The Lotus Academy Trust

Supporting children to find opportunities in every difficulty

The Damara School

Specialist SEMH Independent School

Examination Contingency Plan

Approved by: Trust Board	
Initial Ratification: 14 November 2024	**Review: January 2026, October 2026**
Next review due by: October 2027	

Key staff involved in the Contingency Plan

Role	Name
Head of Centre/SENDCO	Mrs Sandra Govender (CEO)
Exams Officer	Mrs Julie Cox
SENDCO in training	Mrs Toni Mahler-Strzelecki

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of exams
- Mitigate the impact of disruptions by providing actions or procedures to follow

2. Legislation and guidance

This plan complies with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) **General Regulations for Approved Centres 2026-2027**, which requires all Exam Centres to have a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy.

This plan also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

It's also based on:

- Ofqual's guidance on contingency planning
- JCQ's joint contingency plan **for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- **JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) 2026-2027**

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Head of Centre

The Head of Centre is Sandra Govender. They will ensure that a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy is in place and covers all aspects of examination administration.

3.2 Staff and invigilators

Our Exams Officer is Mrs J Cox. Staff and invigilators involved in the centre's exam process are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the contingency plan.

4. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Centre every year in the Autumn term. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

5. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Pupil Assessment policy
- Curriculum Policy

6. Contingency plan

The table below sets out examples of scenarios where a contingency plan may be needed to minimise risk to examination administration. These are based on the JCQ's joint contingency plan, and are consistent with Ofqual's current contingency planning guidance.

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre is closed for an extended period	When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning, e.g. if the centre is forced to close due to a public health emergency	• Seek advice from relevant awarding organisations and JCQ • Have a contingency plan to facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both. Alternative venue Athena Education Support (IP24 3DE) • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents and pupils	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal, e.g. sickness bug, or if they are self-isolating due to coronavirus	• Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue • Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. Alternative venue Athena Education Support (IP24 3DE) • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents and pupils • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series • Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements	Head of Centre Exams Officer

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period	In the event that the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, e.g. a fire at the centre, or increasing rates of coronavirus forces it to close	• Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible • Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate › Head of Centre will decide whether the centre is safe to open, based on advice or instructions from relevant local or national agencies › Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. Alternative venue Athena Education Support (IP24 3DE) • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents and pupils • Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations	• Find out from the awarding organisation if they're able to organise an alternative courier and time to deliver hardcopies • If the above isn't possible, you will receive electronic access to papers via a secured external network • You will need to have plans in place to ensure you can receive, make and store papers under secure conditions • As a last resort, your awarding organisation may consider rescheduling the examination	Head of Centre Exams Officer

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts	• If your examinations are part of the national 'yellow label service' or where your awarding organisation arranges collections, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection • Only make alternative arrangements after approval from awarding organisation and make sure papers are securely stored until collection • Ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection • If your centre makes its own transportation arrangements, investigate alternative arrangements that comply with the JCQ's instructions for conducting examinations	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, e.g. a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts	• Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s), candidates and their parents or carers • Where possible, the awarding organisation will generate candidate marks based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement • Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series	Head of Centre Exams Officer

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Centre is unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	In the event that the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services	• Contact awarding organisations about alternative options • Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site • Share facilities with other schools/colleges if possible • Coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site • Contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible	Administrator
Absence of exam officers, teaching staff and/or invigilators	As soon as exam officers, teaching staff and/or invigilators report an absence	• Recruit and train additional invigilators available for any absences • Recruit and train assistant exam officer	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Lack of appropriately trained invigilators	At the start of the academic year	• Recruit and train additional invigilators	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Failure of IT systems	In the event that the centre is experiencing IT issues	• Share facilities with other schools if possible	IT Lead Head of Centre Exams Officer
Lack of appropriate exam rooms	In the event that the centre has registered more candidates than the space allows	• Share facilities with other schools if possible	Head of Centre Exams Officer

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	In the event that the centre is expected to evacuate or lock down e.g. a fire at the centre, or increasing rates of coronavirus forces it to close	• Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible • Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate › Head of Centre will decide whether the centre is safe to open, based on advice or instructions from relevant local or national agencies › Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. Alternative venue Athena Education Support (IP24 3DE) • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents and pupils • Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements • Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible	Head of Centre Exams Officer
Markers unable to mark papers according to schedule	When there is an indication that markers and assessors are unable to meet deadlines	• Appoint 2 markers or assessors per subject. Train both markers or assessors • Communicate any changes to your plans with parents and pupils Share assessors or markers with other schools if possible	Head of Centre Exams Officer

7. Communication

The centre will use the following communication methods, prioritised by urgency:

Method	Use	Typical Response Time

Telephone	Urgent communications requiring immediate action or response	Immediate
Email	Standard communications, detailed information, formal notifications	Within 2 hours during working hours
Text message (SMS)	Urgent alerts to candidates and parents/carers	Immediate
School website	General updates, ongoing situation information	Within 4 hours
Parent portal/app (if applicable)	Updates to parents/carers	Within 4 hours
Letters home	Formal notifications, follow-up to verbal/electronic communications	Within 24-48 hours
Face-to-face	Immediate communication with candidates in centre	Immediate

7.1 Communication Timelines by Scenario

Minor Disruption (e.g., short delay, single candidate issue)

- **Immediate:** Inform affected candidate(s) and invigilators
- **Within 1 hour:** Contact awarding organisation if required
- **Within 4 hours:** Inform parents/carers of affected candidates
- **Within 24 hours:** Document incident and file report

Moderate Disruption (e.g., IT failure, evacuation, small group affected)

- **Immediate:** Inform all affected candidates and staff
- **Within 30 minutes:** Contact awarding organisation
- **Within 2 hours:** Email/text all affected parents/carers
- **Within 4 hours:** Update school website with general information
- **Within 24 hours:** Send formal letter/email to all affected families
- **Within 48 hours:** Report to governing board

Major Disruption (e.g., centre closure, widespread IT failure, examination cancellation)

- **Immediate:** Inform all candidates, staff, and invigilators on site
- **Within 30 minutes:** Contact all relevant awarding organisations and JCQ
- **Within 1 hour:** Text/email all candidates and parents/carers
- **Within 2 hours:** Update school website with detailed information
- **Within 4 hours:** Send formal communication to all families
- **Within 24 hours:** Notify governing board and local authority (if applicable)
- **Ongoing:** Daily updates until situation resolved

8. Emergency Contact Information

Organisation	Contact	Phone	When to Contact
JCQ		0161 419 5494	Major disruption to examinations

AQA (if applicable)		0161 953 1180	Exam paper/script issues
Edexcel/Pearson (if applicable)		0344 576 0025	Exam paper/script issues
OCR (if applicable)		01223 553998	Exam paper/script issues
WJEC		029 2026 5000	Exam paper/script issues