2025
SLT Responsibility:	Hannah Gregory Harris – Deputy Headteacher
Version:	4
Review Schedule:	Annually
Date of Next Review:	Autumn Term 2026
Review Body:	Local Governing Board or the Standards Committee
Ratified:	Ratified at a meeting of the Standards Committee on 9th December 2025

VERSION INFORMATION

Version	Reason for Update	Author	Approved by
Nov 2021	Annual review	SFO	
Nov 2022	Annual review	SFO	Standards Committee
Dec 2023	Amends due to staffing changes	SFO	Standards Committee
Nov 2024	Amends due to staffing changes	SFO	Standards Committee – 11/12/2024
Dec 2025	Amends due to staffing changes	SFO	Standards Committee

Contents

- Purpose
- Key Staff and Emergency Contact Information
- Key Information and Locations of Resources
- Forced School Closure – Premises Open
- Forced School Closure – Premises Closed
- Unexpected absence of Exams Manager on an exam day
- Long term absence of Exams Manager
- Absence of SEN Staff at Key Points in the Exam Cycle
- Fire Alarms in Public Examinations
- Failure of IT Systems
- Premises not available on Results Day
- Policy Links

1. Purpose

This policy is designed for use when the normal operation of the public examination process at Newhouse Academy is disrupted.

It is intended to be a guide for use at short notice by staff who may not be familiar with the details of the examination system.

The policy is designed to allow the integrity of the examination system to be preserved and allow the school to continue to function as an exams centre when external factors prevent normal operations.

It is not intended to replace the school's Examination and External Assessment policy, or substitute in any way for JCQ regulations, which must be adhered to at all times.

2. Key Staff and Emergency Contact Information

Exams Manager:	Sally Forster Extension 4123 DDI: 01706 362257 X
Line Manager for Exams:	Hannah Gregory-Harris (Deputy Head) Extension 4105
School Data Manager:	Dawn Hoolickin Extension 4116
Trust Facilities Manager:	Jonathan Lupton jlupton@hltrust.co.uk
School Operations Manager:	Cieran Coupe Extension: 4120
School HR and Operations Co-ordinator	Rebekah Duffy Extension: 4215
Main School:	01706 369436
School PR Manager:	Claire Towers Extension 4117 X
AQA Exams Office Support:	0800 197 7162 eos@aqa.org.uk
Pearson Exams Support:	0344 463 2535 examsofficers@pearson.com
WJEC	0292 026 5077 exams@wjec.co.uk
OCR	01223 553998 (GCSE and A Level) 0247 685 1509 (Vocational qualifications, including Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals and NVQ
Bromcom Support:	020 8290 7177
Parcelforce Exams Support:	0844 561 7998

3. Key Information and Locations of Resources

Sally Forster (EM) is the main key holder for exams. A spare set of exam keys, (to the exams store and the exams safe), are located in the Exams Office (EF04) in a key safe. Dawn Hoolickin, Hannah Gregory-Harris and Cieran Coupe, are aware of its location and code.

Exam stationery, signs and script bags are in the exams store, either in the cupboard or on the invigilator's trolley. Spares are in the exams store cupboard.

Key documentation and forms are located in the drawer of the filing cabinet in the Exams office. This includes:

- Copies of all relevant JCQ documentation
- Despatch Logs
- Receipt Logs
- Invigilator Time Sheets
- Exam Log Sheets
- Seating Plans
- Mark and Attendance lists

Exam Board Information Manuals are on the bookshelf in the Exams office (EF04). These are the source for information regarding deadlines and closing dates for each exam cycle.

Logins and passwords for online exam services are in the passwords spreadsheet stored in the Exams Manager's, (EM), user area. There is also a list of passwords in a sealed envelope in the school safe.

Dawn Hoolickin and Hannah Gregory-Harris have access to secure exam board websites which allows them to carry out the more urgent tasks. Exams are managed using the school MIS, Bromcom.

Dawn Hoolickin has full access to the exam module of this system if required.

Digital copies of documentation, letter templates and working documents are in the Exams Folder on the Shared Staff Google Drive to which IT support and a number of other key staff have access if required.

4. Forced School Closure – Premises Open

Scenario

The school is closed due to adverse weather conditions or some other factor which prevents the attendance of the majority of students on an exam day, but the building is safe and has sufficient, albeit possibly limited, staffing.

Principles

The school will make all possible efforts to ensure that examinations continue as planned.

Candidates will be warned in advance of any exams which may be affected by the weather and that they must make their best efforts to attend school so that exams can begin at their normally scheduled times, even if school is closed to all other students.

All students arriving at any time during the examination session will be allowed to sit the examination, and after consulting with candidates after the examination, the school will apply to the board for special consideration for any candidates whose journey to school was in any way arduous enough to have potentially affected their exam performance.

Plan

The following staff, who live within walking distance of the school, have agreed that they will attend, even if the school is officially closed, in order to act as invigilators and help to conduct the examination:

- Sally Forster (Exams Manager)
- Dawn Bracken, (Deputy SENCO, who will deal with any students with access arrangements)
- Colette Bailey (Teaching Assistant)

It is likely that other staff will also be available and aware that in this scenario any staff available may be drafted in to ensure exams are adequately supervised.

If the Examinations Manager is unable to get to school, a member of senior staff will need to act as Exams Manager, although this scenario is unlikely as if the Exams Manager cannot get into school it is unlikely that any candidates will be able to.

If adverse weather prevents the timely despatch of scripts on the day of the examination, completed scripts will be bagged and sealed as normal and stored in the exams safe until they can be despatched, this to be arranged as soon as proper despatch arrangements can be re-established.

5. Forced School Closure – Premises Closed

Scenario

The school is closed due to fire, damage or external factors which prevent access to the building for students and some/all staff.

Principles

The Exams Manager and Senior Managers will need to determine as quickly as possible whether or not it is possible for the examination to take place, when where and how this might be achieved, and how to communicate this information to staff, parents and candidates as effectively as possible.

Plan

In the first instance, it should be established whether or not part of the school building can be opened safely so that exam papers stored on site can be accessed, and the exam can take place on the school site, even if the normal exam rooms cannot be used. If this proves to be the case, the examination can proceed, although the school may be closed to other students.

If it is not possible to access the site, it will need to be determined if an alternative venue is available for the examinations to take place. Suitable venues would include:

- Holy Family School
- Church Halls and similar buildings in the local area
- Local Authority buildings in the local area
- Other Hollingworth Trust Premises

Senior Managers will need to consult with the local authority and the relevant exam boards to seek guidance about possible options.

The key issue in this scenario is to ensure that communications between the school, candidates and parents is as clear and accurate as possible, and that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure relevant communications channels are used effectively and in a timely manner. This is likely to include:

- Providing information and advice on the school website
- Keeping parents informed by sending text messages
- Use of social media such as the academy's official Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Use of local media such as radio stations to disseminate information

These information streams can be managed from computers outside school by the school's PR Manager and IT staff. They do not require the use of school systems to function.

6. Unexpected absence of Exams Manager on an exam day

Scenario

The Exams Manager is unexpectedly absent on the day of a scheduled public examination.

Principles

There are a number of staff in school and a number of external invigilators who are fully trained in running an exam session and ensure that all administrative tasks are completed in line with JCQ regulations. In the absence of the Exams Manager, these staff would undertake the duties normally carried out by the Exams Manager.

Plan

At the beginning of each exam season, the Exams Manager will brief Dawn Hoolickin and Hannah Gregory-Harris regarding the upcoming examinations, make them aware of any special issues or arrangements that may apply and provide them with copies of the detailed exam timetable which includes supervision arrangements and rooming information.

If the Exams Manager is unable to attend the school on an exam day, she will inform the school as early as possible on the day of absence in accordance with school staff absence policy. Hannah Gregory-Harris as the Line Manager for Exams will then need to co-ordinate arrangements for the day, bearing in mind the size of the examinations taking place and the number and experience of the staff available on the day.

In the first instance, Dawn Hoolickin, or a nominated Lead Invigilator will ensure that all papers are delivered to exam rooms, brief any external invigilators, ensure that papers are collated, bagged and despatched at the end of the session(s).

The primary focus will be to ensure that the exam is administered correctly and that scripts are despatched correctly. Any issues arising from the exams, such as Special Consideration applications, should be referred to Hannah Gregory-Harris or if they are not time critical, deferred until the return of the Exams Manager.

Should there be a disruption to the collection of exam scripts, they will be stored in the Secure Exams Store until clarification from the relevant awarding body is received and instructions given regarding despatch.

7. Long term absence of Exams Manager

Scenario

The Exams Manager is absent for an extended period or leaves the school suddenly at a key point in the exams cycle.

