

Marshland High School Exams Contingency Plan and Administration Policy

Contents

1. Purpose of the Exam Contingency Plan	2
2. Contingency arrangements	2
3. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process	3
4. Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning	13
5. Exams Administration Plan	18

1. Purpose of the Exam Contingency Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.

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 at Marshland High School.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the [Ofqual Exam system contingency plan](#): England, Wales and Northern Ireland which provides guidance in the document, '[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 notice [Preparing for disruption to examinations](#).

This plan details how Marshland High School complies with the [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres](#) (Centre management – section 5.3) by having in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

2. Contingency arrangements

The centre must have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan must cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders must have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site or alternative sites which can be used if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different year groups.

The centre must have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

The centre must ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks. (GR 3.17-19)

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will ensure that the centre completes the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year (even if there are no changes to centre details) which includes

providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue. (GR 5.3)

Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the Head of Centre or senior leader is absent at critical stages of the exam cycle. The Examinations Officer will take over any additional tasks relevant to ensuring all deadlines etc., are met. If in doubt the Exams Officer will approach the Head of Centre at other secondary schools within the trust for guidance. In the event of the senior leader's absence, the Head of Centre and Examinations officer will work together to cover the absence.

3. Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

3.1 Exams officer extended absence at a 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 post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Data collections and exam dates - These are saved in Admin 'V' drive – Exams, containing key dates of each exam cycle from which exam will be organised when exam officer is absent. All will be collected at the beginning of the academic year.
- Entries - Estimated entries list will be kept in Admin drive to provide exam information for the current academic year. When entries are made and list of entry names will be given to the HODs for checking.
- Pre-exam time – Record for invigilator training should be kept in the exam folder. Summary timetable should be sent to all invigilators prior to the start of the exam season and make sure required number of invigilators are available for each day. Coursework marks must be obtained from the HODs and submitted via secure areas of relevant website, and also send to the relevant awarding body using the postal labels provided.
- HOC should make sure all exams taking place not more than half an hour early or later of the prescribed exam time by the awarding bodies. Any unusual circumstances, if they occur, should be reported to the board with immediate effect.
- Preparation for post results should be started before exam season finishes, or before students leave school, so that they know the procedures. All website information should be updated.

3.2 SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (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 / 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 in place
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support is not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Need to get all related candidates tested before the exam season starts and submit Form 8 to JCQ for approval. All evidence must be kept in the folder for each student so that at inspection time it can be produced to Inspector immediately
- Exam officer should contact school's SEN coordinator before the exam arrangements are done

3.3 Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (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
- 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
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- HOD or HOC has responsibilities to continue with the plan of actions regarding distributing pre-release materials to students when needed. Need to ensure all NEA works complete before submitting mark deadlines, so that students may have time to appeal
- Exams officer to send out deadline reminders

3.4 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 listed above

The centre will:

- Make sure all invigilators are trained and have experienced a practice exam before external exams
- Have a spare invigilator booked for each exam to cover in the event of short notice absence
- Support staff trained and available to step in if required
- Invigilator recruitment, if required, to take place at the beginning and throughout the academic year

3.5 Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) 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 listed above

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- The Exams Officer will ensure that the alternative site arrangement has been completed using the JCQ Centre Portal and all forms completed and returned.

Alternative venue details:

- The centre would make use of our Trust Partners in WNAT, and seek alternative centre provision for the delivery of exams should Marshland High School be unavailable. The neighbouring primary school will also be contacted to ensure examinations can still take place.
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue

Communication details:

- candidates and parents/carers (If appropriate) would be informed of all new details using the approved school communication system
- candidates would be provided with support from staff and pastoral for any issues in accessing the new venue, or for any emotional support due to the sudden changes
- ensure secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

3.6 Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Inform the awarding body with immediate effect if the failure would lead to late entries/late results
- Ensure that entries are made in advance of the deadline to allow for any potential problems
- Utilise another WNAT school, ensuring remote access IT links to all relevant documentation and software
- Ensure robust back-up systems are in place

3.7. Cyber Security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Contact awarding bodies immediately for advice and guidance
- Make alternative arrangements with other schools within the Trust
- Robust backup systems are in place

3.8 Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with, or complete their exams

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

3.9 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 actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- In the case of modular courses, candidates should sit the examinations in the next available series
- The school should follow plans to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or location
- The centre would use our Trust Partners in WNAT, and seek alternative centre provision for the delivery of teaching should Marshland High School be unavailable

Communication details:

Candidates and parents/carers (If appropriate) would be informed of all new details using the approved school communication system.

- follow any awarding body advice regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations
- follow awarding body advice on options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled exams
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

3.10 Candidates at risk of being unable 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 exams as normal because of a crisis

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations*)
- take awarding body advice on options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled exams
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam, or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam, or assessment timetable, or to the venue

Communication details:

- A candidate would be informed in writing any arrangements that differed from a normal in school exam
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment, or demonstrate their level of attainment, has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

3.11 Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations 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 listed above

The centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place

- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Alternative site(s) details:

The alternative site that has been identified as an emergency replacement venue for the entire cohort is; Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre, Beechings Cl, Wisbech St Mary, Wisbech PE13 4SS

If possible, the school will also liaise with other schools within the Trust, or other local primary schools to minimise travel and disruption. The Primary schools within the local area are West Walton Primary School - Windmill Federation (0.2 Miles), Walpole Community Primary - Windmill Federation (2.6 Miles) Walpole Cross Keys Primary School - WNAT (6.7 Miles) or Clenchwarton Primary School – WNAT (10.6 Miles)

Communication details:

- candidates would be notified of any emergency arrangements via the school communication system
- with the Trust, the school would arrange transportation to another venue
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

3.12 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 listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network, ensuring copies received/made are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling examinations on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam, or assessment timetable, or to the venue

Other centre actions:

- The awarding organisations would provide the school with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Awarding organisations would email examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible. The Examinations Officer must ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Awarding bodies to be contacted for advice and guidance

3.13 Disruption to 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 listed above

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant bodies for advice and instructions, and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

Other centre actions:

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

3.14 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed exam scripts/assessment evidence before marking
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent series

Other centre actions:

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

3.15 Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) or facilitate post-results services

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 listed above

The centre will:

- arrange to access its results at an alternative venue/shared facility with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

The school should contact the awarding organisations about alternative options:

- arranging to access its results at an alternative site
- coordinating access to post results services from an alternative site
- sharing facilities with other centres where possible
- arranging post results requests at an alternative location
- contacting the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- informing candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

Communication details:

- The school will communicate with the candidates using the school communication system, offering details and information on how to receive results
- The school could issue results electronically via the system to ensure students had access

4. Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - [Cyber security standards for schools and colleges](#)

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-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted

"This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions 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 to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

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.

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises. You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

You may also wish to see the [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take Exam planning

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

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#)
- Communicate with students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

- Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant awarding organisation for special consideration.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- 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**

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
- 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

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, students are able to complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.

- 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 students 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 special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects, depending on their specific policies.

See also [JCQ's guidance on special consideration](#)

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 [DfE in England](#), the [DfE in Northern Ireland](#), and the [Welsh Government](#) will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption, and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS) and the [Central Applications Office](#) (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published [joint consultation decisions 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 GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published [guidance for contingency assessment arrangements](#) for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE 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 must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete](#)

[\(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre"

JCQ

JCQ guidance taken directly from [Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026](#) section 15, 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: 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 or bodies.

- 15.3 All centres must have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer 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 owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination 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 If the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies 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 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland
- 15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' within the common examination timetable is for use in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.
- 15.7 In the event that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, 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 re-scheduling 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.
- 15.8 Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading. Centres must, therefore, ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them 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."

Links to other JCQ documentation[JCQ Joint Contingency Plan](#)[Preparing for disruption to examinations](#)[General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)[Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements](#)[Guidance notes for transferred candidates](#)[Instructions for conducting examinations](#)[A guide to the special consideration process](#)[Guidance for centres on cyber security](#)**GOV.UK**

[Emergency planning and response](#): Exam and assessment disruption [Dispatch of exam scripts guide](#):
Contingency planning

National Cyber Security Centre[Cyber Security for Schools](#)[Cyber security training for school staff](#)

5. Exams Administration Plan

In order to safeguard all aspects of examination administration the following systems will be upheld, to ensure that, in the event of staff shortage, the administration of examinations can proceed in a controlled, organised manner.

The Examination Administration folder

The Examination Administration folder contains a list of essential key dates. This list can be used to identify exactly where, in the examination cycle, the school is at any given time and which tasks are relevant for that specific period.

A list of contact details for all examination staff across the Trust can found in the Examination Administration Folder. All staff are available to provide support for each of the stages below.

Entries

A copy of estimated entries for the current academic year will be kept in the Exam Lists and Amendments folder, contained in the exams office, to provide information on syllabus and examination codes. This will allow for the creation of mark sheets and exam entries. Practical support, if required, will be available from Trust examination staff.

When entries have been made, a list of entry codes and totals will be given to the relevant staff to check and confirm and placed in the Exam Lists and Amendments folder.

Entries and registrations are made annually. Registrations for non-GCSE subjects are made within 6 weeks of the students starting in Year 10. GCSE Entries are made in February in the examination year for the student. All data used for registrations/entries are pulled from the school's management

system of which information is gathered and checked yearly with parents. On entry students are also provided with a copy of their entry document in which they are asked to check and ensure all details are correct. Any errors identified are then resolved with the examination boards as required and the school system is also updated.

Non-examination assessments

NEA marks must be obtained from relevant Heads of Department and/or subject teachers and submitted via the secure areas for relevant exam boards. Exam boards differ in their requirements regarding NEA and care must be taken to ensure these are adhered to. Sample requests will be received in due course (or can be obtained from the secure areas) and moderator samples can then be dispatched.

On entering NEA marks to external sites of systems the Exams officer will work alongside another member of staff to ensure that all data inputted is accurate and correct and the data will be checked thoroughly before submission.

Invigilation

The Invigilation folder contains contact and availability details for all invigilators currently employed by the school.

Access Arrangements

Details of all students entitled to examination concessions are available in the SEN & Access Arrangements folder.

Timetabling/examination scheduling and examination organisation

Examination timetables will be publicly distributed on the school website and a master copy will be kept in the Examination Administration folder. This will provide information on rooming and scheduling of examinations. More detailed timetables, detailing invigilation and access arrangements will be distributed to invigilators and held in the Examination Administration folder.

Examination packs

Exam packs are provided for each examination room. They contain:

- Coversheets detailing all information relevant to a specific exam. These include paper references, duration, rooming, number of candidates, stationary requirements and any details of students entitled to exam concessions and erratum notices.
- Seating plans.
- Attendance registers.
- Scribe and word processor cover sheets.
- Specific details and instructions for invigilators.

Examination packs are assembled in advance of examinations and stored securely with the relevant examination papers.

Storage/access to papers

Access to papers and the secure storage will be restricted. However, the keys to the secure storage will be kept securely in the school so that access can be given to the appointed person by the Head of Centre. Papers are to be logged at reception on delivery and moved immediately to the secure storage. When unpacked they should be checked carefully to ensure the correct numbers/paper references.

Examination day

In the event of absence on an examination day, given that timetabling and exam packing will have been completed in advance, invigilators will be able to organise the running of the exam. Invigilators will attend an annual training session to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to uphold the integrity of the examinations.

Dispatch of Scripts

Step by step instructions on dispatching scripts will be kept in the Examinations Administration folder. These will include details of where the relevant stationary is stored and contact details for the exam boards.

Special Consideration Applications

Applications for Special consideration must be made to the relevant boards within seven days of the last examination in the series in each subject. An on- going record of special consideration and any evidence will be kept in the Special Consideration folder.

Pre-results preparation

Necessary SIMS updates will be installed by IT. Named envelopes are to be prepared, ready for Candidates' Statements of Results.

Results

Results will be printed on the early release days. Results will then be placed in named envelopes ready for distribution on the results release days.

Post-Results

Teaching Staff will be sent relevant forms and given relevant information on the post-results services prior to results days. Students will be made aware of their right to request Post-Results Services and their right to appeal as detailed in the ATS, EAR & Appeals Policy.

Certification

On receipt of candidate certificates the Exams Officer is responsible for ensuring that all data present on the certificates is correct. Each certificate is checked to ensure that the candidate number, name and grade/marks displayed match what was awarded on results day. If any errors are identified the Exams officer will immediately contact the Exam board responsible and fix the error. If an error is identified after the student has received the certificate and is information that should've been checked by a student. The student will be made aware that any changes that incur a cost at this point will be passed onto them due to the number of occasions the information was asked to be checked and confirmed. The student exams handbook also covers this notice and students are made aware how important it is to fully check all information.

For subjects with no assessments and submitted marks the certificates will also be checked to ensure that claimed units match that was assessed and submitted.

Certificates will be stored alphabetically and in labelled folders securely with the exams officer until all certificates are accounted for and checked. The certificates will then be sealed in named envelopes for presentation in an annual ceremony around November/December time. If a student is unable to attend the evening instructions will be provided on either collecting the certificates or having them posted out. Certificates are held for 12 months from the issue date and then securely

destroyed as per JCQ guidelines. Their destruction is logged on a destruction record should any queries arise.

In the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations or on results day

In the event that the centre is unavailable for examinations the head of centre will liaise with awarding bodies in order to make provision for students to sit their examinations at an alternative site. It is likely this would be one of the three other high schools within the West Norfolk Academies Trust. Applications for special consideration would then be made for all students affected.

In the event that the centre is unavailable on results day the head of centre will either arrange for the use of an alternative venue (a longstanding agreement exists with the primary school adjacent to the centre) or results will be sent out to students via email.