



Exam Contingency Plan

Policy/Procedure creator: Mrs K Hickman

Policy/Procedure created/reviewed: 24/11/2022

Centre Name	Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College
Centre Number	24415
Date plan first created	6/1/2021
Current plan approved by	Mr G McClarey
Current plan reviewed by	Mrs K Hickman
Date of next review	30/11/2023

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mr G McClarey
Senior leader(s)	Mrs S Thomas (Deputy Headteacher) Mr Paul Edmunds (Assistant Headteacher) Mrs C Corbin (Assistant Headteacher)
Exams officer	Mrs K Hickman
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs M Fitzer
Other staff (if applicable)	Mr B Pain (IT Manager); Loudes IT (external support); Subject leaders (various); Heads of Year (various); Ms S Guise (Access Arrangement Co-Ordinator); Invigilators (various); Miss Emily Oram (Cover Officer)

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Purpose of the 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 Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College.

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.

This plan details how Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3, Centre management) 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. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

Operating across more than one centre

This does not apply to this centre.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams officer 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 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

Entries

essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
sufficient invigilators not recruited

▫ 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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

Subject Leaders to double check the data collection information is provided to the Exam Office by the start of each academic year. SLT to check that the information regarding subjects/ number of students certificating has been provided by the end of September.

Subject Leaders to visit Exam Board website(s) to be aware of key course date information and deadlines

The number of active invigilators will be monitored for the following exam season. If insufficient invigilators are available to cover external exams; P Edmunds to arrange the use of exam trained cover staff and trained non-teaching staff.

Entries:

If the Subject Leader does not receive pre-release material as expected and cannot access it online, P Edmunds will contact the awarding body and get access to pre-release material online.

P Edmunds to check entries with Subject Leaders and arrival of exam papers in good time. In the event of entries not being made SLT will make entries via SIMS exams and send to the Awarding Bodies via A2C. If urgent, SLT will contact the awarding body to receive emergency exam papers / download them from the secure area of the exam board website on the day of the exam.

Subject Leaders should enquire if no entry information has been collected or requested to be signed off prior to the entry deadline for their course(s). A check will be made by P Edmunds in January/ February to ensure that this procedure has been done ready for the following summer series.

Pre-Exams:

Invigilators will be required to undertake online assessments and attend regular training sessions to ensure that they are trained and up to date with the latest JCQ regulations. Online resources from The Exams Office will be made available by P Edmunds. Internal examinations will form part of ongoing training evidence.

P Edmunds to enquire after provisional timetable around July for the following summer series. If a provisional timetable has been published by the Exams Boards but has not been given to SLT or students, P Edmunds will print exam timetable(s) via SIMS or directly from Exam Board websites and circulate as appropriate.

C Corbin to check that site team are aware of requirements for upcoming exams. If no information has been sent to the site team and no instructions received from Exam Office; C Corbin to allocate rooms and candidates in liaison with S Guise and E Oram.

Exam timetables will be circulated to invigilators as soon as they are made available; bookings will be confirmed in advance via Sling website. If by May invigilators have not received any bookings for the summer series they should contact P Edmunds to agree schedules.

When exam papers start arriving, P Edmunds to check deliveries against despatch notes and store exam papers in the secure storage. Subject Leaders to ensure that non-examination assessment material is stored securely within their departments.

Subject Leaders to be aware of their own subject deadline(s); if internal marks or moderation samples not requested by Exam

Office, Subject Leaders / P Edmunds to contact awarding body.

Exam Time:

Internal exams will be run under the JCQ rules to familiarise students with behavioural expectations. Any disruption, cheating or very late arrivals in the exam room will be noted by the invigilator; P Edmunds to review JCQ Malpractice and Special Consideration documents and contact the awarding body as directed.

Parcel Force to be informed of the schools exam dates in advance; if completed exam scripts are not collected on schedule, they will be moved back to secure storage by P Edmunds. Ongoing issues regarding the return of completed papers will be reported to the exam board.

Results and Post-Results:

P Edmunds to follow instructions to download results into SIMS and print onto headed paper for distribution to students on official results release day. Contact IBS for instructions and assistance if required.

SLT and Subject Leaders to check results for borderline candidates who may wish to use post-results services on restricted results release day; C Corbin to apply for Reviews of Marking and other post results services via the awarding body secure websites. Candidate permission must be obtained after the publication of results but in advance.

