ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Exams Policy with Exam Contingency Plan

Our Mission at St Paul's

Service to each other: learning to become a self-disciplined leader

Teaching that inspires me, that challenges me, that gives me a lifelong love of learning

Partnership at the heart of our school: a partnership between school, home and community

Achievement: learn and achieve beyond my expectations within an internationally-enriched curriculum, using world-class technology, with people who care

Understanding of me as an individual: staff who know me by name and help make my experience of school rich and happy

Love and respect experienced through our vibrant Catholic Christian community

Success: academically, spiritually, morally, socially and beyond the classroom

'Learn to Serve'

St Paul's is a community of faith echoing St Paul's letter to Timothy where,
as hallmarks of Christian living Paul stresses
"love… service and doing the best that is possible."

Reviewed	4/5/22
Approved By	**Teaching & Learning with Staffing & Welfare Committee**
Next Review Date	**Summer Term 2025**

1. Aims and Intentions of the Policy

The purpose of this exams policy is:
- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exams policy will be reviewed annually.

The exams policy will be reviewed by the relevant Governor Committee.

Where references are made to JCQ regulations/guidelines, further details can be found at www.jcq.org.uk.

2. Exam Responsibilities

The Head of Centre / Head teacher
- has overall responsibility for the school as an exams centre and advises on appeals and re-marks
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments*

Exams Officer

- manages the administration of public exams, internal exams and BTEC courses

- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies

- oversees the production and distribution to centre staff and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events

- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them

- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework and controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines

- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries where required

- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams

- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts and ensure that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines

- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration following the regulations in the JCQ publications for *Access arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations*

- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes

- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges

- organises the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- ensures candidates' coursework/controlled assessment marks are submitted and other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies, correctly and on schedule
- tracks, dispatches and stores returned coursework/controlled assessments
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates in consultation with the SLT and forward any appeals/re-mark request results

Deputy Headteacher
- organisation of teaching and learning
- external validation of courses followed at key stage 4 / post-16

Heads of Department
- guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries
- accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Exams Officer
- accurate completion of coursework mark sheets and declaration sheets
- decisions on post-results procedures

Teachers
- supplying information on entries, coursework/controlled assessments as required by the HOD and/or Exams Officer
- submission of candidate names to heads of department / faculty

SENCO
- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Exams Officer in good time so that they are able to process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required)
- working with the Exams Officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in exam rooms
- provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims

Invigilators
- assisting the Exams Officer in the efficient running of exams according to JCQ regulations
- collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam
- collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and ensuring their return to the exams office

Candidates
- understanding coursework/controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework/controlled assessment as their own
- ensuring that their conduct in all exams follows JCQ regulations

3. Qualifications Offered

- The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Senior Leadership Team.

- The statutory tests and qualifications offered are GCSE, iGCSE, A levels and BTEC.

- The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the Exams Office must be informed immediately.

- Informing the Exams Officer of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.

- Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by Deputy Headteacher on consultation with the Head of Department.

4. Exam Seasons and Timetables

4.1 Exam Seasons

- External exams are scheduled in November, January, May and June.

- Internal exams are scheduled in December, January, February, April, June and July.
  All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

- The Senior Leadership Team decides which exam series are used in the centre.

- The centre does offer some assessments on an on-demand basis. If offered, on demand assessments can be scheduled only on a date agreed between the Deputy Headteacher and the Head of Department.

4.2 Timetables

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exams timetables for the internal and external exams before each series begins.

5. Entries, late entries and re-sits

5.1 Entries

- Heads of Departments will provide estimated entry information to the Exams Officer to meet JCQ and awarding Body deadlines.
- Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Heads of Department and the subject teachers.
- Candidates, or parents, cannot request a subject entry, change of level or withdrawal.
- The centre does not act as an exams centre for other organisations.
- The centre does not usually accept entries from external candidates.

5.2 Late entries

- Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email.
- Late entries are authorised by Heads of Department.

Re-sit decisions will be made by Head of Department in consultation with the candidate and the Head of Faculty.

6. Exam fees

- Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

- GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

- AS level initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

- A2/A level initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

- Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments.

- Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

- This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents/carers at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

- Re-sit fees are usually paid by the centre.

- Candidates must pay the fee for an Enquiry about Result or Access to Scripts if they request it.

7. Equality Legislation and Access Arrangements

7.1 Equality Legislation
- All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

- The Centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Business Manager.

7.2 Access Arrangements
- The SENCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

- A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCO.

- Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the SENCO.

- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO and Exams Officer.

- Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer with the SENCO.

- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the SENCO and Exams Officer.

8. Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team.

Contingency Plans are available and are in line with the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and Awarding Bodies. (See Appendix A)

9. Estimated Grades

The Heads of Department are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested by the Exams Officer.