Principles

The school will need to identify the key risk factors arising as a result of the absence, which will depend on the time of year the absence occurs, (see below) and ensure that these are mitigated as quickly as possible. The key requirements being to ensure that deadlines are not missed and planning for upcoming exam related events is maintained.

Key Risk Factors:

Entries (Jan/Feb)

Entries for summer exams must be made before mid-February otherwise penalty fees will be incurred. There is a risk that inexperienced staff may not be in a position to check that entries are complete and accurate. Incomplete entries carry the risk that candidates may not be able to certificate correctly in the summer.

Plan

In this situation, Dawn Hoolickin, will complete and send entries, and ensure that entries are checked by subject leaders to ensure that all certification requirements have been met.

Pre-Exam Planning (Feb/March)

Exams must be roomed, seating plans completed and invigilators booked so that individual student timetables can be produced as early as possible once entries are completed. Lack of planning may result in candidates receiving incomplete or inaccurate information, insufficient staff being available for supervision and unnecessary disruption to school routines to accommodate last minute changes

Plan

Dawn Hoolickin can take up this role in an emergency if required and will need to work closely with the Exams Line Manager. Senior Staff will need to ensure that other aspects of the planning are carried out in an appropriate and timely manner. The key issues to be addressed are:

- Disseminating key information to staff and candidates.
- Co-ordination of the use of the Sports Hall and Hall with site staff, PE Dept.
- Ensuring each examination has sufficient invigilators, booking external invigilators and organising an invigilation timetable.
- Ensuring (with the SENCO) that there is adequate provision for Access Arrangement candidates.

Non-Examined Assessment and Legacy Coursework Administration (April/May)

Coursework marks need to be sent by electronic data interchange, (EDI), to boards by early May. Failure to do this may put the award of accurate grades to candidates at risk.

Plan

Hannah Gregory-Harris and Dawn Hoolickin can take on this role to deal with GCSE NEA and Language Exams.

Exam Season (May/June)

Exam materials must be booked in and equipment and resources prepared for exam sessions. Issues relating to Malpractice, Special Consideration and despatch must be dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with JCQ rules. Lack of oversight at this time could result in:

- Incorrect or insufficient papers being received
- Malpractice and Special Consideration applications not being processed correctly
- Maladministration as a result of lack of knowledge by inexperienced staff
- The centre not being adequately prepared for the annual visit of the JCQ Inspector

Plan

Hannah Gregory Harris and Dawn Hoolickin are conversant with the rules regarding booking in of exam papers and organising secure storage and could take on this role and ensure that appropriate numbers of the correct papers have been received. Senior Staff will need to ensure that exam rooms are set up and prepared properly at the start of the season. All external invigilators are familiar with the procedures for completing attendance mark lists and bagging and despatching scripts. Senior Staff will however, need to nominate one of their number to deal with issues arising from Malpractice, Special Consideration and other issues which may arise during the exam season. They may need to seek advice from the relevant exam boards on these matters in the first instance.

Results Day and Post-Results Services (August/Sept)

The download of results data and the dissemination of results to candidates and staff is critical and must be carried out in a very short time-frame in late August. The submission of re-mark requests and any queries arising from results issued must be carried out immediately afterwards. This is also the time of year when a large number of external requests for clarification and information are received from parents, college tutors and candidates.

Plan

As well as the processing of the results, there will be a requirement for administrative support on the day results arrive in school. The school Data Manager, Dawn Hoolickin can assist with the download of results and the preparation of results for students, and a member of senior staff will need to take responsibility for dealing with requests for information regarding results, and for collating and making applications for re-marks.

They may need to seek advice from the relevant exam boards on how to do this.

8. Absence of SEN staff ay Key Points in the Exam Cycle

Scenario

The SEND Team is a key component of the exams administration process as they are responsible for identifying candidates who may need access arrangements, carrying out the necessary testing to support applications, making the applications, and organising the deployment of staff to supervise the access arrangements on exam days.

Principles

The organisation of access arrangements can be broken down into a number of tasks which are carried out by several different staff members. The SENCO, Hilary Lunn, is responsible for overall administration of this area and the assessment and testing of candidates. The organisation of staff and accommodation for access arrangements on exam days is carried out by the Exams Manager.

This means there is scope for tasks to be moved around between individuals if required and sufficient time to appoint replacements, if necessary.

Plan

Assessment and testing is carried out well in advance of any examinations (up to two years) and so in the absence of the SENCO it should be possible for the school to make alternative testing arrangements without this impacting on candidates. In the absence of the EM, the organisation of rooming and deployment of staff would be carried out by the SENCO or their Deputy.

The absence of the SENCO would not impact the exam process directly for some time, however, Senior Staff would need to monitor the situation to ensure for example, that all potential access arrangement students are being assessed and appropriate provision being made.

9. Fire Alarms in Public Examinations

Scenario

The school fire alarm sounds during a public examination.

Principles

Examinations should proceed with the minimal possible disturbance to candidates, consistent with their safety.

Plan

When the fire alarm sounds, the lead invigilator should make an announcement to candidates that they should stop writing and that examination conditions remain in force. The lead invigilator should make a note of the time that the alarm began to sound.

The Exams Manager, or nominated member(s) of senior staff if the Exams Manager is not on site, will move immediately to the exam venue(s) to give further instructions to candidates and Invigilators and supervise the evacuation.

Candidates will be taken from the exam venue and will have to remain under exam conditions. They must not take any bags or other personal items with them. All papers must be left in situ on examination desks. No materials at all must be taken from the exam rooms. The lead invigilator must remove the seating plan and mark and attendance list from the room before securing it.

Candidates will be evacuated through the appropriate fire exits and assembled on the adjacent hard standing if evacuated from the hall, or the area at the front of the main student entrance if evacuated from the Sports Hall or any other exam room. **They must not go to their normal fire assembly points but must remain together as a group.**

The lead invigilator, to the best of their ability, must ensure that all candidates are accounted for and that the candidates do not talk or communicate. The lead invigilator and Exams Manager will check the candidates against the mark and attendance list and seating plans and report any candidates who were present in the exam room but are not at the assembly point to Majella Keenan/Cieran Coupe as soon as possible.

When it is determined that it is safe to return to the building the Invigilators will supervise the return of candidates and once all candidates are seated the exam will re-commence with an allowance of time added at the end to reflect the length of the disturbance. The evacuation will then be reported to the exam board and the relevant Special Consideration requests for the candidates actioned by the Exams Manager. If the examination cannot continue, the Exams Manager will seek advice from the exam board and give instructions to candidates and invigilators as required.

10. Failure of IT Systems

Scenario

Exam planning and preparation is almost entirely computerised and so loss of access to school IT systems could have an impact on the school's ability to manage the exam process.

Principles

The school has a disaster recovery plan designed to deal with a major failure of its IT systems. This plan is primarily designed to preserve data and allow the rebuilding of systems over an extended period. The school also uses a cloud based MIS (Bromcom) and the Google for Education platform, which are accessible over the internet and mitigate the worst issues associated with loss of on-site services or school systems being compromised.

Plan

Administrative tasks relating to exams are carried out using the cloud based MIS or directly on the exam board websites, and do not rely on the IT infrastructure of the school or specific local software. The same is also true of communications systems such as SMS and student and staff e-mail. It is therefore possible to continue to administer the examination process relatively easily using the MIS or exam board websites from any location with a secure internet connection.

In the short term, therefore, the Exams Manager could carry out most necessary tasks from home using a school provided device or could work from the Trust offices or another site within the trust that is not affected by the IT issues.

11. Premises not available on Results Day

Scenario

The school is closed due to fire, damage or external factors which prevent access to the building for students and some/all staff.

Principles

The Exams Manager and Senior Managers will need to determine as quickly as possible whether or not it is possible for Results Day to take place, when, where and how this might be achieved, and how to communicate this information to staff, parents and candidates as effectively as possible.

Plan

In the first instance, it should be established whether or not part of the school building can be opened safely so that results can be accessed. If it is not possible to access the site, it will need to be determined if an alternative venue is available for the results to be downloaded and made ready for students to collect. Suitable venues would include:

- Holy Family School/Hopwood Primary School
- Church Halls and similar buildings in the local area
- Local Authority buildings in the local area
- Other Hollingworth Trust sites or the main Trust offices.

The key issue in this scenario is to ensure that communications between the school, candidates and parents is as clear and accurate as possible, and that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure relevant communications channels are used effectively and in a timely manner. This is likely to include:

- Providing information and advice on the school website
- Keeping parents informed by sending text messages
- Use of social media such as the academy's official Twitter and Facebook accounts
- Use of local media such as radio stations to disseminate information

These information streams can be managed from computers outside school by the school's PR Manager and IT staff. They do not require the use of school systems to function.

12. Policy Links

- Examination and External Assessment Policy