2. ALS lead/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 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 (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam

rooms Other criteria:

Not Applicable

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre

will:

Planning:

K Hickman / P Edmunds to communicate with SEN Office to ensure candidates in Year 10 & 11 are tested/assessed and that evidence of need has been collated in time to make an applications for the planned exam series deadline.

The centre recognises its duties under The Equality Act 2010, as set out in our Disability Policy 2022-23.

Evidence of need is collected and collated on an ongoing basis in liaison with Subject Leaders and teaching staff.

Pre-Exams

Access arrangements are made as far in advance as possible of any planned exams series using JCQ Access Arrangements Online (AAO). Permission will be requested via AAO before awarding any emergency access arrangements.

In the event of Access Arrangements or centre delegated arrangements not being put in place as agreed, the Awarding Body will be notified and Special Consideration will be applied for on the candidate's behalf via the secure website, as per the JCQ Special Consideration guidance.

Modified papers will be requested in good time before the deadline for the planned exam series (January for Summer series) in liaison with the SEN Office. In the event of modified papers not being received in time, the awarding body will be notified.

Learning Support Mentors and other Access Arrangement facilitators will receive ongoing training and updates in line with JCQ criteria. Requirements for each exam series cohort are monitored by the SEN and Exam Office. Extra staff will be recruited and trained in advance of the planned exam series where a staffing shortfall is evident

Exam-time

Access Arrangement candidate support is arranged in advance of every planned exam series. Contingency arrangements for staff absence are agreed in advance with SEN Office.

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 Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

Subject Leaders are responsible for ensuring all data is collected from teachers in their department. Missing data must be submitted to the Exam Office as a matter of priority. In the event of a Subject Leader absence, their Second in Department must fill the role and provide this information.

Teaching Staff will ensure that candidates in their groups are informed of their Centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body to ensure they have adequate time to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the Centre's marking. See Non-Examination Assessment Policy 2022-23 and Internal Appeals Procedures 2022-23.

Subject Leaders will be aware of deadlines for the submission of candidate marks and work for their course(s). Reminders will be sent by the Exam Office to departments in advance of deadlines

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 Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

ensure that the recruitment of invigilators takes place on an ongoing basis to ensure the correct number of invigilators are trained and will be available to conduct exams for each planned exam series.

For large cohort exams, Cover Staff and other trained support staff will be used to invigilate, should a shortage arise.

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 Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

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

Alternative venue details:

In an emergency, G McClarey to co-ordinate with Exam Office in finding an alternative venue. Awarding body to be notified as per JCQ regulations.

K Hickman will apply for special consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirements set out in the JCQ guidance.

The exam office will

communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue

communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or

to the venue Communication details:

Candidates will be informed of any change of venue via the school messaging service and via email.

The exam office will

ensure the 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

Other centre actions:

- The Exam Office will check cohort size and need against rooms available in good time prior to the planned exam series.

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of

delivery Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

Maintain firewall.

Ensure data is fully backed up, including cloud.

Maintain anti-virus software.

Continue to be signed up to NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) monitoring.

Continue to be signed up to Police Cyber Alarm monitors.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS/IT system failure at final entry

Deadline MIS/IT system failure during

Exams preparation MIS/IT system failure

at results release time

Other criteria:

No other criteria is identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

Final entries will be submitted via A2C in good time prior to the final entry deadline for the planned exam series.

In the event of an MIS/IT system failure at the time of final entries being made, entries will be made either from another location on site with A2C

installed, or via the exam board secure websites which can be accessed externally.

Exam planning and preparation is completed using Google shared documents with the SEN Office and Exam Assistant. In the event of any IT failure during the planning process it can be accessed externally from another location off-site.

In order to ensure results can be downloaded on release day, A2C will be installed on another machine on site.

In the event of college site being inaccessible to download results on release day they will be accessed directly from the secure area of awarding body websites.

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

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

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

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 Communication details:

Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative arrangements via the College's messaging service and/or via email. The College will

- Take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available

- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations

- Advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or

assessment at a later date Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

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 examinations

as normal Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations

- 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:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative methods of learning via the college messaging service and/or via email.

The centre will

- 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

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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
- 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 venue details:

G McClarey to co-ordinate with Exam Office in finding alternative

venue. Communication details:

- Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative venue via the college messaging service and/or via email.
 - 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

Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

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 Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

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 and will ensure when copies are received/made these 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 of the examination 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:

No other actions identified.

13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

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 awarding 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:

No other action identified.

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

Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

raise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to 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 assessment series Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

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 Other criteria:

No other criteria identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body

make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an

alternative venue Alternative venue details:

G McClarey to co-ordinate with Exam Office in finding

alternative venue. The Centre

make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location

contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible

inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the

facilitation of post-results services Communication details:

Candidates and parents will be informed of alternative venue via the college messaging

service and/or via email. Other centre actions:

No other actions identified.

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Cause of disruption

No further causes identified.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

Not applicable.

CHANGES 2022/2023

(Added) Under **Purpose of the plan**: new heading 'Operating across more than one centre' and field for completion

(Added) Under **Possible causes of disruption to the exam process** : new cause '6. Cyber-attack' and fields for completion. This means that causes 6-15, have now changed to causes 7-16

(Added) Under cause **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)**: new field for completion 'Alternative venue details'

(Amended/added) Under **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**: guidance and links to current information

UPDATED December 2022 (in the section of the template – **Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning**) to reflect Ofqual's update to the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland where information related to pandemic disruption for 2021 to 2022 has been removed, links to newly published guidance added and existing links updated.

UPDATED January 2023 (in the section of the template – **Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning**) to reflect Ofqual's update to the Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Updated 'General contingency guidance' to include 'Handling strike action in schools from the Department for Education in England'. Updated 'Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments' section to notify that the Department for Education has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools.)

(Added March 2023) Under cause **7. Failure of IT systems**: example added to 'Other criteria' prompt as follows: Add any criteria not listed above for implementation of the plan (an example could be: Power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen test) or add - No other criteria identified

UPDATED April 2023 (in the section of the template – **Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning**) added links to DfE cyber security standards and guidance)

CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES

Not Applicable.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber Security Standards in schools and colleges

(www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges)

DfE Cyber Security Guidance - March 2023 (As exam season approaches the Department for Education is reminding schools and colleges to renew their cyber security and backup policies)

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**

(updated 18 January

2023) [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** www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-a-governance). 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

(www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings) from the Department for Education in England

handling strike action in schools (www.gov.uk/government/publications/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

(www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools)

exceptional closure days (www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland

checklist - exceptional closure of schools (www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland

school terms and school closures from NI Direct (www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/school-terms-and-school-closures)

opening schools in extremely bad weather (<https://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools>) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government

police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

(www.protectuk.police.uk) [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 to centres on exam contingency plans

(www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres-exam-contingency-plan/) and JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations (www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review 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.

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 your centre is able to open.
3. 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.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/).
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply 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 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.

See also JCQ's guidance on special considerations

(www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-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 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 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 to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in summer 2023.

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 November 2022, Ofqual and the Department for Education issued decisions following a consultation on the resilience of the qualifications sector

(www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ensuring-the-resilience-of-the-qualifications-system-in-2023-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea/outline/consultation-decisions) for specific examinations awarded in England in summer 2023. Ofqual has published Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on gathering evidence of student performance

(www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-resilience-in-the-exam-system-in-2023) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications to support resilience in the exam system in England in 2023.

The Department for Education has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools

(www.gov.uk/government/publications/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.

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

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/bodies.

15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the 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 days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Examsystem contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland* -

www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland

The designation of 'contingency days' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event that there is national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, 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.

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 arrangements. 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** - jqc.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2022) - jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

JCQ Notice to Centres - **Examination contingency plan**/examinations policy -

jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan General Regulations for Approved Centres -

jqc.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements -

jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms Guidance notes for transferred

[candidates - jqc.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

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

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

[jqc.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

GOV.UK

[Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption -](https://www.gov.uk/guidance//publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

[gov.uk/guidance//publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and- childrens-social-care-settings](https://www.gov.uk/guidance//publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

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

Wales

School closures: examinations - gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools - gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools

Northern Ireland

(updated 2021/22) Exceptional closure days - education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days

Checklist - exceptional closure of schools - education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

ProtectUK

ProtectUK.police.uk

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free **Web Check** (ncsc.gov.uk/information/web-check) and **Mail Check** (ncsc.gov.uk/information/mailcheck) 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 (ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/cyber-tools-for-uk-schools).

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
(ncsc.gov.uk/news/alert-targeted-ransomware-attacks-on-uk-education-sector)
2. Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement
(ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/mitigating-malware-and-ransomware-attacks)
3. Offline backups in an online world (ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/offline-backups-in-an-online-world)
4. Backing up your data (ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide/backing-your-data)
5. Practical resources to help improve your cyber security (gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools)
6. Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it (com/watch?v=FppzWedY0ic&t=237s)
7. School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK
(gov.uk/news/school-staff-offered-training-to-help-cyber-defences)