10. Managing Invigilators and Exam Days

10.1 Managing Invigilators

- external invigilators will be used to invigilate both internal and external examinations
- the recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer/Line Manager
- securing the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager
- DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre
- invigilators are trained, briefed and timetabled by the Exams Officer
- invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

10.2 Exam Days

- the exams officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator
- the Premises team are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms
- an invigilator will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted
- in practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties
- exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be available to Heads of Department 24 hours after the published finishing time of the exam

11. Candidates

- The Exams Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each exam series. A formal briefing session for candidates will be given for the summer series. This will be given by the Head of Year.
- The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour applies at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.
- In an exam room candidates must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an exam room.
- Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full exam time at the discretion of the Head of Year.
- Note: candidates who leave an exam room must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times.

- The Exams Officer/Senior Leadership Team is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.
- For exams that last for an hour or less, candidates will not be allowed to leave the exam room until at least one hour after the published starting time or until the published finishing time whatever comes first. They will not be allowed to return.

12. Clash Candidates

The exams officer will be responsible as necessary for identifying escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

13. Special Consideration

- Should a candidate be too ill to sit an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma or be taken ill during the exam itself, it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

- The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within five days of the exam.

- The exams officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within appropriate timescales.

14. Internal Assessment

- It is the duty of Heads of Department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for despatch at the correct time. The exams officer will assist by keeping a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date and time sent.
- Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the Exams Office by the Heads of Department. The Exams Officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure (IAP) document.

15. Results, Enquiries about Results (EARs) and Access to Scripts (ATS)

15.1 Results
- candidates will receive individual results slips on results days in person at the centre - certificates will be posted (first class) later on results day if they have not been collected
- the results slip will be in the form of a centre produced document
- arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Exams Officer
- the provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the SMT and Exams Officer

15.2 Enquiry About Results (EAR)
- all processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer following the JCQ guidance
- the cost of EARs will be paid by the centre or the candidate depending on who has requested it
- EARs may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a re-mark or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-

moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates

- all decisions on whether to make an application for an EAR will be made by Head of Department / Head of Faculty

- EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking

- when the centre does not uphold an EAR, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged

15.3 Access To Scripts (ATS)

- all processing of requests for ATS will be the responsibility of the Exams Officer following the JCQ guidance

- the cost of ATS's will be paid by the centre or the candidate depending on who has requested it

- after the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request a photocopy of a paper

- centre staff or candidates may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained

- re-marks cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned

16. Certificates

- Candidates will receive their certificates in person at the centre.

- Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so and bring suitable photo id with them that confirms who they are.

- Certificates can be posted using a 'signed for' delivery service in exceptional circumstances. A fee is payable for this service.

- A candidate must contact the Awarding Body if they need replacement certificates.

- The centre retains certificates for two years.

Appendix A

Exams Contingency Plan

Contents

Purpose of the Plan

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at St Paul's Catholic College. 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 scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

> The centre agrees to *"have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;"*

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1.   Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- *Planning*
  - annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
  - annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
  - sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- *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*
  - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
  - candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
  - exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
  - internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators
- *Exam time*
  - exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
  - required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
  - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies
- *Results and post-results*

- access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Should the Exams Officer be on extended absence then the Line Manager, with support from, admin staff will complete the tasks.

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
  - 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
  - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
  - staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
  - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- In the event of the SENCo having an extended period of absence the school would follow procedure and ensure (via outside agencies and support) that all the Planning, Pre-Exams and Exam time tasks are completed and conducted appropriately with the oversight by the Senior Leadership Team with the support of the KS3 SENCo.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in:
  - candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
  - late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

Centre actions:

- The Head of Department and Head of Faculty work closely together to ensure that none of the above occur.

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:

- Fortunately several of our Teaching Assistants are also trained invigilators who can be called upon.
- Recruitment of Invigilators is on-going.
- There is a wide pool of invigilators available.

5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions:

- There will always be available rooms

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- The IT manager has systems to ensure that the MIS system is checked and secure and as such the probability of failure is minimal.

7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]

Centre actions:

- The centre site is laid out in such a way that it is unlikely that the whole site will be closed for any period time.

- In the event that this does occur, the school Senior Leadership Team will make the decision as to what year groups will be able to come to school with the facilities available (this will undoubtedly be examination classes).

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. [JCP scenario 2]

Centre actions:

- Candidates will be unable to sit exams and the Exams Officer will communicate with the relevant examination body.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. [JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions:

- An alternative venue would be sought in order for the candidates to still sit their exams.

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions:

- The exam board would be contacted and arrangements for delivery will put in place (by post or via electronic means).

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]

Centre actions:

- We will keep the exam papers in the secure area of the centre and then seek awarding body advice.

12. 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

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]

Centre actions:

- Contact the examination bodies and ensure that procedure is followed, following advice.

13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]

Centre actions:

- Results will be made available to pupils on line, or in the event that a candidate cannot access the results we will post home.

Causes 7-13 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

JCQ

General regulations

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations   Guidance on *alternative site arrangements*

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms   *Instructions for conducting examinations*

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings
https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings
Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide