



**THE  
BURGESS HILL  
ACADEMY**

# Exam Contingency Plan

**2024/25**

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the centre. 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 for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations* (Effective 1 September 2023).

This plan also confirms The Burgess Hill Academy's compliance with the JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) 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 where the head of Centre, Examinations Office or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. 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. The potential impact of a cyber attack should also be considered.*

## National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The Head of Centre will also ensure that as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies request for information regarding their contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of the member of staff. Head of Centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself (GR5.3).

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle.

- Where the Head of Centre at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

## Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exam officer extended absence at critical stage of the exam 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*

#### *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*

- *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 disruption

- Data Manager and admin personnel to make entries, produce timetables and organise rooms/invigilators.
- Exams Officers Diary to be followed for key dates and procedures to be completed.
- Exams Officers local network to be approached to provide help to the school on a temporary basis.
- Use Lead Invigilators with assistance of SLT to run exams
- Advertise for a temporary experienced exams officer if the period of absence becomes protracted.
- Request support from University of Brighton Academies Trust for experience exams officer at another academy.

## 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 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

- Candidates not assessed and/or evidence of need not collated – A registered and qualified practitioner to be employed on a temporary basis.
- Application of access arrangements – to be applied for by the exams officer in case of need.
- Staff not allocated and trained – Exam requirements assessed in February for the summer entry. Invigilators trained and employed where necessary. LSA's used during exams.
- Work schedules to be issued a minimum of 2 months before the start of an exam season.

## 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*

*Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*

*Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

*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.*

*Consistency of delivery as a result of extended absence could potentially affect quality of results.*

### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Early entry information – to be supplied by the subject leader or deputy.
- Final entry information – This is requested from subject leaders or their deputy by the exams officer a minimum of 1 month before deadline for entry to the exam boards.

- Internal Assessment Marks – to be requested from the subject leader or deputy in their absence a minimum of 3 weeks before the deadline date.
- There is a diary operated by the exams officer to monitor the capture of this information to ensure exam board deadlines are met.
- Subject Leader/Deputy or Line Manager of subject area to ensure NEA assessment tasks have been set/issued/taken
- Line Manager/Subject Leader of subject affected by teacher extended absence to consider informing and consulting with awarding bodies to decide on appropriate action to be taken.

#### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Failure to recruit and train invigilators- An assessment is made each year in January/February for the forthcoming summer series.
- Exams Officer and HR to decide any recruitment, advertise availability in school's newsletter to parents, website, assess applications and interview.
- Exams officer to arrange training of new invigilators.
- Readvertise as necessary and circulate advertisement to existing invigilators
- Invigilator shortage on exams day/absence on day of exam – Exams officer to call other invigilators for cover, LSA's/cover supervisors/admin staff to be used. Agency staff can also be employed.

#### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams planning- Planning for exams series to start a minimum of 3 months before each series
- If necessary lessons to be moved to alternative classrooms to ensure suitable rooms are available for exams purposes
- A number of support/admin rooms are available for unexpected incidents during exams.
- Unexpected incident – several smaller admin/support rooms are available for smaller numbers of students
- Should a large number need accommodating, the gym/barnden hall can be utilised or if the whole school affected, then refer to the buddy system within the Exams Emergency Procedures.

#### **6. Cyber Attack**

##### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery*

#### Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment – such as a cyber attack
- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed up regularly to an individual memory stick, password protected and allocated to each student by the exams officer
- Ensuring protection of the candidates work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber attack.
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work/using the NSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber attacks.
- Please also refer to Academy On Line Safety Policy (Academy website)

### 7. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Final entry deadline – Exam entries to be made a minimum of 1 week before the exam board published deadline. Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions.
- During exams preparation – If problems become protracted and time critical, invoke buddy system as detailed in the Exams Emergency procedures.
- Results Time – Exams Officer computer remains untouched throughout the summer holidays, the computer is logged on and remains so overnight the day before exams results day
- The IT manager is in attendance on results download day to resolve any issues that arise
- Results could be obtained from the exam boards directly
- If problems become protracted instigate buddy system as detailed in the Exams Emergency procedure
- Students/Parents to be advised if an alternative venue for collection of results is required

### 8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

#### 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

- Please refer to Exams Emergency Procedures and Buddy system that is operated. Students/Parents to be advised of arrangements via, Academy website and local radio stations heart (96-107) and More radio (106.4)
- Please refer to Appendix A Centre lockdown procedures for exams and Academy Trust lockdown procedures for the whole school on the Q drive.

### 9. 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 closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. In the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series. Centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning. – Show my homework to be used to load work to be done, if problem becomes protracted the buddy system should be instigated as detailed in the Exams Emergency Procedures
- Alternative accommodation will need to be obtained and prioritised for those students due to sit exams in a forthcoming exam series
- Students and parents to be advised of arrangements via website, email and local radio

**10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations– centre remains open**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Please refer to Exams Emergency Procedures and Buddy system that is operated. Students/Parents to be advised of arrangements.
- Exams Officer to liaise with Exam Boards to make them aware of the situation.
- Special consideration to be applied for
- Consider alternative site arrangements – home, hospital and make appropriate requests to Exam Boards.

**11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable owing to an unforeseen emergency)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Candidates unable to attend centre- investigate if they are able to sit the exams at an alternative centre, (Buddy System in Exams Emergency Procedures), the Exams Officer to liaise with the relevant exam boards, special consideration to be applied for if applicable. Students/parents to be advised of arrangements via email, school comms, website, local radio if necessary
- Exam papers to be downloaded from secure exam board site, if closure protracted, exam board may be able to deliver papers to alternative location.
- Implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of exams and notifying the JQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative site Form online, using the centre Admin Portal (CAP)

**12. 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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption



- Disruption to the receipt of exam papers before exams – Exams Officer to liaise with appropriate exam boards and Parcelforce to arrange delivery, secure receipt and storage.
- If becomes urgent, papers can be downloaded on the day of the exam from the exam board secure site.( resources closed only to secure key holders if large numbers needed to be printed)
- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Copies received would need to be made and stored under secure conditions. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances. As a last resort and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

### 13. Disruption by transporting 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

- Disruption to the receipt of exam papers before exams – Exams Officer to liaise with appropriate exam boards and Parcelforce to arrange delivery, secure receipt and storage. Where examinations are part of the national yellow label service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, seek advice from centres the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body. Where own arrangements are made, centres should ensure the dispatch option complies with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations. Secure storage of completed examination scripts should be applied until collection.
- Exams Officer can take completed scripts to the post office direct for posting to the exam boards
- For any examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, centres should investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations.

### 14. 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

- Exams Officer to contact relevant Exam Boards to explain circumstances and complete any reports as necessary
- Copies of subject teachers marking records to be obtained by the Exams Officer and sent to the Exam Boards
- Special consideration to be applied for if applicable
- 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.
- Students and Parents to be advised

**15. 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

- Unable to access/distribute results/facilitate post results service- IT Manager to attend on results days with Exams Officer to resolve any IT problems
- If issues cannot be resolved – download direct from the Exam Board website; instigate buddy system detailed in the Exams Emergency Procedures if IT problems become protracted.
- Students and Parents to be advised of alternative arrangements made
- Exams Officer to contact awarding organisations
- Candidates unable to attend centre- investigate if they are able to collect results from an alternative centre, (Buddy System in Exams Emergency Procedures), the Exams Officer to liaise with the relevant exam boards and schools. Students/parents to be advised of arrangements via email, school comms, website, local radio if necessary
- Arrangements to be made at buddy locations if IT problems become protracted for post results requests to be administered, contact with awarding organisations initially for advice and confirmation.
- Results and Post Results information to be emailed via intouch to students.



## **Appendix A**

### **Lockdown Policy (exams)**

#### **Purpose of the policy**

This policy details the measures taken at The Burgess Hill Academy in the event of a centre lockdown during the conducting of examinations.

A lockdown may be required in the following situations:

- ▶ an incident or civil disturbance in the local community which poses a risk
- ▶ an intruder on the site with the potential to pose a risk
- ▶ local risk of air pollution, such as a smoke plume or gas cloud
- ▶ a major fire in the vicinity
- ▶ a dangerous animal roaming loose
- ▶ any other external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of exams staff and candidates

The Burgess Hill Academy has devised lockdown procedures after consulting GOV.UK's [Developing Dynamic Lockdown Procedures](#) guidance.

With regard to conducting examinations, the focus before, during and after an exam will be:

- ▶ the welfare and safety of exam candidates and centre staff engaged in the conducting of examinations
- ▶ maintaining the integrity and security of the examinations/assessments process
- ▶ how to achieve an effective lockdown
- ▶ how to let people know what's happening
- ▶ training staff engaged/involved in the conducting of examinations
- ▶ STAY SAFE principles (Run, Hide, Tell)

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

##### **Head of centre**

- ▶ To ensure that a dedicated lockdown alarm tone is in place and recognised by all staff and candidates. The bell will ring in continuous intervals at least 10 times to signal a lockdown is in progress
- ▶ To ensure that all staff involved in the conducting of examinations are trained in how to raise the alarm for a lockdown, act effectively and made aware of their responsibilities
- ▶ To arrange appropriate training for all exams-related staff in lockdown procedures
- ▶ To ensure that candidates are aware of the procedures relating to a lockdown, particularly those arriving late for an examination who cannot access the exam room due it being locked down
- ▶ To ensure that all candidates and staff are aware of an exit point in case an intruder manages to gain access, or the room becomes unsafe
- ▶ To provide written lockdown procedures for exam room/invigilator use
- ▶ To inform the relevant Emergency Services immediately in the case of any potential threat to the safety of exams staff and candidates

## Senior leadership team (SLT)

- ▶ To have accountability for all exams staff and candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- ▶ A member of SLT will go around with a megaphone
- ▶ A message will also be sent on Teams
- ▶ To run training/drills for examination candidates on lockdown procedures
- ▶ To inform parents/carers about the centre's Lockdown policy in relation to the conducting of examinations
- ▶ To have a presence around exam room areas prior to the start of each exam session
- ▶ To liaise with the appropriate authorities and awarding bodies regarding candidates taking examinations during a lockdown
- ▶ To use the exam room attendance register(s) to compile a list of all candidates not accounted for

## Exams officer

- ▶ To train invigilators in the centre's lockdown procedure. This will be completed a training sessions and a copy of the policy sent to invigilators.
- ▶ Where safe/possible, to liaise with SLT/invigilators in all exam rooms during a lockdown
- ▶ To assist with Lockdown training for staff and students where applicable to the conducting of examinations

## Invigilators

- ▶ To be aware of the centre's lockdown procedure
- ▶ To complete attendance registers as soon as possible so candidates can be identified in the event of a lockdown
- ▶ Where safe/possible, to communicate with the exams officer during a lockdown to confirm the situation in a particular exam room

## Lockdown procedure

### Before an examination

If a lockdown is required as candidates are entering/waiting to enter the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- ▶ A member of SLT will be present around exam room areas
- ▶ Candidates will be instructed to enter the exam room immediately
- ▶ Candidates will be instructed to remain silent, hide under exam desks or sit against a wall/around a corner but not near the door
- ▶ Where safe/possible, the SLT member will communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' mode)
- ▶ The exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately
- ▶ Invigilators will

- ▶ lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds
- ▶ switch off all lights
- ▶ lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the examination room
- ▶ take an attendance register/head count if possible
- ▶ (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room

### **During an examination**

If a lockdown is required during the exam/when candidates are in the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- ▶ Invigilators will:
  - ▶ tell candidates to stop writing immediately and turn their papers over.
  - ▶ collect the attendance register
  - ▶ make a note of time when the examination was suspended
  - ▶ instruct candidates to remain silent, leave all examination materials on their desks and hide under exam desk
  - ▶ where safe/possible, communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' mode).
  - ▶ lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds
  - ▶ switch off all lights
  - ▶ lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the examination room
  - ▶ (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
- ▶ Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately
- ▶ The head of centre will make informed decisions on alerting parents/carers, awarding bodies and emergency services
- ▶ If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following centre policy, the exams officer (or invigilators in the absence of the exams officer) will initiate the emergency evacuation procedure
- ▶ The exams officer will collect all examination papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding bodies

### **After an examination**

If a lockdown is required after the exam/as candidates are leaving the exam room, the following procedure will be employed:

- ▶ Invigilators will:
  - ▶ stop dismissing candidates from the exam room
  - ▶ instruct candidates who have left the room to re-enter the exam room
  - ▶ instruct candidates to remain silent and hide under examination tables
  - ▶ where safe/possible, communicate (via mobile phone/walkie talkie) the situation to the exams officer (ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' mode).

- ▶ lock all windows and close all curtains/blinds
- ▶ switch off all lights
- ▶ lock all doors and/or use tables, or any other furniture, to barricade the entrance to the exam room
- ▶ (if the threat is a chemical or toxic release) instruct candidates to cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
- ▶ Where safe/possible, the exams officer will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to the head of centre immediately

## **Ending a lockdown**

- ▶ The lockdown will be ended by either
  - ▶ the sound of a defined alarm (this will be the bell ringing 10 times) or
  - ▶ the identification/authorisation of Emergency Service officers/SLT/head of centre entering each exam room
- ▶ A specific word or phrase may be used to confirm that the instruction to end the lockdown is genuine
- ▶ Invigilators will undertake a head count/register and confirm attendance with the exams officer/SLT
- ▶ Where applicable and if advised to do so by SLT/ head of centre, and following JCQ guidelines, if there is sufficient time remaining, candidates may restart their examination
- ▶ Invigilators will then:
  - ▶ ask candidates to return to their desks, remind them they are under exam conditions and allow a settling down period
  - ▶ recalculate the revised finish time(s) to allow for the full exam time
  - ▶ tell the candidates to turn their papers over and re-start their exam
  - ▶ amend the revised finish time(s) on display to candidates
  - ▶ note how long the lockdown lasted on the exam room incident log (to later inform a report to the awarding bodies and where relevant, any centre-wide lockdown recording form/log)
- ▶ The exams officer will
  - ▶ provide a report of the incident for awarding bodies (via the special consideration process or as advised by awarding bodies)
  - ▶ safely/securely store all collected exam papers and materials pending awarding body advice/guidance
- ▶ Where applicable/possible/available, SLT/exams officer will
  - ▶ negotiate any alternative exam sittings with the awarding bodies
  - ▶ offer, arrange and provide support services to staff and candidates
- ▶ At the earliest opportunity, SLT/head of centre will prepare a communication to parents/carers advising them of events (including relevant actions and outcomes)
- ▶ Where possible, exams staff and candidates will be invited to attend an assembly lead by the head of centre to discuss the lockdown and offer ongoing support
  - ▶ If this is not possible, communications will be provided via a centre text/email/newsletter and information uploaded to the centre website

## **Evacuation**

- **Evacuation will only be instructed in exceptional circumstances and should not be instigated unless instructed to do so.**
- **This will be communicated by TBHA Teams Channel or the exams officer or a member of SLT**
- **The location for evacuation is: The Triangle Leisure Centre, Burgess Hill.**



## Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

### Ofqual

Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the Exam System Contingency Plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland – what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plann-england-wales-andnorthern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-shoud-do-if-exams-or-otherassessments-are-seriously-disrupted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plann-england-wales-andnorthern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-shoud-do-if-exams-or-otherassessments-are-seriously-disrupted).

Updated October 2023 – Ofqual's final decision on long term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

In addition be aware of specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

#### **What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted**

##### **Contingency planning**

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up to date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual general Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans....

##### **General contingency guidance**

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- Handling strike action in schools from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [exceptional closure days](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ir
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- Police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats.

##### **Disruption to assessments or exams**

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

Also consider looking at JCQs notice to centres on exam contingency plans and JCQs notice on preparing for disruption to examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

## **Steps the Academy should take**

### **Exam planning**

Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

### **In the event of disruption**

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 the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams 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 regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
7. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

### **After the exam**

1. Consider whether students may be eligible 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.

## **Steps the awarding organisation should take**

### **Exam planning**

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

### **In the event of disruption**

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event, which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

### **After the exam**

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

### **If any student miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption**

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about what special consideration, when it is, or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- [JCQ's guidance on special consideration](#)
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### **Wider communications**

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA](#) Regulation 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 a 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.

### **Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments**

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in 2022 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in Summer 2024

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 for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023 Ofqual and DfE published a joint consultation decision on long term resilience arrangements.

As in 2023 Ofqual has provided guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSE's, As and A Levels and Project qualifications.

The Department for Education has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools. In England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools colleges and other exam centres should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

## **JCQ**

### **Contingency planning**

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland)

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 All Centres must have a written exam contingency plan which covers all aspects of exam administration. This will allow members of SLT to act immediately in the event of an emergency where the

HOC, Exams Officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the exam cycle. The exam contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for exams owing to unforeseen emergencies. All relevant members of centre staff must be familiar with the exam contingency 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 “contingency sessions” for examinations summer 2024. This is consistent with the qualification regulator’s document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examsystem-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of “contingency sessions” within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding body’s standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day on examinations in summer 2024 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 last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it was 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 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 the contingency arrangements 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.

[JCQ guidance above taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations> section 15, Contingency planning]

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan

JCQ Notice to Centres – Examination contingency plan/examinations policy - [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres-exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres-exam-contingency-plan/)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for conducting examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

A guide to the special consideration process [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

## DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in school and colleges

- Cyber Security Standards in Schools and Colleges
- Cyber Crime and Cyber Security, a guidance for education providers
- DfE Cyber Security Guidance – March 23

## GOV.UK

*Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption;*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settingsand>

*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>

## Wales

*School closures; examinations* [gov.wales/school-closures-examinations](http://gov.wales/school-closures-examinations)

*opening schools in extremely bad weather* : guidance for schools [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](http://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools)

## Northern Ireland

*Exceptional closure days*

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days>

*Checklist for Principals when considering Opening or Closure of School* – exceptional closure of schools

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools>

## ProtectUK

[www.protectuk.police.uk](http://www.protectuk.police.uk)

## National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)

3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)